



## Senators Dorgan, Lott, Snowe, and Feinstein Seek Two Year Delay on Domestic Base Closures

-- Feinstein believes "California has done its fair share."--  
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**Washington, DC** – *In light of the serious challenges facing the U.S. military, Senators Byron Dorgan (D-ND), Trent Lott (R-MS), Olympia Snowe (R-ME), and Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.) today offered an amendment to the Department of Defense Authorization bill that would delay the closure of any additional domestic military installations by at least two years. Under the amendment, military installations oversea could be considered for closure in 2005.*

*Last year, Senator Feinstein joined with Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison (R-TX) to create an Overseas Basing Commission as part of the FY 04 Military Construction Appropriations Bill. This is a congressionally appointed commission to study the structure of U.S. overseas military facilities and report its conclusions and recommendations to Congress and the President currently due at the end of the year.*

*In previous rounds of base closures, 31 bases and military installations were closed or realigned in California – and there are still environmental clean-up issues that need to be addressed. The prepared text of Senator Feinstein's floor statement follows:*

"Mr. President, I rise today to join Senators Dorgan, Lott, and Snowe to introduce an amendment to delay the next round of domestic base closures for at least two years. It is in our national security interests to support this amendment.

Specifically, the amendment would:

- Modify the 2005 base closure round to apply solely to military installations outside of the United States; and,
- Provide for expedited consideration of the request for a domestic base closure round in 2007.

Since Congress authorized the 2005 base closure round in 2001, our military and our nation have been confronted by several major new challenges:

- 9/11 and the war on terror,
- the overthrow of the Taliban and Hussein regimes,
- and the reconstruction of Afghanistan and Iraq.

Rogue states that seek weapons of mass destruction and international terrorist groups have replaced the Soviet Union as the greatest threat to American interests and security.

Our determination and commitment to succeed in these endeavors is unwavering, and we must provide our military personnel with the tools they need to get the job done. These challenges, however, have also forced us to re-examine the role and composition of our military in this new era: what kind of force structure will be needed, how many troops will be sufficient, and, yes, what sort of infrastructure and basing needs will be required to meet these new threats.

It seems short-sighted to me, then, that we are moving forward with a process that was approved before 9/11 took place and before any of these questions were raised. In fact, the criteria for the 2005 base closure round are almost identical to the criteria for the past four rounds.

How can we be sure that this process will be fair and balanced and in the best interests of our military and our national security interests if it is based on criteria appropriate for 1995? For example, there was no Department of Homeland Security in 1995, and we are only just beginning to understand how our domestic military infrastructure can play a role in providing for the actual defense of our homeland.

We may very well need the military infrastructure currently threatened by the 2005 base closure round for future missions and threats. Once a base is closed, it is almost certainly closed for good. This is not the time to rush forward with these decisions. Our military is under enormous stress in Afghanistan, Iraq, and the war on terror. It would be prudent, in my view, to take a step back and look at the entire post 9/11 landscape to determine what sort of military infrastructure will be necessary to protect our national security interests.

One factor that should be taken into consideration as we examine future military needs is the structure and scope of overseas bases. We still have 112,000 troops based in Europe, 37,000 in Korea, and 45,000 in Japan in bases designed, devised, and intended for Cold War era threats.

Yet the 2005 BRAC round is focused entirely on domestic bases. This strikes me as unwise. Suppose that after the 2005 round is completed, it is determined that several overseas bases need to be closed and the troops relocated to the United States. Where will they go? Will closed bases have to be re-opened?

Let us also remember that there is an economic impact on a community that must be taken into consideration. When a base is closed, jobs are lost and economic growth is stunted. Even the threat of a base closure is enough to scare away investment. Should we not take a look at our overseas basing structure first before we ask our communities to make additional sacrifices?

Senator Hutchison and I introduced legislation last year to create a congressional commission to take an objective and thorough look at our overseas bases. It became law as part of the FY 04 Defense Authorization bill and the commission is up and running.

It seems to me that the way to approach this issue – as outlined in the Dorgan/Lott/Snowe amendment -- is to build on that legislation and first look at our overseas basing needs in 2005 and then turn to domestic bases, if necessary, in two years' time.

I would also like to discuss the impact of BRAC on my home state of California. California has been hit very hard in past base-closure rounds. 29 military bases have been closed, costing the state more than 93,000 jobs, of which 40,000 were civilian positions.

According to Tim Ransdell, executive director of the California Institute for Federal Policy Research, “California lost more jobs than all the other states combined in the last four rounds.” While at the time, it had only 15 percent of the nation’s military personnel, it shouldered 60 percent of net personnel cuts.

I believe California has done its fair share. We are proud of a long history of support for our armed forces, and we hope to continue our mutually beneficial relationship.

Nevertheless, if Californians are called on to make additional sacrifices and additional bases are closed in a future domestic BRAC round, we should know that our government did a complete and thorough examination of the threats our country will face in the future and the military capabilities we will need to face them.

And while we are discussing the base-closure process, I would also like to mention my concerns about the environmental cleanup of bases closed in past rounds. The record is discouraging. Some bases will not be fully cleaned until 2069.

It is estimated that it will cost \$1.3 billion to clean up the former McClellan Air Force base in Sacramento, a process that will not be finished until 2033. The cleanup at Fort Ord will not be finished until 2031, while Castle Air Force Base will not be completed until 2038. And the list goes on and on.

Before we add to the number of bases to be cleaned, additional resources and commitment must be provided for the environmental cleanup of bases that have already been closed.

In closing, let me say that I understand that after taking a thorough examination of our military infrastructure needs in the post-9/11 era and our overseas basing structure, it may be appropriate to move forward with another domestic BRAC round.

But we owe it to our men and women in uniform and, indeed, every American to undertake that examination or we will put our national security interests at risk.

I urge my colleagues to support the amendment.”

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