Military downsizing in the United States: A study of military base closures in California from the late 1980's to early 1990's

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MILITARY DOWNSIZING IN THE UNITED STATES: A STUDY OF MILITARY BASE CLOSURES IN CALIFORNIA FROM THE LATE 1980's TO EARLY 1990's

by

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Military Downsizing in the United States examines military downsizing efforts during the late 1980's and early 1990's. It begins with an outline of the historical development of the United States military, and it then evaluates the key economic and political factors involved in the recent decision to close bases around the country. Military Downsizing in the United States then evaluates three separate base closure case studies in California. The case studies are Fort Ord, the Long Beach Naval Complex, and Norton Air Force Base. The goal of these evaluations is to determine whether interest group or elite politics is controlling the base closure process.
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CHAPTER 1

THE HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE UNITED STATES MILITARY FROM THE EARLY 1800's TO THE 1900's.

INTRODUCTION

The United States military over the last two hundred years has undergone considerable evolution. Today, the United States possesses a large standing military which is, for the most part, voluntary in its nature. The military is professional and officers usually consider military office a career pathway. In addition, the United States military establishment is oriented towards procuring high technology weapons for the protection of the United States and its allies. In a word, the United States military today is a thoroughly modern institution with the capability of wielding its might anywhere around the globe.

The characteristics of today's military have made the United States far more capable of directly protecting its economic and military interests than ever before. However, the military preparedness of the United States has come at a price. Today, it is
more difficult than ever before for the United States military to downsize its operations. The inability to downsize rapidly when necessary will cost the United States taxpayers millions of dollars in the future; and in many sectors of the military, there are individuals and groups who wish to prevent downsizing for reasons other than national security. This reluctance to downsize the military when necessary will create serious threats to the budgetary process of the United States government.

The politics of military downsizing was brought back onto the nation's political agenda in the 1990's. Included among many of the areas evaluated for military downsizing were domestic military bases and facilities. The topic of base closures will be the primary focus of this discussion; but before addressing the politics of base closure, it will be necessary to engage in a brief historical review of how the United States military became the budgetarily uncontrollable leviathan that it is today.

PRE-COLD WAR HISTORY

Prior to the 1800's no professional armies existed in Europe or the United States, but this all changed by the 1900's. The dramatic change in the military
occurred during the late 1700's and early 1800's. It was during this time that both the American and French Revolutions occurred. These new wars required the mobilization of vast quantities of men, and these large armies were difficult to control without an experienced professional officer corps leading them. The problem was that the armies of Europe and the United States did not have trained officers, and they knew that it would be naive to believe that a nation's army would always have a military genius like Napoleon to guide them. Therefore, the armies of Europe and the United States went about creating military academies to train a professional officer corps for the military. In the United States, a serious commitment to officer education began at West Point in 1817 after the difficulties of the War of 1812. The Navy also established an academy in 1845. The end result was the promoting of military officer'ship as a viable career choice for the first time in American history.¹

Professionalization changed the face of the military in another significant way. For the first time, the United States volunteer militia was not considered the primary basis of American defense.

"Militia no longer figured in the commander in chief's calculations... Professionalized regulars reinforced by enthusiastic volunteers had replaced the common militia as the foundation for national defense."²

By the late 1800's the United States had a thoroughly well established professional officer corps, but it still maintained small peacetime forces for the Army and Navy. Originally, these small forces were deemed necessary only because the United States had to protect its citizens from Indians and naval piracy. However, by the last third of the 1800's officers began to warn the government of the need to modernize the military. They argued that any possible enemies of the United States were too strong for the American military. They pointed out that the lead time for producing modern weaponry was far too long. Finally they believed warfare had become too complex for amateur volunteer militias to master quickly.³

The United States military educated people about the need for reform through their educational facilities and through the writings of military intellectuals. One such military intellectual was Emory Upton who wrote The Military Policy of the United

²Ibid.

³Ibid., p. 271.
States after he conducted a world tour to review the militaries of other nations in 1875. He advocated the adoption of German military methods for the United States. He criticized the United States for allowing excessive civilian control of the Army, and he worried about America's fascination with citizen-soldiers or militia. He also praised the Germans for engaging in peacetime plans for war; maintaining a large standing army; and for relying on a system of conscription.4

The Navy also had an intellectual reformer by the name of Alfred Thayer Mahan. He published The Influence of Sea Power upon History, 1660-1783 in 1890.5 In his book, Mahan concluded that Britain had achieved greatness by controlling the seas and the commerce they bore. He believed the United States could imitate this greatness by establishing a strong merchant marine, establishing colonies, and building a large Navy with many battleships.6

By the late 1800's military intellectuals like


Mahan and Upton had established doctrines which would be the basis of military arguments in favor of expanding the size of both the Army and Navy. While the Army was still no match for any of the great military powers of the world at the turn of the century, the Navy was slowly becoming a world sea power. The United States Navy can credit new seacoast emplacements, an expanding specialized industrial base, and the writings of Mahan for its growth during this time.\textsuperscript{7}

As can be seen, the establishment of military academies and the writings of military intellectuals played a key historical role in the development of a large and professional military establishment in the United States. However, other historical events also produced key attributes of today's military. Two such attributes were the reliance on high technology weaponry and the maintenance of a large global military presence. Each of these attributes was first established after World War II.

\textbf{COLD WAR HISTORY AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF CONTAINMENT AND DETERRENCE POLICIES IN THE UNITED STATES}

As the power of Europe and Great Britain dwindled\textsuperscript{7}

\textsuperscript{7}Ibid., p. 280.
after World War II, the United States was forced to assume the British role of being a global rival to the Soviet Union. As early as 1947 President Truman was forced to confront the Soviet Union in both Greece and Turkey. He requested $400 million dollars to aid Greece against a communist rebellion and Turkey against Soviet pressures to revise the international convention on control of the Straits. In addition, Truman had to fund governments in Western Europe in order to prevent them from falling under communist rule, and he had to oppose several third world revolutions which were communistic in their leanings or sympathies. The end result of all this global crisis management would be the establishment of the United States' containment and deterrence policies by 1953.8

Deterrence against the Soviet Union meant the nation would need a strong military to threaten the Soviets, and they would have to use their military establishment against the Soviets if it was felt that their interests were threatened. This deterrent included the recently discovered nuclear bomb, and it also included collective security measures which had been established through the Rio Pact and the United

8Ibid., pp. 496-498.
Initially, the Truman administration was almost completely reliant on nuclear weaponry as the key to its deterrence policy. Ironically, the United States was reliant on weaponry which its Strategic Air Command (SAC) was incapable of delivering successfully to its targets. Apparently, the Air Force did not have a single team capable of assembling a nuclear bomb until 1948, and in that same year, General Curtis E. LeMay discovered that none of the Air Force's thirty nuclear bomber crews was capable of hitting its targets accurately. The reason Truman continued to rely on nuclear weaponry was because the Finletter Commission and various congressional committees had reported in 1948 that atomic weaponry and intercontinental delivery systems would outstrip defensive systems for several years to come. These reports and the detonation of the first Soviet nuclear device in 1949 gave Truman good reason to approve the hydrogen bomb program in 1950.

While Truman had begun to mobilize the United States' nuclear forces in the right direction, he still could not manage to convince the American people of the

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9 Ibid., pp. 494-496.

10 Ibid., pp. 499-501.
necessity to expand the nation's conventional forces in order to contain Soviet military activity. In 1949, Truman managed to place the United States in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, a collective security alliance. This gave him a reason to increase the United States' conventional forces. In June of 1950 the outbreak of the Korean Conflict also gave Truman a reason to request increases in the size of American conventional forces.

By the end of the Korean War, the administrations of Eisenhower, Kennedy, and Johnson began the process of establishing a permanent containment and deterrence policy. Nuclear weapons were to remain the center piece of this deterrence policy, and by 1965 the United States had established a strategic nuclear triad of intercontinental bombers, missiles, and submarines. New collective defense organizations were established around the world like ANZUS, and the United States established a protective nuclear umbrella.

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11 Ibid., pp. 506-508.


The large alliance systems and elaborate policies of containment and deterrence help explain why the United States has continually maintained a global military presence. However, United States military history still has not revealed all the reasons why it became so dependent on high technology. To understand this phenomenon more thoroughly, one must review the administrations that followed Truman.

The Eisenhower administration proposed a "New Look" policy for the United States military. "Eisenhower believed that proxy wars like Korea and the pressure of defense spending would fatally weaken the American economy..." He pledged to reduce the military budget by $14 billion in two years, and in order to achieve his goal he chose to de-emphasis conventional arms in favor of nuclear arms. The results were mixed. He did lower budgets, but the United States had to maintain an ability to wage a high capacity nuclear strike in order to compensate for a lack of conventional forces.

The United States' defense became reliant on the high technology involved in producing nuclear weapons. In addition, the United States required intelligence on

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14Ibid., p. 534.

15Ibid., pp. 534-535.
Soviet military activity. In the years following World War II, the CIA relied on immigrants for some information, but as the years went on there were fewer immigrants. Relying on British, French, and German spy rings was not the answer to this problem since the Soviets had already penetrated these spy networks. Therefore, the only solutions available to the United States were such high technology surveillance operations as the U-2 spy plane and the National Security Agency (NSA).\textsuperscript{16}

Finally, the Eisenhower administration further encouraged the development of high technology by making nuclear missile development a high priority in the late 1950's. Ike was encouraged to do this because of the Gaither Committee which recommended in 1957 that the Strategic Air Command should not be alone in carrying the burden of controlling America's nuclear arsenal.\textsuperscript{17} In addition, it was during this time that the Soviets launched "Sputnik" and proved that their missile technology was becoming intercontinental.\textsuperscript{18}

\textsuperscript{16}Ibid., pp. 536-537.

\textsuperscript{17}Ibid.

Eisenhower and the Soviets began engaging in a race for technology. It was a race which had been sparked by Eisenhower's "doctrine of massive retaliation" in 1954 and the Soviet's "Sputnik" launch in 1957.

"Each combatant had to continually improve its arsenal, so as to deter the other from using its arms. Fewer and fewer units of each successive weapon were made, but each was much more technically sophisticated than the last. A process of institutionalized innovation was set in motion."\textsuperscript{19}

This continual search for innovation meant a constant rise in expenditures for research and development in the defense budget, and technical innovation became the primary goal of the military-industrial complex in the United States.\textsuperscript{20}

Innovation meant that defense budgets would have to continue to increase during the Eisenhower administration, but it was not innovation alone that increased the defense budget during the Kennedy administration. Politics played a role in the expansion of defense budgets during the Kennedy presidency because he had to appear tough on military issues to compensate for his Catholicism, inexperience,


\textsuperscript{20}Ibid., p. 32.
and relatively liberal views of containment policy. The administration felt it could expand the defense budget by $50 billion if it promised more centralization and civilianization of defense decision making. Kennedy advocated a "flexible response" which meant a buildup of conventional arms in order to insure that the United States would not need to resort to nuclear weapons prematurely during a hot war. Kennedy's administration also argued for a "two and a half war" conventional force which would be capable of fighting in North Asia, Europe, and an insurgency-threatened state simultaneously.21

Kennedy's administration had the same misgivings about extravagant defense expenditures as the Eisenhower administration, and Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara tried to streamline the procurement process for high technology weaponry. However, the Vietnam War and the military contraction during the mid 1970's prevented this program from being implemented successfully.22


During the late 1970's the United States lost a great deal of control over the spending of its defense budget. The end result was a bloated defense budget and a large national debt.

THE REAGAN MILITARY BUILDUP

From 1976 to 1980, American public opinion drastically changed as the country began to feel that not enough was being spent on national defense. Carter realized this and in 1979 he reacted by boycotting the Moscow Olympics, placing a grain embargo on the Soviets, and resuming draft registration. These actions were taken by Carter to gain political favor with the American public during a presidential election year. However, the effort was too little, too late since Reagan had already created a strong presidential coalition based on a national security platform.23

Between the years of 1981 and 1989 the Reagan presidency was responsible for the largest peacetime military buildup in the history of the United States. The Reagan coalition responded to what it and many in the United States perceived as a deep decline in the economic and military power of the United States during

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the 1970's. Reagan rejected the liberal foreign policy of détente and instead opted for a "peace through strength" position with the Soviets as an adversary. To accomplish his military and economic goals, Reagan cut taxes and domestic programs while increasing the military budget.\textsuperscript{24}

Upon Reagan's arrival in the White House he began to implement his economic policies which had the effect of isolating Democrats from the debate on budget expenditures in the United States government. Reagan had given the public big tax breaks, and he had cut domestic programs. As defense expenditures expanded, it was politically infeasible for Democrats to argue against larger defense expenditures. It was also infeasible for them to be for big tax increases. In effect, all the Democrats could do was watch as the domestic programs they supported were cut to make way for a bigger defense.\textsuperscript{25}

During the early 1980's the United States was suffering from a recession which the public expected Reagan to fix. Interestingly, Reagan's economic philosophy prevented him from using the government to boost the economy directly, but by supporting large

\textsuperscript{24}\textit{Ibid.}, pp. 1-2.

\textsuperscript{25}\textit{Ibid.}, pp. 2-3.
investments in the military he was able to do this indirectly during the recession of the early 1980's. This military Keynesianism successfully bolstered the economy during the recession, and it allowed the Reagan administration to ask for more military expenditures.  

Military Keynesianism and the political isolation of Democrats had the effect of institutionalizing the annual defense expenditure increases of the 1980's.  

Reagan's containment policy valued military strength above everything else and it emphasized the expansion of the military across the board. Reagan's containment policy assumed that wherever international conflict occurred the Soviets somehow influenced it. Of course, this policy of "peace through strength" demanded that the United States confront the Soviet threat wherever it was perceived, and this doctrine did not limit military expenditures or rely heavily on diplomacy as had the administrations of Eisenhower, Nixon, and Carter.  

In military terms, the Reagan doctrine of "peace through strength" meant the expansion of the Navy from 479 to 600 ships. It meant that the Rapid Deployment Force was changed from a force that borrowed troops and

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26 Ibid., pp. 46-48.

27 Ibid., p. 32.
hardware from the different services to a force that allowed for the addition of completely new troops and equipment. It also meant the development of more conventional high technology weapons like the M-1 (tank), Bradley (fighting vehicle), DIVAD (air defense system), and the Apache AH-64 (attack helicopter). Certainly all of these programs had tactical justifications for their existence. Some were needed for the new AirLand strategy in Europe, and others were needed to defend the United States from a new "blue water" Soviet Navy. However, the emphasis of the Reagan buildup was on Research & Development and Procurement, not on operations or maintenance. Therefore, the Reagan buildup was expected to be expensive, but it is important to note that Reagan's defense strategy which advocated qualitative not quantitative superiority over the Soviets was not atypical of previous administrations.28

THE FALL OF THE SOVIET UNION

In March of 1991 the Secretary of Defense, Dick Cheney, delivered a speech in which he described the international events which had recently occurred in the Soviet Union. These international events, in

28Ibid., pp. 41-44.
combination with economic events domestically in the United States, brought military downsizing back onto the political agenda for the first time since 1979. According to Secretary Cheney,

"The Warsaw Pact is dead as a military organization and the threat of a short-warning, global war starting in Europe is now less likely than at any time in the last forty five years... the Soviet ability to project conventional power beyond its borders will continue to decline."

His speech was an acknowledgement by the Secretary of Defense that the United States had won the Cold War. His statement set the tone for future strategic military planning in the United States.29

Secretary Cheney's evaluation of future threats to the peace of the United States was not completely positive. He did point out that the Persian Gulf War was the kind of future conflict that the United States military could find itself being pulled into in the future. Some of the regions of the world where Cheney felt a conflict like this could occur included the Korean Peninsula, Middle East, and the Persian Gulf. Cheney pointed out that future United States military conflicts would probably be regional, occur with very short notice, and involve well armed nations with

elements of conventional and unconventional weaponry.\textsuperscript{30}

The Joint Chiefs of Staff agreed with Dick Cheney when they outlined five potential conflict scenarios involving the United States' non-nuclear military forces. The first of these scenarios was "light" insurgency or narcotics activity which could occur in various locations. The second was a "light" regional contingency being needed in various unspecified locations. The Joint Chiefs of Staff also believed a "major" regional contingency could be needed against North Korea in the future. Another "major" regional contingency could be needed in the Middle East, and this was especially true of Iraq. Finally, the Joint Chiefs of Staff believed a "major" contingency might be needed in Europe in the future to fight the still "heavy" threat of Russian forces in the area.\textsuperscript{31}

NEW MILITARY DOCTRINES AND CHANGING ECONOMIC CIRCUMSTANCES FOR THE UNITED STATES IN THE 1990's

Based on such international changes, Secretary Cheney began the task of drawing up a new military strategy for the United States. Interestingly, this "new" strategy differed in very few significant ways


\textsuperscript{31}\textit{Ibid.}
from the previous doctrines of containment and deterrence. Under the new strategy, strategic nuclear forces will be maintained in order to facilitate a high level of effective deterrence. Second, strategic forces will need to be structured in such a way that no nation should feel pressured into conducting a pre-emptive strike. Finally, because United States capabilities will need to be survivable in the event that deterrence should fail, the strategic forces should attempt to limit conflict to the lowest level of violence possible.32

For conventional forces, Dick Cheney and the Pentagon decided on a "two war strategy." According to this new doctrine, the United States military should be capable of fighting two separate major conflicts simultaneously, as outlined in the joint military net assessment mentioned previously by the Joint Chiefs of Staff. This doctrine means the United States should be able to face a full scale war with North Korea and Iraq simultaneously or face Russia and a large scale third world conflict like the Persian Gulf War simultaneously.33

It must be noted that in 1990 Dick Cheney reminded

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32Ibid., p. 27.

33Ibid.
Congress that all defense structure adjustments were made possible by positive military trends in the Soviet Union and the Third World. He emphasized that recent events indicated such positive assumptions may not be completely well founded; and therefore, if events change, the United States may have to slow down its future budget downsizing efforts.

"Even so, he acknowledged that if, 'the Soviets were to shift direction again and return to a strategy of military confrontation it would take them at least one or two years or longer to regenerate the capability for a European theater-wide offensive or global conflict.'"34

Despite the end of the Cold War and efforts by various groups to engage in military downsizing, people like Secretary Cheney still seem to hold on tightly to old values concerning defense budget measures. Cheney demonstrated a willingness to protect operations and support budgets, and he also was willing to streamline the process of weapons procurement. However, Cheney still demonstrated a tendency for favoring expensive next generation weapons which may have limited utility in the future. Examples of his favoritism can be seen in his support for the B-2 stealth bomber, army ground-based stealth missile, Navy & Air Force stealth fighters, and a hybrid C-17A for

34Ibid., pp. 27-28.
military airlift capabilities.  

It seems from the descriptions of the new international world order that the United States will have very little opportunity to downsize its military, and yet downsizing efforts have been made. It stands to reason that there must be motivational factors for downsizing other than a decreasing Soviet military threat around the world, such as the large budget deficits produced during the Reagan buildup.

According to Senator Sam Nunn (D - Georgia), "Secretary Cheney's orders to the services reflected fiscal change, not a real threat assessment." In fact, revisions of the military budget were started well before the threat of the Soviet Union was seen as diminishing. According to one defense administration official, the revision of military budgets before the revision of military strategy had wrecked "total chaos" upon defense policy.

By 1984, American public opinion experienced another dramatic switch in its views concerning the size of the United States military budget. In 1980,  

\[\text{35Ibid., pp. 52-53.}\]


\[\text{37Ibid.}\]
Americans had felt that the United States was not spending enough on the military budget, and in 1984, Americans felt the government was spending too much on a defense budget which needed to be lowered to pay off growing budget deficits. The dramatic change in opinion did not affect Reagan's administration; but as the Soviet Union fell, the Bush administration found fewer justifiable reasons for maintaining a large military budget. The net result of this change in public opinion will be a 1996 military budget which may be equal to the purchasing level of the 1980 military budget.38

The downsizing effort of the 1990's will be fairly extensive, and it will involve all branches and functions of the military. Personnel will be reduced in the following manner: Active-duty personnel will go from 2,070,000 to 1,653,000 by 1995; the National Guard and Reserves will go from 1,128,000 to 906,000 by 1995; and the civilian defense work force will go from 1,068,000 to 940,000 by 1995. Strategic nuclear forces will begin a modest downsizing effort due to the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START). The Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI) will be reduced to the Global Protection Against Limited Strikes project or (GPALS).

38Ibid., pp. 220-222.
This reduction will diminish SDI capabilities by half, and it will reduce its cost to 80% of SDI's original cost. Tactical nuclear weaponry will be reduced as NATO begins removing all nuclear ordnances from Europe. Finally, all of the services will be modernized, but they will also face force cuts.39

THE CURRENT HISTORY BEHIND MILITARY BASE CLOSURES IN THE UNITED STATES DURING THE 1990'S

The Reagan fiscal programs of the 1980's left a legacy of overspending and deficits which has forced the United States government to engage in budgetary downsizing. One way to reduce the large size of the military budget is by closing unnecessary military bases around the country. Certainly military bases have been an acknowledged source of excessive military waste and inefficiency, and the Defense Department responded to this by forming the Commission on Base Realignment and Closure. The commission was first suggested in 1984 by the Grace Commission which was the President's Commission of Private Sector Survey on Cost Control. The Commission was implemented in 1988 by

Defense Secretary Carlucci.40

The Commission on Base Realignment and Closure faced the daunting task of addressing base closure politics. The United States government had not closed a single base in the United States since 1977 because of congressmen who had engaged in pork-barrel politics and logrolling in order to prevent their districts from losing military dollars. In order to get around this problem, the Grace Commission recommended a commission with revised procedures. The Commission was designed by Secretary Carlucci as a bi-partisan board of businessmen and retired military officers. Together this group submitted a list of 86 bases which needed to be closed and 54 bases which ought to be realigned in December of 1988. However, the unique aspect of the list was not found in the recommendations but rather in the procedure for approval of the list. According to the procedures, the Secretary of Defense had to approve or disapprove the whole list within 15 days. The Congress then had 45 days to do the same. The goal was to prevent Congress from making exceptions for each base on the list.41


41Ibid., p. 213.
Initially, the suggestions and proceedings of the Commission were only authorized by then Defense Secretary Frank Carlucci. However, in October of 1988 the Commission was legally recognized in legislation passed by Congress.\textsuperscript{42}

The new regulations went a long way in forcing the United States to face up to the need to downsize and close inefficient military bases, but the United States Congress did not allow the new commission's regulations and procedures to prevent them from engaging in last minute politicking. Congress took all 45 days to act on the Commission's recommendations, and many congressmen threatened to strike the law down when appropriation debates occurred during the next two budget cycles. Opposition to the list was bi-partisan and included both liberals and conservatives. Congresswomen like Nancy Pelosi (D - San Francisco) and Barbara Boxer (D - California) argued that closing the Presidio in San Francisco would cost more than keeping it open. Senator Alan Dixon of Illinois tried to get copies of the transcripts of the Commission's proceedings in order to use them to prevent bases from

being closed in his state.43

THE CURRENT PROGRESS OF MILITARY BASE CLOSURES DURING THE CLINTON ADMINISTRATION IN THE UNITED STATES

Today, the Clinton Administration has continued the base closures advocated by the Bush administration. As recently as March of 1993 Secretary of Defense Les Aspin advocated that 31 major military installations be closed and that the United States scale back and consolidate an additional 134. In addition, 29 overseas military bases have also been slated for closure by the administration of President Clinton. In a letter to congressmen on March 10, 1993, Aspin noted that, "Future changes will decrease force structure and will require more, not fewer, base closures than those I will recommend at this time."44

The politics of closing these bases will be made all the more difficult because of the nature of the modern United States military as outlined in this chapter. For example, the United States military has been essentially an all volunteer force since 1974.


According to Major Bill Crews, "'You don't just have a bunch of draftees who are eager to return to a world they know... In many cases, these career-military persons have never had another job.'" In addition, the sheer size and high technology orientation of the United States military will make it difficult in the future for military forces to simply be terminated immediately upon request.

CONCLUSION

The goal of this paper will be to address the politics behind closing military bases in a modern military the size of the United States. There are several questions which need to be addressed. Who is in charge of the closing of military bases in the United States? Is it interest group politics or the politics of the political elite which fuels the current downsizing efforts? Finally, how successful have these efforts been in bringing about real change?

Chapter 2 will begin by addressing the primary economic structures and economic forces responsible for downsizing in the 1990's. Chapters 3 thru 5 will then endeavor to understand the politics behind base closing

by addressing three separate cases of military base closing in the state of California in the early 1990's. Finally, the conclusion will take the knowledge gathered from chapters 1 thru 5 and attempt to answer the questions previously mentioned in this chapter.
CHAPTER 2

THE PRIMARY ECONOMIC STRUCTURES AND ECONOMIC FORCES RESPONSIBLE FOR MILITARY BASE CLOSURES IN THE 1990's

INTRODUCTION

The Reagan military buildup was economically excessive, and few people in the Defense Department would deny the fact that downsizing must occur. However, as will be demonstrated, in defense politics it is always easier to create than to destroy. Any attempts to downsize the military must contend with the political economics of the "iron triangle". Chapter two will focus on the primary economic structures and economic forces involved in the issue of military base closings in the United States during the 1990's. Therefore, this chapter must do three things. First, it must discuss what the "iron triangle" is. Second, this chapter has to display all the significant political players involved in the "iron triangle". Finally, it must relate these players and the "iron triangle" to current base closing efforts.
IRON TRIANGLES AND THE MILITARY INDUSTRIAL FIRM

An iron triangle, "refers to a nexus of interest and cooperation among a bureaucratic agency, a congressional committee, and some private interest, usually in industry or business. These triangles are characterized as 'sub-governments' because they form agenda-setting and decision-making units that exclude broader participation."¹ In defense, the role of the bureaucratic agency is fulfilled by the following political players: the Department of Defense, the National Aeronautical Space Administration, and the nuclear weapons branch of the Department of Energy. The Congressional role of the "iron triangle" is fulfilled by the House & Senate Armed Services Committees, the Defense Appropriations Subcommittee, and the various congressional members of defense-related districts and states. Finally, the private interest role is fulfilled by military firms, labs, research institutes, trade associations, and trade unions.²

There are many different types of "iron triangles"


in the United States government, and the best way to demonstrate their effect is by showing how they alter the behavior of military industrial firms. Eventually this example will be used to provide greater insight into how "iron triangles" affect attempts at closing bases across the country. However, before proceeding, certain myths about the "iron triangle" must be dispelled.

In *Dismantling the Cold War Economy*, Ann Markusen and Joel Yudken present evidence from interviews which demonstrate that the "iron triangle" of defense is not quite as rigid and structured as people believe. For example, they found that neither the congressional defense committee leadership nor congressional voting patterns directly correlated with defense expenditures. The authors cited two reasons why defense expenditures were not directly controlled by key congressmen. First of all, the authors pointed out that Congress is not the only key player in the defense game. A project reaches Congress only after years of gestation, and the Pentagon usually has already determined who it wants to do business with before Congress sees the funding request. They also pointed out that most people assume that the majority of all defense expenditures go directly towards the creation of new production facilities. In reality, most annual defense
expenditures go to incremental projects, replacement parts, or new & modified generations of equipment. Generally, congressional porkbarreling only occurs when a defense expenditure item is large.\(^3\) Therefore, the "iron triangle" is a political mechanism which usually only operates when the political stakes and economic value of a project are high.

"Congressional configurations as well as presidential preferences, do appear to be more important in explaining military facility location than the location of defense manufacturing and service capacity. The infamous role of Sen. Lyndon Johnson in establishing Houston's space center and Sen. John Stennis's (D - Alabama) role in Huntsville's growing arsenal are but a few of the many suspected instances."\(^4\)

However, even in the building of new bases congressmen have much more control over preventing the closing of bases in their districts than initiating the opening of bases in their districts. One reason for this is the fact that a congressman's constituents will hold him accountable for the closing of a base in his district, but they will never hold him accountable for not opening a base that does not yet exist. Another reason why congressmen exercise more control over base closing is the fact that maintaining funding


\(^4\)Ibid., p. 196.
in Congress is always easier than starting new funding. According to United States Air Force General John Herres:

"the military is the dog that gets wagged by the tail when it comes to base closings.... Operating base structure is expensive as hell. You don't win wars with base structure, but with weapons systems. We always want to close more than we can get away with. But we always get zinged by the political community."  

People can also be deceived into believing that congressmen from military districts tend, by their nature, to be pro-military. Often people will assume that their pro-military stance is the reason why the district receives large amounts of military funding. There is a simple explanation for why this is not always the case. People who are elected from a military district will tend to have a pro-military bias due to the local economy's dependence on defense dollars. They will naturally tend to want to be on key defensive committees because of their constituents. In effect, pro-military congressmen do not always initiate porkbarrel defense spending for their district because many times the defense spending was initiated at the request of the district before they came to Washington, D.C.  

5Ibid., pp. 194-195.

6Ibid., p. 197.
THE KEY COMPONENTS (POLITICAL PLAYERS) IN THE IRON TRIANGLE

Clearly the "iron triangle" is not as rigid or simplistic as the previous definition implied, and with that in mind it is now time to analyze the various components of the "iron triangle". All three groups in the "iron triangle" have something in common. Each of them is interested in how the military research and development money is spent by the United States government, but no one is more interested than the military industrial firms. In order to maintain leadership roles in their field, defense contractors are constantly engaging in research and development operations. These research and development operations are what allow the corporations the ability to produce the new weapons that the Pentagon is interested in. A large majority of all the research and development done by corporations is funded by the government, so it is imperative to each corporation that it lobby the government for money.\(^7\)

In order to accomplish their goals, defense contractors trade in two separate political commodities (information & influence). Contractors seek

information on future weapons programs; federal procurement and regulations plans; how bureaucrats and congressmen feel about a weapons project; and what defense legislation will look like. Government relations officers and Washington staffers relay this information to defense companies who use it to continue preparations for production of future weapons systems.8

Government relations officers will also try to help their companies gain influence in governmental proceedings and decision-making. Influence will allow the company to have an edge over other companies in the defense budget proceedings, and influence can be gained in many different ways. The company may try to neutralize Congress, or sell the company's idea to bureaucrats in the executive branch. If these strategies do not work, it may take its case to the voters through grass-roots lobbying efforts and campaign contributions.9

When lobbying, it is important to remember that lobbyists do not make distinctions between lobbying Congress and the executive branch. The Washington staff will take the initiative at the legislative, procurement, and appropriation levels. Washington

8Ibid., p. 23.
9Ibid., pp. 23-24.
offices design the grass-roots efforts aimed at employees, stockholders, and local communities. They also manage campaign contributions and direct contacts with members of Congress. Therefore, they are the heart of all activity in the "iron triangle".10

The military industrial firms are the most active instigators in the "iron triangle", and nowhere is this more clearly seen than in the relationship between the corporate Washington offices and the Congress. Gordon Adams engaged in a study of the political activity of eight different major military industrial firms in the late 1970's & early 1980's. In three different stages of the study he tried to determine how military firms were utilizing their political action committee money.

In the first stage he matched the company plants to congressional districts to see if certain congressmen received campaign contributions because their home district was a corporate district. In the second stage the author selected eight key congressional committees that deal with the projects of the Department of Defense and the National Aeronautical Space Administration. Amongst these committees were the pivotal House and Senate Armed Services Committees and the House and Senate Defense Appropriations

10Ibid., p. 130.
Subcommittees. He then compared the membership of congressmen to these committees with the amount of campaign contributions that they received from military contractors.\textsuperscript{11}

Unfortunately, the campaign contributions from the companies averaged only 28.4\% in stage one and only 41\% in stage two. These totals were certainly not the percentage of campaign contributions that one would expect to find in a strong "iron triangle" because over half the money was still falling into non-military congressional campaigns. However, the final stage of the study proved that there was a strong link between the Congress and the companies. In the final stage, the author combined the previous two categories of statistics and eliminated any double counting. The average percentage of contributions shot up to 59\%. The highest contributions came from McDonnell Douglas (78\%) and Lockheed (67\%); and Northrop, Rockwell, and General Dynamics also managed to spend over half of their campaign contributions on key geographic and committee candidates.\textsuperscript{12}

The political contributions made by military corporations help congressmen stay in office, so

\textsuperscript{11}Ibid., p. 116.

\textsuperscript{12}Ibid., pp. 117.
congressmen are naturally eager to listen to what these military firms have to say. Both groups need each other politically, and therefore, they create a bond which is extremely difficult to break. However, corporations are not the only groups that can help congressmen stay in office. Voters also have the ability to establish an "iron triangle" bond with their congressmen. As stated by former Defense Secretary Dick Cheney, "If we leave base closing up to the communities affected or to the members of Congress affected, there won't be any bases closed. I get paid to make these kinds of decisions." In effect, Cheney is pointing out that an "iron triangle" bond between the local communities and their congressmen exists. It uses votes instead of political contributions in order to maintain the bond.

The bond between voter and congressman is not necessarily beneficial to the common good, and it often promotes only the self-interests of the local voters. For example, in the first round of base closing proposals that occurred in 1988, the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission suggested 55 domestic military bases for closure. The plan collapsed under a hail of partisan recriminations in

Congress even though the United States desperately needed to reduce the government deficit partially created by excessive defense expenditures.\(^\text{14}\) The bond between community voters and their congressional representatives is part of the "iron triangle" that prevents bases from being closed, and it is this "iron triangle" which the discussion will focus on in chapters three thru five.

However, the "iron triangle" example utilized to describe the behavior of military-oriented corporations has not been completely described as yet. Thus far, the example has taken only the behavior of the corporations and Congress into consideration. What about the executive branch?

While campaign contributions and votes may explain many of the reasons why Congress behaves the way it does, these points still do not explain why the executive branch would cooperate with corporations. The answer can be found in the advisory committees and personnel transfers of the Department of Defense.

Defense contractors often engage in lobbying efforts through entities like defense advisory committees. The advisory committees serve as a vital link between the executive branch and industrial firms.

\(^{14}\) Ibid., p. A24.
In 1979, the Department of Defense ranked sixth in the total number of advisory committees in government, and it ranked eleventh in the total number of members on advisory committees (777). The committees deal with a wide range of issues of interest to both the Department of Defense and military firms. Among the most important of these committees is the Defense Science Board which is responsible for making decisions concerning the valuable research and development funds of the Pentagon.\textsuperscript{15}

In addition to their lobbying efforts, corporations have been known to offer tangible benefits to individual employees of the executive branch. Retired men and women of the armed forces are often hired by military firms for their knowledge of government, aerospace technologies, and procurement strategies. Their expertise goes beyond general knowledge of the process and extends into access to the process. In addition, companies often have a hand in the choosing of key administrative officials in defense. From 1969 to 1973 it was noted that the top 100 defense contractors in the United States had hired 1,400 former employees of the Department of Defense.

and 379 former employees of contractors became employees of the Department of Defense during the same time period. The exchange of these employees between military firms and the government can benefit the firms' future business dealings with government and give government a view of how contractors conduct business. The bond between business and the executive branch also tends to exclude outsiders from the political process. Therefore, the executive branch can form a bond of dependency with defense contractors thru the offering of employment outside of the government.

The defense department's desire to maintain good employment opportunities beyond their government careers forces them to work cooperatively with military contractors, and the executive branch's desire to maintain employment also is an important factor in the anti-base closing "iron triangle". No defense department employee is going to be willing to close military bases if they feel that their job is going to be eliminated in the process. These employees are more likely to join forces with their local community voters and congressional representatives. Together these three political groups have one thing in common. They

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16Ibid., pp. 78-79.
desire to maintain the flow of government money and jobs into their district just like the military corporations did in the previous example.

The "iron triangle" formed by local communities, congressmen, and local military employees can be devastatingly effective at thwarting any attempts at closing down local military bases and facilities. However, the local military "iron triangles" have been relatively powerless against base closing efforts of the early 1990's. How is this possible?

Rep. Dick Armey (R - Texas) felt the only way to break the local military "iron triangles" was to eliminate their desire to cater to local parochialism. He did this by conceiving the legislation responsible for creating the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission. The eight member panel was to be composed of non-congressional, unelected officials who would be solely responsible for drawing up the list of bases needing to be closed. In effect, the commissioners became the legislators of base closing, and they eliminated the United States Congress from the local military "iron triangles". The local communities and local military employees can threaten the commissioners all they want, but their threats will be ineffective because the commissioners are insulated from being

The question remains, however, why would congressmen endorse the creation of a commission which takes their legislative powers away from them? The answer to this question is that it provides a perfect political cover for the Congress. Congress knows that it must cut defense budgets in the national interest of the United States, but they can't simply ignore the pain their local districts must sometimes endure for the national interest. The commission makes the tough decisions as to who will lose their bases, and the individual congressmen can be allowed to protest the choice of their bases for closing. Politically, Congress loses responsibility for actions that they themselves had begun by creating the commission in the first place.\footnote{Ibid., p. 1842.}

The previous chapter briefly discussed the procedure utilized by the Commission to close bases, but the procedure is much more detailed than this brief summary may have implied. Therefore, a more substantial discussion of the role of the Department of Defense in base closings is necessary. This is
especially true since a more in depth analysis of the Defense Department's role will reveal how the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission further isolates local military employees from the decision-making process occurring in the Department of Defense.

THE ROLE OF THE DEFENSE DEPARTMENT IN BASE CLOSURES

Two separate criteria were utilized in the decision-making process. The first of these criteria used for determining which bases needed to be closed was the force-structure plan submitted to Congress with the Defense Department's budget request for the year the base closings were being advocated. The second set of criteria used to determine which bases needed to be closed consisted of eight key points. The first four points concerned the military value of individual bases and considered the following issues: "current and future mission requirements; availability and condition of land facilities and air space; contingency and mobilization requirements; and cost and manpower implications." The four remaining points concerning individual bases considered the following issues: "return on investment; local economic impact; impact on
community infrastructure; and environmental impact.”

Together these two criteria placed distance between both local communities & local military employees and the Department of Defense. Politically, community leaders would be incapable of simply arguing that closing a base would be harmful to a community. The Defense Department would be capable of using its two sets of criteria to find a defense against the parochial arguments of communities. Essentially, the two criteria reduced political discussions of base closing down to the level of military necessity. Community economic needs virtually became a non-issue.

These two criteria were given to the three branches of the armed forces, and each of them were expected to create their own list of bases to be closed. Each of the armed services established a high level commission to accomplish this goal. They then submitted their lists to the Secretary of Defense for his approval. Therefore, the lists were prepared by high level officials of the three branches of the armed services and the Department of Defense. None of these officials were tied to local bases due to their

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20 Ibid., pp. 18,21-22.
positions in the bureaucracy, and local military employees could expect very little assistance or mercy from these officials.

In order to further guarantee that a base would not be kept open for reasons other than military necessity, the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Act of 1990 placed a restriction upon the activities of the Base Closure and Realignment Commission. The Commission is allowed to deviate from the list of base closure recommendations it receives from the Secretary of Defense only when they find "substantial deviations" from the force-structure plan and selection criteria.\textsuperscript{21} Parochial politics are not allowed to blur the need to close basing facilities, and no base is allowed to be given preference over another unless the base can justify its existence according to the two test criteria.

One problem that could arise from this procedure is that the armed services may initially "cheat" when they produce their base closing lists. The Defense Base Closure and Realignment Act prevents this problem by involving the General Accounting Office. The General Accounting Office is fully integrated into all

review and analysis efforts during the production of the list. Each of the armed services was obligated to have a General Accounting Officer placed on their base closing commissions. The General Accounting office also verified the data produced by the armed services for the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission.22

The Commission's efforts were further shielded from partisan politics by making all of their meetings open to the public. Community and congressional leaders were allowed to offer testimony and viewpoints concerning their local base facilities.23 On those occasions where partisan politics played a role in the choosing of a base the local leaders could come before the Commission and lobby the board for its removal. The Commission also allowed public testimony from Department of Defense officials and other expert witnesses. Local leaders could not even complain about the hearings being held exclusively in Washington D.C. because they were held all over the country.24


23Ibid., p. 12.

Finally, communities which will suffer base closures are not going to be able to complain that the economic pain of the closure will be absorbed only by their community. This parochial argument will not get communities very far because the federal government is obligated by law to help communities through this kind of crisis with the help of the Economic Adjustment Program.25

During the transition period which often lasts between three and five years the communities will receive help from the Defense Department in three ways. First, the Department of Defense is obligated to restore the environmental integrity of any polluted military facility through the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act and the Defense Environmental Restoration Program. Second, the Department of Defense is obligated to help all civilian and military employees who are forced to move due to a base closure. The Defense Department does this through the Homeowners Assistance Program created in 1966. Finally, the Department of Defenses' Priority Placement Program and Displaced Employee Program provide civilian employees assistance in

finding a new job in defense or in other government departments.  

These benefits lessen local community and military employee anger at the base closing process, and therefore, they further prevent local constituents from activating the local military "iron triangle". However, the success of actions taken by the Department of Defense to eliminate local military "iron triangles" can't be measured by what is written into law. The best measurement of success can only be determined by the progress of military base closing in the 1990's.


Comparing the 1988 base closing round with the rounds that followed it will demonstrate that the current procedure for base closing is much more effective at what it seeks to accomplish than were previous procedures. On May 3, 1988, Secretary of Defense Frank Carlucci formed the Defense Secretary's Commission on Base Realignment and Closure. It studied and recommended bases for realignment and closure. By October of 1988, the Congress had passed and President Reagan had signed Public Law 100-526 which was known as the Defense Authorization Amendments and Base Closure

26Ibid., pp. 74-75.
and Realignment Act.27

Unlike the 1988 Commission, the 1991 Commission was established in law before the Commission was established in reality. The two commissions are very different structurally. For example, the 1988 Commission came up with its recommendations for base closing and then reported its results to the secretary of defense. The 1991 Commission did this in the reverse order.28 In addition, Congress complained that the hearings of the 1988 Commission had been closed and secretive. Congress also complained that many of the threatened facilities had never been visited by the commissioners, and faulty data had been used in order to determine which bases ought to be closed and which ought to be left open.29 As was noted previously in this chapter, the 1991 Commission did not suffer from these problems because of its reformed procedure.

As would be expected, many congressmen felt that the first base closure list was highly partisan in its

27Ibid., p. 17.


choice of targets. In noting the difference between the 1989 list and the 1991 list, Rep. Les Aspin (D – Wisconsin) stated, "... a quick study indicated the (1991) list is balanced between bases represented by Democrats and Republicans. By contrast, he said, all but a handful of the 55 bases on last year's list were located in areas represented by Democrats."30

As was noted previously in this chapter, the end result of 1989's base closure list was a battle of partisan politics in which the base closure list collapsed from attacks in Congress. In fact, after the ordeal in Congress many of the bases on the 1989 list had to be put on the 1991 list.31 The anger raised in Congress over the 1989 list is exactly what the local military "iron triangle" needs in order to prevent bases from being closed. The "iron triangle" finds it very easy to gain support for its cause when the only reason for certain bases being on a list is partisan politics. On the other hand, the "iron triangle" finds it very difficult to gain support for its cause when the reason for certain bases being on a list is their military redundancy.

The current military base closure procedure forces


community leaders and congressmen to justify why their base should be spared according to the bases actual military value. Initially, community leaders attempted emotional pleas of economic hardship, but they found that these pleas fell on deaf ears during the 1991 round of base closings. In the most recent round of base closings in 1993 community leaders came to terms with the fact that bases were going to be closed. The only question left was whether or not their base was going to be one of the bases to be closed. The community leaders' only defense in these circumstances was to prove that the armed services had underrated the value of their facility.\textsuperscript{32}

Apparently, the new procedures have created an environment of frankness concerning which bases must be closed. It is no longer denied that some base infrastructure is redundant. However, politics still does occur in the debate over whose base is most redundant. Chapters three thru five study the politics of three different California facilities, and each of these case studies will provide an illustration of how downsizing occurs in the 1990's. However, before discussing these, one case study more thoroughly

demonstrates the "new" politics of base closing in the United States than any other. The case study shows how even the most well armed community leaders can't prevent the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission from breaking through the "iron triangle".

CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA: A STUDY IN COMMUNITY LOBBYING

The city of Charleston, South Carolina was under siege during the last round of base closings in 1993. The United States Navy had proposed closing down the naval complex in Charleston, and the closing of all six parts of the complex would have cost the city 35,000 jobs. In addition, the economic cost of lost wages was estimated to be in the area of $1.1 billion dollars for the city.  

The Charleston Naval Complex was by far the biggest cut the Commission threatened to make in any community during the 1993 round. Therefore, it stands to reason that if the Commission is going to cave into political interests this is one area in which they might. From the very beginning the base closing procedure worked flawlessly. Both of the Senators of South Carolina were prevented from becoming too highly

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involved in the parochial interests of their constituents. In fact, Senators Strom Thurmond (R - South Carolina) and Ernest F. Hollings (D - South Carolina) were each reduced to giving a one minute speech before the Commission in defense of the naval complex.  

However, the community of Charleston had far too much at stake for them to simply accept the lose of the naval complex. The community leadership armed itself with a $1 million war chest, and they hired Washington lobbyists and public relations advisers to help them lobby the Commissioners. Elizabeth Inabinet, the President of the local chamber of commerce, was responsible for hiring the Washington law firm, and it was the local Chamber of Commerce that headed the political battle against the Commission. It established the group called "In Defense of Charleston".  

The goal of "In Defense of Charleston" was to present the Charleston Naval Complex as the wrong

34Ibid., p. 1172.


shipyard to be closed. They realized that the only way they could convince the Commission to keep the naval complex open was by presenting them with better alternatives for base closings. They decided to lobby for the closing of the naval shipyard at Norfolk. However, any lobbying effort needs to have more than a good argument on its side. A good lobbying effort needs money.37

"In Defense of Charleston" received money from various government entities. Republican Governor Carroll A. Campbell Jr. transferred $500,000 from the state to the campaign effort. The cities of Charleston and North Charleston each contributed $100,000 to the lobbying effort. The Chamber of Commerce contributed $245,000. Finally, shipyard workers and other individuals throughout the community contributed $50,000.38

Overall, the local military "iron triangle" responded to the crisis as they had always responded before. They brought local community leaders together with local military personnel and Washington lawmakers and they produced a lobbying effort which might have saved the complex under normal circumstances. However,

37Ibid., p. 1174.

38Ibid.
these were not normal circumstances. The lawmakers they were trying to influence were men and women who were not elected, and thus, not afraid of angry voters. In addition, they were lawmakers who had to close bases whether local economies were prepared for the closures or not. In the end, the panel voted to close both the Charleston Naval Shipyard and the Charleston Naval Station.39

CONCLUSION

The Charleston case study demonstrates the amazing effectiveness of the Commission in breaking the "iron triangle" found in local military communities. The Commission met in 1988, 1991, and 1993 to engage in base closure hearings. Another round is scheduled for 1995.40 The three case studies in the following chapters will demonstrate the political actions taken by each of the four rounds of base closings. Some of the facilities in the case studies were eliminated early in the process, and others continue to gasp for breath in the final rounds of closures in 1995.

All of the bases are in California. The choice of


this state as a geographical base for this discussion is not coincidental. In fact, it is one of the few places which can convincingly lay a claim to having been hurt more than the state of South Carolina. The California Institute is a bipartisan research group, and it determined that the state of California had suffered 60% of all the net personnel reductions in the military during the first two base closing rounds of 1988 and 1991. To make matters worse, after all the military personnel have been redistributed around the country the state of California only seems to be getting approximately one-third of its uprooted jobs back. Nationally, an average of two-thirds of all uprooted military jobs come back to the states they originated from.41

CHAPTER 3

FORT ORD: A CASE STUDY IN COOPERATION

INTRODUCTION

Fort Ord was established in Monterey in 1902 during the Spanish-American War. Its main purpose was to help evacuated troops recover from tropical diseases which they had acquired during their tour of duty in that conflict. By 1933, Fort Ord was officially established as a post in the Monterey Peninsula area, and by 1991 the base had grown into an army facility with over 15,000 military and 5,000 civilian personnel. The base has served many different purposes over the years. During the Korean & Vietnam conflicts it was a basic training camp, and in the 1970's it became an infantry base. The base has expanded over the years, and today its facilities cover an area of over 28,000 acres.¹

Over the last ten years the Pentagon has considered the possibility of closing the base, but it

was not until November of 1989 that anyone seriously threw out a base closure proposal for Fort Ord. In November of 1989, Army Chief of Staff, General Carl Vuono suggested moving the 7th Division of Fort Ord to Fort Lewis in Washington state. The immediate result of moving the 7th Light Infantry Division from Fort Ord would be to leave the facility without a significant mission, and thus, the base would have to close if the suggestion was approved.2

Fort Ord has often been considered the "crown jewel of army posts", and soldiers from the base have served in every major American conflict since World War I. The facility certainly has a proud tradition, but its closure by the army may save them a considerable amount of money in the long run. As of March 1992 the United States army projected that the bases' closure will save them between $150 million and $200 million annually.3 As should be expected, such a high return of savings should have produced a considerable amount of interest in closing the base by both the Department of Defense and the Base Closure and Realignment Commission.


In fact, Fort Ord was among the bases that was suggested for closure in January 1990. The suggestion was part of a proposed package of base closures placed in the Pentagon's 1991 budget blueprint. However, this list received a chilly reception from Congress because of the severe economic impact it would have on local communities. In addition, the selection of bases seemed to be overwhelmingly biased against Democratic districts. In the end, the list of base closures revived the Base Closure and Realignment Commission of 1988 because Congress desired a fair evaluation of bases before their suggestion for closure. Congress accomplished the Commission's revival through the passage of legislation which gave the Commission legal reinstatement.4

The chilly reception of Congress towards the 1990 base closure proposals saved Fort Ord from being closed that year. However, the reactivation of the Base Closure and Realignment Commission meant that Fort Ord's fate was only postponed to a date later in the future. On July 1, 1991, Chairman Jim Courter and his Commission suggested the closure of several bases throughout the state of California. Amongst these

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bases was Fort Ord.\textsuperscript{5}

\textbf{JUSTIFICATIONS FOR THE CLOSURE OF FORT ORD}

However, before discussing what occurred during the base closure process it is important to address the reasons why the military felt Fort Ord was no longer worthy of being kept open. One of the reasons why the military wanted to close Fort Ord was explained in a December issue of the \textit{Armed Forces Journal}. The report pointed out that the Army had too many light infantry divisions. It also pointed out that the light infantry's mission of rapid deployment into hot spots around the globe was in fact a mission that was in conflict with the primary role of the Marine Corps. Therefore, the 7th Division's move to Fort Lewis and conversion from a light infantry unit to a heavy infantry division with tanks would eliminate both problems.\textsuperscript{6}

Moving the 7th Division to Fort Lewis would solve some of the problems associated with the 7th Division's mission being limited to light infantry, but the


question still remains as to why the Army felt they could not make the 7th Division conversion at Fort Ord? The problem with a direct conversion at the Fort Ord facility is that Fort Ord is simply too small for anything other than a light infantry division. Therefore, a second problem is that it is a single-use base. The United States Army has shown preference over the years towards eliminating single-use bases in exchange for larger multi-use bases.7

Another problem which contributed to the move to close Fort Ord was the difficulties experienced by the 7th Division during the Panamanian invasion of 1989. During that invasion the 7th Division experienced a twenty-four hour delay in deploying to the theater of conflict. This delay was caused by two problems. The first problem was that Fort Ord had no military airfield on base to deploy from. The nearest military airfield was located 150 miles away at Travis Air Force Base. The second problem was that the 7th Division was plagued by fog which is a frequent occurrence at both locations.8 Both problems hamper the abilities of the


7th Division to deploy rapidly, and this is a problem since rapid deployment is a necessary part of the mission of a light infantry unit.

The Base Closing and Realignment Commission found the need for the 7th Division to rapidly deploy not quite as important as the Army had found it. However, they did point out in their report to the President that the building of a new airfield or enhancement of the old airfield would cost $97 million and might be prevented by environmental concerns. They also found that moving the 7th Division to Fort Lewis would optimize the use of that facility and nearby McChord Air Force Base.9

The Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission also found two additional problems with Fort Ord which helped motivate their decision to recommend closing Fort Ord. The first problem was the fact that family housing at Fort Ord was limited and expensive. According to the report, 1,365 families were inadequately housed at the time of the publication of the report. The second problem was with the training facilities for the 7th Division at Fort Ord and other bases in the Monterey Bay area. The report stated that

training for the division was readily available in the area, but the training of the division was divided between three separate facilities: Fort Ord, Fort Hunter-Liggett, and Camp Roberts.\textsuperscript{10}

THE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF THE CLOSURE OF FORT ORD ON THE MONTEREY PENINSULA

The closing of Fort Ord will be a mixed blessing to the people of the Monterey Peninsula. It provides them with opportunities that most communities can only dream of, and it provides them with challenges that other communities can only hope they will never face. For example, a full third of Monterey County's economy is based on the activities occurring at Fort Ord; however, the closing of Fort Ord will provide the community with 28,057 acres of unused and partially developed oceanfront property in an area well known for its scenic beauty. Monterey County Supervisor Sam P. Karas had anticipated political fights over the development of this land, and he planned on insisting that Fort Ord be included for the first time in county land-use plans when they came up for review in 1990. Another state official also voiced Sam P. Karas' fears when he stated, "'I'll bet there are a lot of real

\textsuperscript{10}\textit{Ibid.}
estate people just licking their lips over this. This could well turn into a real battle royal."\(^{11}\)

Losing a full third of its economy is going to be difficult for the Monterey area to handle, but the sheer size of the Fort Ord area may prevent a large portion of the economic hit Monterey is going to face. The Monterey County area currently is faced with a housing shortage, and the Fort Ord land will provide new areas for real estate developers to move into. The future rush to build would provide hundreds of new jobs and residents to the area.\(^{12}\)

The area will need plenty of new jobs and residents according to a committee of county and local officials who met in 1990. They reported that the closing of Fort Ord would mean a $277 million reduction in the personal income of the region, and the base closure would be directly responsible for a population loss of 33,000 in the Monterey area. Two cities in the Monterey Peninsula will be particularly hard hit by the base closures. Charles McNeely, the city manager of Seaside, California estimated that the city will lose $40 million of its $120 million in annual retail sales.


The city also expects to lose between 20% & 40% of its 40,000 citizens. Mayor Johnson of Marina, California anticipates losing 60% of Marina's 26,500 citizens.13

Another heavily hit institution in the Monterey area will be the Monterey Peninsula Unified School District. The school district anticipates losing one-third of its 15,000 pupils because their families are employed by Fort Ord. Another problem the school district will have to deal with is the fact that six of its schools are located on Fort Ord property.14

The economic statistics previously mentioned tend to present the picture of a community soon to become a ghost town, but this does not have to be the case. As mentioned previously, Monterey has 28,057 acres of prime real estate ready to be developed, and a Pentagon survey has demonstrated that in the last 100 domestic base closings the majority of communities have been better off economically five years after closure. The surveys have determined that of the 100 bases most recently closed by the Department of Defense 42 have become airports, 75 have become industrial and office parks, and 12 have become four year universities.


14Ibid.
However, the happy results of these base closures were not guaranteed, and some communities will deteriorate if they do not make intelligent use of their redevelopment opportunities.  

THE IRON TRIANGLE OF MONTEREY: TURNING FAILURE INTO A FIGHTING CHANCE FOR A PROSPEROUS FUTURE

Certainly, the Monterey area would not be expected to simply allow such a heavy blow to be dealt to their local economy without putting up a political fight to keep the base open, and Rep. Leon Panetta (D - Monterey) was one of the first congressmen to spark life into the local military iron triangle. Leon Panetta was a highly influential member of the House Budget Committee at the time of the Fort Ord base closure process. On December 31, 1989, he stated that he would resist any attempts to close Fort Ord or to move the 7th Infantry Division. Panetta felt that moving the 7th Infantry Division out of California was a militarily unsound move. He felt this was particularly true since the division was expected to move hundreds of miles north of its current location. In his opinion, Fort Lewis could not offer the 7th Infantry Division the same kind of year round good

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weather that Fort Ord offers for training. In addition, Fort Lewis could not offer the division the ability to conduct field maneuvers like Fort Hunter-Liggett can at its 165,000 acre reserve near Fort Ord. Finally, Panetta pointed out that recent expansions of on-post housing at the base made Fort Ord among the best bases in the country for housing military personnel.16

Leon Panetta was not the only influential California politician that attempted to come to the aid of Fort Ord. California Governor Pete Wilson told the press that he was also against closing Fort Ord. Senator John Seymour (R - California) also took a strong stance against the closing of Fort Ord. He informed the press in April of 1991 that he intended to conduct hearings into the procedures used by the Department of Defense to justify their conclusion that Fort Ord had to be closed.17

It is important to note the strategy used by the Monterey iron triangle. Local and national politicians from the area chose a strategy that did not involve high pressure tactics. California's politicians chose

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to challenge the Army's arguments for closing Fort Ord directly based upon their merits. In many ways their strategy was a dramatic success. The Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission agreed with many of Fort Ord's supporters that many of the Army's arguments for closing Fort Ord were less compelling than was originally perceived. One example was the argument that Fort Ord could not deploy its troops quickly enough. Fort Ord's supporters convinced the Commission that this argument by the Army was not persuasive enough to close the base. However, their strategy failed to pass its most crucial test. California's politicians did convince the Commission that Fort Ord was more useful than the Army believed, but they could not convince the Commission that a different infantry base deserved to be closed. Therefore, the Commission voted 6 to 1 to close Fort Ord by 1997. Former Secretary of the Army Howard "Bo" Callaway was the only defender of the base, and he summarized the vote on Fort Ord when he stated, "This is the finest light infantry base in the world, and we closed it for one reason - to save $70 million a year."

The United States government broke the Monterey

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iron triangle with the vote against Fort Ord by the Commission. The defeat was evident in the reactions by two of Fort Ord's key supporters. Senator John Seymour told the press that he would appeal the Commission's decision to President Bush. If the Monterey iron triangle had not been broken by the Commission's actions it would not have been necessary for Senator Seymour to resort to begging President Bush for mercy in his state. Rep. Leon Panetta took a different approach to the problem. He realized that the fight for Fort Ord had been lost and that he was no longer in a position to prevent the base closure. Therefore, he told his local constituents that the community had to accept the reality that Fort Ord was going to close and to move on with their lives.19

The iron triangle was broken, but it did not wither away and die. Rep. Leon Panetta had delivered the Fort's eulogy, but he did not simply leave Monterey to deal with its new economic problems. Panetta had planned ahead, and he had formed a local committee prior to the closure to deal with the possibility of losing Fort Ord. The committee's goals were to replace civilian jobs, help businesses affected by the base closure, provide health care to retired Army personnel,

and develop plans for the redevelopment of the Fort Ord reservation. In effect, Leon Panetta had taken the local military iron triangle's energy and redirected it towards redevelopment of the area. Rep. Leon Panetta did not stop with producing a local committee to address the problems created by the base closure. He also sponsored a bill before leaving Congress. The bill eventually became law, and it allowed the United States military to turn over parts of a military facility, a section at a time, once a section of the base has been certified as having been free of environmental contaminants. This law is important to the future of Fort Ord's redevelopment plans because state environmental officials have already recommended as many as 8,000 acres of the base be fenced off because of unexploded munitions.

THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT OF THE FORT ORD BASE CLOSURE

Rep. Leon Panetta's (D - Monterey) law is crucial to the Fort Ord area because it is the only legislation which will help them alleviate the problems of the area.

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superfund law. In 1980, the superfund law passed by the United States Congress forced polluters to pay fines to repair the environmental damage caused by their actions. The goal of the legislation was to force the polluter to pay the bill for environmental cleanups instead of the taxpayer. An additional stipulation of the law was that no portion of a superfund site could be transferred or utilized until all the contaminants were cleaned from the area. The second stipulation of the law would create serious trouble for the Fort Ord area because the Environmental Protection Agency has designated the Fort Ord facility as a superfund site. Cleaning the toxic sites around the base could take up to 20 years, and the costs of simply examining the problem could come to as much as $3 million or $4 million dollars.

According to the United States Army the Fort Ord facility has 19 separate locations which will require cleaning, and the cost for the operation is expected to come to $60 million. Many of the toxic sites on the base are small and are fairly common to any area where

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a large population resides. For example, the list of toxic sites includes: photo laboratories, a plastics shop, three old sewage treatment facilities, and a gasoline station. However, other toxic sites on the base are much more exotic. For example, approximately 9,900 acres of the base have been littered with explosives and ammunition. Today those sites contain high levels of lead and unexploded munitions, and the Army discovered that these sites are threatening to pollute the groundwater surrounding the base. The contamination of groundwater threatens the water supply of 38,600 people and vast agricultural lands that use the groundwater.24

Environmental problems like water contamination are not issues which Monterey's local politicians can choose to neglect. Monterey is home to 15 separate environmental groups which have in the past exercised considerable power over the direction of development in the community. For example, the Pacific Union real estate firm purchased 20,000 acres of land in Carmel Valley for development, but the company was prevented from building more than 360 homes and 140 hotel rooms on the property because of the heightened environmental

concerns of the citizens of Carmel Valley.25

Clearly, the various environmental groups of Monterey will be opposed to the quick development of Fort Ord, and their opposition to the idea will not solely be based on the problems of water contamination by military munitions. The environmental groups will also be concerned with the problems created by endangered species of the area. More than half of Fort Ord's land provides vital habitat to endangered species of the Monterey Peninsula.26 Another problem they will be concerned with in the future is the problem of unexploded munitions in the area. According to the Bureau of Land Management, the Fort Ord target range will be permanently set aside as wildlife habitat, and the United States Army will attempt to remove the unexploded munitions from the area over the next 10 years. A large portion of the unexploded munitions will be recovered, and the land will help support endangered species like Smith's butterfly and the legless lizard. Unfortunately, the technology for recovering munitions is primitive and expensive, and the Army feels that some portions of the target range


will have to be kept off limits until better technology allows them to recover the munitions.27

REDEVELOPMENT OF THE FORT ORD AREA

Even though the Fort Ord area has some severe environmental problems the majority of the base is very much ready to be received by the people of Monterey County for redevelopment. Unlike base closures of the past the United States government has passed a law allowing the Army to sell Fort Ord at the maximum possible price available on the market. The profit from this real estate sale will be kept by the United States Army. The 1988 law allowing this procedure is very different from previous Defense Department land sales because previous sales gave top priority to other government agencies. The money generated from the selling of Fort Ord is expected to generate $400 million from private and public interests, and the profit motivation behind the land sale has several Monterey officials worried. The chairman of the Monterey County Board of Supervisors, Sam Karas, voiced his fears when he said the following:

"One of the things we're really concerned about

is, if the Defense Department is trying to derive the most amount of revenue from it we might not have the money to buy it... Our fear is that it will be sold to a private developer. That's our great fear. Unless we have some protection, we could have development out there that not everyone could live with."^28

Monterey officials knew they had to take unified action if they wanted to prevent problems like undesirable growth in the area. Their solution was to create a task force similar to the committee Rep. Leon Panetta (D - Monterey) had produced for the community during the base closure debate. In the beginning, the area consulted with over 380 different citizens from business, government, environmental, and community groups. Eventually, this group consolidated into a smaller group called the Fort Ord Reuse Group (FORG). The people of Monterey have placed their hopes for an orderly and successful redevelopment of Fort Ord in the hands of FORG, but some individuals have feared that the task force will not be able to accomplish its task because it must maintain a shaky balancing act between six different government bodies. Each of the government entities has a claim on Fort Ord's land, and development of the property will only be able to proceed if all the parties cooperate. Most of the region's citizens have continued to maintain a positive

outlook on Fort Ord's development, but Josh Kirschenbaum, a graduate student from the University of California, Berkeley agrees that the pessimists have good reason to fear the problems of a breakdown in cooperation between the communities of Monterey. He studies city and regional planning and he pointed out that if the bases' redevelopment is allowed to be divided between the various communities then the planning process will become a nightmare.²⁹

For the most part the communities of Monterey have cooperated with one another successfully, and there has only been one hotly contested issue concerning the development of Fort Ord. The controversy concerns what should be done with Fort Ord's four miles of beachfront property and sand dunes. Environmentalists, residents of upscale communities, and some politicians in the area want the property developed into a state park. On the other hand, communities like Marina, Seaside, and Sand City feel the area should be zoned for resort hotel development to help their economies recover from the closing of Fort Ord.³⁰


Suggestions for redeveloping the Fort Ord facility vary widely and include ideas like: the building of a facility for the Internal Revenue Service, the building of a military air base for the German government, and the building of a new California state university. However, none of the ideas suggested by developers has sparked as much interest or unity of purpose as the building of a new California state university.\textsuperscript{31}

All the developments which will occur at Fort Ord will require money, and the bill that Monterey has asked the government to pay is extensive. In January of 1993, Monterey officials requested $4.8 million dollars from the Pentagon's Office of Economic Adjustment to fund the completion of the area's reuse plan. The amount of money is controversial because the Office of Economic Adjustment has never awarded a community more than $200,000. Monterey officials also requested $37 million worth of appropriations for Fort Ord reuse from the Defense Department's budget, and they requested $100 million worth of funds from the Pentagon to help start the new University at the base. Few politicians expect the area to receive all the

\textsuperscript{31}\textit{Ibid.}
money they have formally requested.32

However, the area will receive at least $100 million to $135 million from the 1994 defense appropriations budget to help create the new science oriented California State University at Monterey Bay. The money was diverted to Monterey by Rep. Leon Panetta before he left to head the Office of Management and Budget for President Clinton. Initially, the university was planned to have 2,000 students and classes started in the fall of 1995. Eventually the campus will utilize 1,300 acres of the base, and it will take advantage of nearly $1 billion worth of free land, dormitories, athletic complexes, streets, sewers, and theater complexes. However, the new California state university will not be alone among educational institutions utilizing the land. The University of California, Santa Cruz will develop 850 acres of Fort Ord for a technology center concerning computers, scientific instrumentation, environmental protection, and environmental restoration. In addition, the Defense Language Institute, Monterey Institute for International Studies, and the Monterey College of Law

will all relocate to Fort Ord in the future.\footnote{CSU waits as Fort Ord comes in from Cold War," \textit{Sacramento Bee}, 10 February 1993, (Newsbank Index, p. INT 19: G5).}

\textbf{ANALYSIS OF THE FORT ORD CASE STUDY}

In analyzing the Fort Ord case study several questions need to be asked. The first of these questions is how successful was the process behind closing Fort Ord? In the case of Fort Ord the political process behind the base closing was highly successful because Monterey's local iron triangle was broken by the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission. Proof of this fact can be found in the actions of Monterey's top officials. Rep. Leon Panetta (D - Monterey), Senator John Seymour (R - California), and Governor Pete Wilson of California all were opposed to the closing of Fort Ord, but in each case they wielded little influence over the final result of the Commission's decision. This result is particularly surprising because of Leon Panetta's strong influence over the House Budget Committee. Panetta had enough power to divert over $100 million from the defense appropriations budget of 1994 to provide for the new California state university in Monterey, and yet he did not have the power to prevent the Commission from closing Fort Ord.
The base closing process was also highly successful in their case because of the reasons given for closing Fort Ord. According to reports and testimony from the key officials involved in the closing of Fort Ord, the base was as good as any other facility in the Army, but the Commission's role is not solely to determine which bases in America fulfill their mission and which do not. The Commission's primary mission is to determine how to save the United States money. In the end, the Commission agreed with local officials, but they remembered their role and they insisted on the closure despite political pressure.

The second question this analysis needs to consider is whether or not there were any unusual or unique patterns of political behavior displayed in this case study? Three aspects of the political behavior in this case study stand out. The first aspect is that the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission was able to break the political influence of Monterey's local iron triangle. Certainly, this is a break from previously established congressional traditions of maintaining obsolete bases in congressional districts in return for votes in future elections. The second unique aspect of this case study is that Monterey officials did not attempt to promote strong grass-root
support for keeping Fort Ord open. Instead, high level Monterey officials opted to fight their battle with a low level of political pressure which failed to prevent their base from being closed. The third unique aspect of this case is that the Monterey iron triangle was used for purposes other than keeping Fort Ord open. In fact, Monterey's local iron triangle played a vital role in the redevelopment process for the base after it was marked for closure.

The third question which needs to be asked is whether or not any good has come out of closing Fort Ord? One positive aspect of the closure is that it will save the United States a great deal of money which the government needs for paying the national debt. However, curbing the nation's debt does not help the local community which still has to deal with the economic blow. Fortunately, Monterey has accepted the inevitability of Fort Ord being closed with optimism and grace. They opted to take their political energies and place the majority of it into a redevelopment of the area rather than wage a costly and probably futile battle against the Commission. Their political initiative and the large size of Fort Ord have already brought the beginning of a new university for the area.

The final question which needs to be asked is whether or not anything bad has come out of closing
Fort Ord? The cooperation demonstrated by the communities of Monterey during the planning of Monterey's local university is not universal. The towns of Marina, Seaside, and Sand City want to develop the Fort Ord coastline, and they will face a great deal of resistance. The key to successful development is cooperation, and all parties concerned will have to cooperate. A lack of cooperation will lead to no one being helped because development will simply freeze along the coastline.

The only other problem which the Monterey Peninsula faces because of the base closure is the severe environmental degradation of certain portions of the facility. However, this is a problem which the community would have to come to terms with whether the base closed or remained open. In addition, the problem is not going to deal a serious blow to the area's economy because approximately two-thirds of the land is not contaminated.

Overall, the Monterey Peninsula will be badly hurt by the closure in the beginning, but there is good reason to believe that the area will eventually prosper from the decision to close Fort Ord.
LONG BEACH, CALIFORNIA: A CASE STUDY IN HIGH STAKES AND HIGH PRESSURE POLITICS

INTRODUCTION

The first naval activity to occur in Long Beach, California was in 1843. In that year the sloop of war Cyane decided to drop its anchor in San Pedro Harbor, and other ships soon followed. In 1897, San Pedro Harbor was visited by a full navy flotilla, and in 1908, the anchorage was used as a stop for Theodore Roosevelt's great white fleet. Inevitably, the navy chose to make the harbor a permanent home port for their operations, and the harbor received that designation in 1919 when the United States Navy found it necessary to divide their fleet into two separate fleets (Pacific and Atlantic). The base prospered for many years until it was closed in 1950, but the base closure was only temporary because the Korean War gave a new justification for its existence. The base was closed again after the end of the Vietnam War in 1974,
but again it was opened in 1979.¹

Over the years the base has had to overcome its problem of being undervalued and overlooked by the United States Navy. The base has been repeatedly closed throughout this century only to find its facilities reopened by the Navy when the need was apparent. Additional evidence of this problem is seen in the fact that the Long Beach naval facility was not officially established as the headquarters of the Pacific Fleet until 1942, but it had served in that capacity since 1919.² The navy's first aircraft carriers were stationed at this "quasi" headquarters of the Pacific Fleet throughout the 1930's, and some of the great historical battleships of World War II, like the Arizona, were stationed in San Pedro Harbor before they moved to Pearl Harbor, Hawaii.³

Certainly, the people of the Long Beach area were relieved when the facility was re-opened in 1979. They were relieved for many reasons, but the most important


reason was the fact that the Navy finally appeared to appreciate the importance of the facility. The Navy spent $130 million on renovations to the base. It added a medical & dental clinic, fueling piers, a barracks, and off-base housing for naval personnel. The renovations seemed to signify that the Navy had experienced a change of heart in regards to its Long Beach naval facility.⁴

However, any assumptions that the Long Beach naval facilities would have a long life were brought to an abrupt end in the late 1980's. The Long Beach Naval Shipyard employs people like Arturo Ramos who was president of the Federal Employees Metal Trades Council during the late 1980's. His group has had to fight off three separate attempts to close the Long Beach Naval Shipyards in the late 1980's and early 1990's. The workers and local boosters prevented the shipyards from being placed on the 1988 base closure list which was a list that was later accepted by the United States Congress. In 1989, the group was amongst the many groups responsible for wrecking a second attempt to close the shipyard and 53 other bases. They had hoped that these two attempts would be the last attempts at closing the shipyards because the 347 acre facility was

slowly becoming efficient and profitable, but the $10 million profit margin they had posted was not enough. The shipyard was again being considered for placement on the base closure list in 1991 along with its sister facilities the Long Beach Naval Station and Hospital.\textsuperscript{5}

The end result of the 1991 base closure list was not encouraging to the Long Beach community. The Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission decided to close the Long Beach Naval Station, but it also decided to keep the Long Beach Naval Shipyards open. However, the Commission gave the Long Beach community some additional bad news. They suggested that the naval shipyard's status be reevaluated in 1993.\textsuperscript{6}

\textbf{JUSTIFICATIONS FOR THE CLOSURES OF NAVAL FACILITIES IN LONG BEACH, CALIFORNIA}

Many factors contributed to the Navy's desire to close Long Beach's naval facilities, and many of these factors became apparent as early as the mid-1980's. For example, in 1985 the Long Beach Naval Shipyard reduced its workforce by 13\% or 900 employees. The reductions were only the beginning of a downsizing

\textsuperscript{5}"Politics blamed for plan to study closing the site," \textit{Orange County Register}, 1 June 1991, (Newsbank Index, p. INT 97: A6).

effort that was intended to reduce the facilities workforce by 1,500 employees by the end of 1986. The layoffs in Long Beach were part of a nationwide reduction in employment in the Navy due to a lack of repair work for the nation's shipyards.7

The reduction in workforce at the shipyard hurt the competitiveness of the Long Beach facility because many highly skilled workers were removed at a time when it needed to show it was an efficient facility. A high level of efficiency was needed not simply because of ongoing reductions in the workforce, but also because the shipyard had to compete against privately owned shipyards for business in 1985. Competition for ship repair work is a relatively new procedure for the United States Navy.8

However, the end result of the reduction of jobs and the increased competition produced a shipyard that was given a commendation for being the most efficient government operated shipyard in the country in March 1991.9

However, greater efficiency at the naval shipyard

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7"Navy Trimming 900 Jobs at its Long Beach Shipyard," Los Angeles Times, 22 November 1985, p. 3.

8Ibid., p. 4.

did not remove the primary problem facing the Long Beach facilities. According to the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission, the main problem facing Long Beach was excess pier capacity on the west coast. This problem was particularly problematic for the Long Beach Naval Station which had deficient facilities and an inability to house the entire fleet of Southern Californian naval ships. On the other hand, San Diego had the capability of housing all of Southern California's naval vessels.\textsuperscript{10} Therefore, San Diego received support for keeping its naval station open.

The Commission also decided to keep Everett, Washington's naval station open because closing the station would not remove enough of the excess pier capacity in the west coast area. The elimination of these two candidates left only Long Beach which the Commission believed would produce tremendous savings for the government if it was closed. Therefore, they advocated closing the facility to reduce pier capacity for the Pacific Fleet.\textsuperscript{11}

The politicians of Long Beach have had to fight an


\textsuperscript{11}Ibid., pp. 49-50.
uphill battle to keep the Long Beach naval facilities open. Clearly, the Long Beach Naval Shipyard, Station, and Hospital are run efficiently, but it is undeniable that the station and shipyard are too big. Their large size and excess capacity invites the elimination of jobs and closing of facilities that they have experienced over the last ten years.

THE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF THE CLOSURE OF NAVAL FACILITIES IN LONG BEACH, CALIFORNIA

As previously mentioned, the 1991 base closure list contained suggestions for closing all three naval facilities in the city of Long Beach. The combined economic impact of possibly losing the shipyard, station, and hospital was estimated at $3 billion in 1991. The lose of revenue to the community was particularly difficult since the city was currently dealing with a local deficit of $26 million. Of the $3 billion total the Long Beach Naval Station was worth $1 billion to the local community in 1994, and the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission guaranteed its closure in the 1991 round of base

closures. Also in 1994, it was estimated that the possible closing of the Long Beach Naval Shipyard would mean the termination of 3,100 employees, and it is estimated that the closure of that property would cost the city's economy $750 million.

The economic impact of the closings would not be as severe to the local economy if it was not occurring at a time when other industries were having difficulty surviving in the area. For example, the area's largest local employer is McDonnell Douglas, and in 1991, they announced plans to build a major new plant in a different state. The plant was going to create the company's next generation of commercial jetliners, and the decision to place the plant elsewhere may have cost the community thousands of jobs. In addition, the troubled aircraft company transferred 3,200 jobs from the Long Beach area during the same year. Another trouble spot for the local economy was the closing of Buffums department store in Long Beach. The locally founded department store was a major contributor to the city's weak retail sales tax base, but it recently went


bankrupt. Today, the city receives retail sales tax only from two shopping malls in the area.\textsuperscript{15}

The economic problems of Long Beach present a challenge to local and national politicians who are tied to the city's electorate. It has often been the case in the past that local politicians have used their influence in order to maintain a strong economy in the area. For example, in 1983 the Long Beach Naval Shipyards faced a cut of 800 employees from its workforce. All 800 were going to be laid off in the following year due to a lack of naval overhaul and repair jobs. Many of the workers felt the lay offs were being scheduled because the battleship New Jersey was currently on duty in Lebanon instead of in port for repairs. During the lay off controversy then Secretary of the Navy, John Lehman, announced plans to pull the battleship Missouri out of moth balls and reactivate it at Long Beach. Rep. Daniel E. Lungren (R - Long Beach) realized that the reactivation of the battleship could prevent the lay offs at the shipyard, and he sent a letter to Lehman requesting that he expedite the project. Rep. Daniel E. Lungren asked for the matter to be expedited because the money earmarked in 1984 for the reactivation of the battleship was only enough for

\textsuperscript{15}"Ill Wind Blowing in Long Beach," Los Angeles Times, 1 June 1991, p. B3.
advanced planning to be done concerning the reactivation of the Missouri.  

There is nothing unusual about what Rep. Lungren did for his local constituents. He was simply fulfilling his role in the local military iron triangle, and his push to prevent the lay offs in his district normally would win him the support of voters in his district. However, the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission eliminated Congress from the process as was noted in Chapter two. Therefore Rep. Lungren and his colleagues found it difficult to prevent proposals to close various Long Beach facilities during the Commission's reign.

When the Commission tried to close the naval facilities, they were met by the full political opposition of the Long Beach iron triangle, and unlike Fort Ord, the people of Long Beach were not willing to concede defeat at any point in the battle for their facilities.

THE IRON TRIANGLE OF LONG BEACH: FIGHTING TO SAVE A SINKING SHIP

As was noted previously, the Long Beach shipyard won a commendation for efficiency and innovation in

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management in March of 1991 because it had saved the United States government over $80 million in the previous four years. Employees of the shipyard felt that its efficient performance had saved the facility even though they knew that the base closure commission had already threatened to close the naval station and hospital. Their assumptions were wrong. The addition of the shipyard to the list along with the station and hospital came as a shock to local politicians. The addition of the shipyard was not just shocking because of the facilities recent efficiency rating. It was also surprising because local politicians thought they had dissuaded Defense Secretary Dick Cheney from placing the facility on the list in January through the letter writing, lobbying, and picketing activity that city officials and workers had engaged in.17

The threatened lose of all three facilities moved the entire community into action. Politicians of the area started to design their arguments opposing the closing of the three facilities. Senator Alan Cranston (D – California), Rep. Dana Rohrabacher (R – Long Beach), and Rep. Glenn M. Anderson (D – Harbor City) all opposed the closing of the Long Beach Naval Station. Rohrabacher was particularly

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critical of the methods used by the Navy to recommend the closure of the station. He pointed out that the Navy's selection process had been criticized by the General Accounting Office. The selection process had rated both the Long Beach station and the Pearl Harbor station the same in four separate categories, and yet, the Navy never advocated closing the Pearl Harbor station. According to Rohrabacher, "'For all the Navy can say about it, the yellow [closure] rating for Long Beach might as well have been done by a coin flip.'"18

Local officials did not simply blame the Navy's faulty analysis for their predicament. Louis Rodriguez, the president of Local 174 of the Professional and Technical Engineers, felt that it was not economics that brought the naval shipyard onto the 1991 list. He felt that politics had a great deal to do with Long Beach's appearance on the list. Rep. Glenn Anderson agreed with Louis Rodriguez's assessment when he pointed out that, "'In recent days, the Long Beach Naval Shipyard has come under attack by those associated with Philadelphia as they try to replace their shipyard with the best of them all.'"19


19"Politics blamed for plan to study closing the site," Orange County Register, 1 June 1991, (Newsbank Index, p. INT 97: A6).
Long Beach assistant city manager John F. Shirley also agreed when he said, "'I don't think there is any question Philadelphia has been able to assemble a large coalition to defend their shipyard." Shirley listed many prominent politicians whom he believed were a part of the Philadelphia iron triangle. He included the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission's chairman who had represented the state of New Jersey in Congress for 12 years. He also included other prominent politicians such as, House whip, Rep. William Gray (D - Philadelphia); Senator Arlen Specter (R - Pennsylvania); and Senator Bill Bradley (R - New Jersey). All these politicians were prominent national figures and they were all concerned with the welfare of Philadelphia and its shipyard. Shirley's primary concern was that the Philadelphia iron triangle commanded more clout than the Long Beach iron triangle which consists of Rep. Rohrabacher (a sophomore representative); Rep. Anderson (recently removed from his chairmanship of the House Public Works Committee); Senator Seymour (a recently appointed Republican of California); and Senator Cranston (a lame duck Senator). Shirley believed that only a united delegation of Southern Californians would be able to

20Ibid.
defeat Philadelphia, but unfortunately, Southern California was divided over the Long Beach shipyard.\textsuperscript{21}

In the end, Long Beach officials realized that their efforts to keep the Long Beach Naval Station open were probably futile, and they placed most of their efforts into preserving the Long Beach Naval Shipyard. The Commission's elimination of the station meant the removal of 29,000 enlisted personnel from the area.\textsuperscript{22} The closure also meant that local officials had to shift their efforts to insure that the shipyard was not lost in the future.

One of the best ways to prevent a shipyard's closure is to produce enough business for the yard to demonstrate that it is necessary to keep it open. In 1992, California's senators and Los Angeles & Orange County's representatives attempted to expand the usefulness of the Long Beach Naval Shipyard by giving it more business. According to current naval procedures, the Long Beach Naval Shipyard is allowed to bid on large, long-term repair jobs, but it is not allowed to bid on smaller repair jobs which are done out of San Diego. The limitation was put in place because sailors stationed at San Diego could be forced

\textsuperscript{21}Ibid., pp. INT 97: A6-A7.

to make a commute to Long Beach, and the commute could place strains on the families of naval personnel. Long Beach politicians attempted to reverse this naval procedure, and their goal was to allow the Long Beach shipyard the ability to bid against San Diego's ship repair facilities. Rep. Duncan Hunter (R - Coronado) discovered the attempt to "snatch" San Diego jobs, and he placed a clause in the Defense Authorization Bill of 1992 banning Long Beach from taking such an action. The bill and Hunter's clause passed in the House of Representatives, but it was a struggle since two separate attempts were made to thwart the progress of the clause in committee.23

Politicians of Long Beach were unsuccessful in their attempt to produce a base that was so commercially active that any attempt to close it would be deemed foolish. The 1993 round of base closings found the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission prepared to add the Long Beach Naval Shipyard to its list once again. Long Beach was originally not placed on the list of base closures, but the Commission placed it there as a possible alternative to closing the Mare Island Shipyard of San Francisco which was already on the list for

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The people of Long Beach began another extensive round of lobbying efforts for the shipyard's future, but the economic lobbying had little effect on the final outcome of the Long Beach shipyard hearings. The Long Beach shipyard barely survived the hearing process when the Commission voted four to three to keep the base open. There was some bad news attached to the vote. The bad news was that people expected the shipyard facility to be a possible target for the 1995 round of base closures. One possible reason why the base succeeded in staying open was the fact that the Navy did not want the base closed originally. The United States Navy desired to keep the base open as an emergency dry dock for aircraft carriers. Another possible reason for the shipyards success in avoiding a closure order was the fact that the Commission was already closing Mare Island shipyard in California during the 1993 round of closures. This position was supported by Commissioner Harry C. McPherson Jr. who stated, "Closing two public shipyards [in California] was considered.


is more than this commissioner wants to do in '93.'\textsuperscript{26} However, as the vote points out the rest of the Commission did not necessarily agree with McPherson's position. Commissioner Robert D. Stuart pointed out that the Long Beach Naval Shipyard ought to be closed even though it was not included in the base closure list submitted to the Commission because the United States Navy simply was not going to need Long Beach's additional facilities as the Navy's fleet shrunk in size.\textsuperscript{27}

The sentiments expressed during the 1993 round of base closures by Commissioner Stuart were heard by local leaders in the Long Beach area, and they began preparing for the possibility of their base being reconsidered for closure in 1995. People like the president of the International Federation of Professional and Technical Engineers, Louis Rodriguez, began gathering signatures from people in the local malls of the Long Beach area. In a two day period alone they managed to get 9,000 signatures protesting the government's consideration of closing the shipyard. The goal of the 1994 effort was to send the letters to President Clinton when he received the base closure

\textsuperscript{26}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{27}Ibid.
list from the Defense Department for review. It was the hope of Rodriguez and other employees that Clinton would see these letters and remove the shipyard from consideration before the proposal was sent to the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission. On February 28, 1995, their hopes of avoiding the 1995 round of base closures were ended when the Pentagon released its list of recommendations for the Commission. Among the few outright base closures on the list was the Long Beach Naval Shipyard. The list advocated more realignments than closures because of Clinton's need to generate political support for his re-election bid in states like California. Another reason for the advocacy of fewer closures was the fact that the up-front costs of closing bases was beginning to become expensive enough to prevent the immediate closure of new bases.

REDEVELOPMENT OF THE LONG BEACH AREA

Several of the Long Beach area's facilities have


30 Ibid., p. 2A.
been closed by the Commission, and the Long Beach community sees a logical need to redevelop the properties in order to prevent economic hardship in their community. The need to engage in redevelopment in the Long Beach area ran into a snag when the United States Navy announced its intention to keep the property of the Long Beach Naval Station and Hospital after the two sites were closed. The 1991 announcement by the Navy forced Ernie Kell, the mayor of Long Beach, to discuss the possibility of taking the property away from the Navy based on legal grounds. According to Kell, "We're going to have to take a look at how the navy obtained the property (from the city)." In addition to the legal threats issued by the city of Long Beach, the city also engaged in land negotiations with the Navy in 1991. The Navy, however, intends to transfer the bulk of the naval station to the shipyards which have not be ordered to close yet. The only property which the city may be able to negotiate away from the Navy is the hospital, three housing sites, and the mole pier.

Even the Los Alamitos golf courses located on the

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32Ibid., p. INT 153: G12.
naval station's property is being transferred to the shipyard property. The golf courses produce an annual profit of $100,000 for the Navy which is used to fund other naval recreational facilities in Long Beach like the gymnasium and swimming pool. This profit benefits naval operations in the area, but the profit level is nothing in comparison to the levels of profit the golf courses could take in if they were privatized. Joe Guerra is the senior vice president of American Golf Corporation of Santa Monica and he believes the naval golf courses could be worth up to $5 or $10 million if they were privatized.23

Over the last several years the United States Navy has steadfastly maintained its hold over the majority of its Long Beach property, but the city of Long Beach has not been content to allow their land negotiations to go to waste. On June 28, 1994 the city produced a land development proposal for the Long Beach Naval Station which was presented to the United States Navy. The land development proposal was endorsed by the city, and the plan included a proposal to bulldoze the base and convert 100 acres of the property into a container terminal. The Navy decided to consider the proposals,

but in exchange, the Navy intends to ask the city of Long Beach to fund the renovation of a barracks, medical clinic, and exchange & commissary at the shipyard.34

ANALYSIS OF THE LONG BEACH CASE STUDY

The best way to analyze the Long Beach case study is by utilizing the same four questions used in the previous Fort Ord case study. The answers to the questions will allow both case studies to be more readily compared with one another.

The first question which needs to be asked is how successful was the process behind the closing of the Long Beach Naval shipyard, station, and hospital? Overall, the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission's efforts should be labeled successful, but they did have some difficulties. Both the closing of the naval station and the hospital were done with relatively little difficulty, but the closing of the naval shipyard still has not occurred even though the Navy will not need the facility as the fleet shrinks in size. However, the survival of the shipyard can not truly be attributed to anything special done by the

Long Beach iron triangle, and this was especially true during the 1993 round of base closings. It was during that round of base closings that the Commission was afraid that closing more than one shipyard in California would be too much. The lack of resolve shown by the Commission in 1993 was a shortcoming of the Commission's otherwise fair and effective proceedings, but it was a shortcoming which the Commission corrected when it placed the shipyard on the 1995 list of recommendations for base closures.

While the Commission's resolve was occasionally tested during the hearings concerning the shipyards it was never tested with the station and hospital. In both the case of the hospital and the station the Commission weighed the evidence for and against closing each and decided to close each because they were unnecessary facilities that were costing the government too much to keep open.

The second question of this analysis concerns whether or not there were any unusual or unique patterns of political behavior displayed in the Long Beach case study? Three aspects of the case study stand out. The first unique aspect of this case study is that, like the Fort Ord case, the local military iron triangle was broken by the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission. However, unlike the
previous case study the Long Beach iron triangle initially did make some progress in opposition to the Commission. A second interesting aspect of this case study was the angry tone of the political discussion set by the Long Beach iron triangle during the hearings. The angry and highly political tone is not necessarily unique to other battles waged by local military iron triangles, but it serves as an interesting contrast to the more subdued approach taken by the Fort Ord iron triangle. The contrasting tactics are particularly interesting because they demonstrate that neither tactic guarantees success against the Commission. The third interesting aspect of the case study was that the iron triangle of Long Beach did display a genuine concern about redevelopment of the closed bases. The concern was less well pronounced than in the Fort Ord case, but nevertheless, the iron triangle did alter its mission (keeping bases open) somewhat when it became involved in the redevelopment of the naval station.

The third question of this analysis is whether or not any good has come out of closing the Long Beach naval complex? Unfortunately, the only one who seem to be benefitting from the various facility closures in Long Beach is the United States government. The closure of the Long Beach naval facilities will allow
the United States government to save a considerable amount of money as time goes on, but the base closure will hurt the local governments of the Long Beach area. They will be hurt initially by the closing of the bases, but their biggest problem in the long term may be getting the United States Navy to release the property for redevelopment.

Finally, the fourth question is whether or not anything bad has come because of the closing of the Long Beach naval facilities? Long Beach may have made a bad situation worse by opposing the Commission's wishes for so long, and the Commission may not have been doing the people of Long Beach any favors by allowing the naval shipyards to stay open beyond the 1993 round of base closures. The community fight with the Commission has continued on with only a little attention being given to the redevelopment of the facilities. The length of the battle with the Commission has also put them in a position in which they will be one of the last communities to ask the government for assistance in their redevelopment proposals. It is conceivable that they will be given very little aid because other communities came before them.

Overall, the chances for productive redevelopment of the Long Beach facility look fairly unfavorable in
the near future, and the primary culprits are the volatile Long Beach iron triangle and the overly compassionate Commission. The combination of hostility and compassion has only postponed the inevitable closure of the Long Beach facilities, and if the Long Beach community finds that they have lost the shipyard after the 1995 round of base closures they will have done little to prepare for a future without the bases.
CHAPTER 5

NORTON AIR FORCE BASE: A CASE STUDY IN LOCAL GREED, JEALOUSY, AND UNCOOPERATIVENESS

INTRODUCTION

Norton Air Force Base is located in San Bernadino, California, and in 1988, the base employed a total of 4,500 military and 2,133 civilian employees. The Air Force base was the home of the 63rd Military Airlift Wing, and it also was where other air wings like the 445th military airlift wing were stationed. The airlift wings allow the base to maintain airlift capability for air and ground forces, and the base can deliver these forces expeditiously to anywhere in the world. In addition to the bases' airlift capabilities, it also served as a headquarters for the Air Force Inspection and Safety Center, the Ballistic Missile Office, and the United States Air Force Audit Agency.¹

The 53rd Airlift Squadron was amongst the different air wings which served at Norton Air Force

Base, and like many other airwings at the base they have been in every conceivable type of military mission requiring airlift capabilities. In 1942, the 53rd Airlift Squadron dropped paratroopers over Sicily from C-47's, and they delivered 8,500 gallons of gasoline to General George Patton's troops in Frankfurt, Germany. They have also seen military action in places like Korea and Da Nang, but the airlift squadron was not limited just to flights over combat zones. The squadron also served in humanitarian efforts like the Berlin airlift, and they have served in relief efforts during domestic disasters like hurricanes in Florida and the emergency cleanup of Three Mile Island. The various airlift wings of Norton Air Force Base are vital to the proper functioning of military plans, but they are not the first image that pops into mind when one thinks about the Air Force. Colonel John D. Hopper Jr. admitted as much when he said, "'The more glamorous missions belong to the shooters who drop the bombs and shoot the guns.'"^2

Norton Air Force Base has seen a great deal of activity over the years, but nothing in its history compares to the amount of activity during the Vietnam War. Lieutenant Colonel Lynn Nelson described Norton

Air Force Base during the Vietnam War as a "virtual sky highway" connecting the United States to Southeast Asia and Vietnam. However, the high level of activity during the Vietnam War subsided quickly with the ending of hostilities, and the base was scheduled for closure in the 1970's. The base was not closed then because the entire list of proposed base closures was terminated, and it was not until late 1988 that Norton's personnel started to hear rumors of a new effort to close the facility.\textsuperscript{3}

Initially, the communities surrounding Norton prepared to battle the United States government to preserve the existence of their base, but unlike the other previously mentioned base closure case studies, the San Bernadino community offered very little actual resistance to the government's plans to close the base. The Presidential Commission recommended closing Norton Air Force Base in December of 1988, and by January of 1989 the county, cities, and community leaders of the area had formed the Norton Economic Expansion Committee. The mission of the committee was to oppose any attempt to close Norton and to prepare the community for redevelopment of the area if the

committee failed in its efforts. After only four months of struggling against the federal government the communities surrounding Norton Air Force Base realized that the closure of their base was inevitable. Between April and June of 1989 the committee began to address various ideas on how the property could be reused.4

The plan to close Norton was approved, but the plan did not require the entire base to close. The Commission on Base Realignment and Closure gave the Air Force the option of keeping the Aerospace Audiovisual Service at Norton Air Force Base or moving it to March Air Force Base in Riverside, California. The Air Force chose to move the facility to Riverside. The Commission on Base Realignment and Closure also told the Air Force that the Ballistic Missile Office in Norton would be maintained at Norton, and 300 homes at the Norton facility would be kept open for the missile office workers and personnel of March Air Force Base.5

JUSTIFICATIONS FOR THE CLOSURE OF NORTON AIR FORCE BASE

The Defense Secretary's Commission On Base


Realignement and Closure had four justifications for their desire to close Norton Air Force base. One of the reasons was the fact that flight operations at Norton were constrained by an increase in air traffic in the Los Angeles area. Another reason for closing the base was the fact that the warehouses were deteriorating and most other facilities on the base needed to be upgraded to meet current standards of technology. A third reason was the fact that the quality of life at the base was inferior. The base has a shortage of family housing units and inadequate medical, dental, and recreational facilities. Finally, the base was closed because the United States government had a surplus of capacity in the category of strategic-airlift installation.6

THE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF THE CLOSURE OF NORTON AIR FORCE BASE ON THE SURROUNDING COMMUNITIES AND THE INLAND EMPIRE

The actual degree of economic damage that the closing of Norton Air Force Base will have on the local community is difficult to ascertain. According to Mayor Evelyn Wilcox of San Bernadino the base closure would have a profound effect on San Bernadino, and the

closure would remove $248 million from the community when it withdrew its annual payroll. It is certainly true that the closing of the base would mean the ending of 6,600 jobs in the area, but an additional 1,300 jobs at the base would be kept because the nearby Air Force Ballistic Missile base was not affected by the military cutbacks. In fact, the lose of jobs in the area may be more of an illusion than anyone realizes. Colonel Brooke P. Bailey pointed out at a press conference that, "'the vast majority' of those losing their jobs would get new ones at other bases, in many cases at nearby March Air Force Base in Riverside."^7

Lieutenant Colonel Lynn Nelson tended to agree with Bailey's assessment of the economic impact of the base closure. He pointed out the fact that the total number of jobs scheduled to move ten miles south to March Air Force Base was 2,800. He also pointed out that the short term impact of the base closure would be minimal with an overall positive effect for the community in the long term. Nelson said the reason for the minimal short term impact on the region was because, "We have 3,500 civilians here, but it's going to be two or three years down the road before anyone

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Another factor which may reduce the overall impact of the facilities closure on the economy of the area is that the base will become one of the biggest chunks of real estate open to development in the Southern California area. In addition, the property is located in a part of town where the cost of real estate is much less expensive. The end result of inexpensive and available land has sparked a tremendous amount of interest in purchasing the land, and it is likely to be developed by local authorities and private companies because the Pentagon is discouraging federal development.  

The land value of Norton Air Force Base alone was estimated at $200 million in 1990. Additional assets of the property include 200 buildings, and 1,500 acres of hangars and runways. The Air Force facilities are large enough to handle 747 jets.

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9Ibid.

10“San Bernadino learns there’s life after a base closes,” Austin American-Statesman, 4 February 1990, (Newsbank Index, p. INT 14: D5).
As previously mentioned, the people affected by the closing of Norton Air Force Base did relatively little to prevent their base from being closed, and in fact, the majority of the local iron triangle's political activity was used to keep other facilities, that were not a part of the closure, from being added to the list. For example, in November of 1989 the United States Air Force considered the idea of finding a legal loophole to close the Ballistic Systems Division in San Bernadino. The loophole that the Air Force wanted to create was necessary because the United States Congress had recently passed a law specifically stating that the Ballistics Systems Division was to remain in San Bernadino. Therefore, they decided to reorganize the division under a different Air Force unit, and move it to an Air Force unit at Vandenberg Air Force Base near Lompoc. The move would have been perfectly legal even though it defied the spirit of the law passed by Congress which stated that moving the division would cost too much.11

Upon hearing about the political maneuvers of the

Air Force the local iron triangle moved into full action. Rep. George E. Brown Jr. (D - Colton) moved his congressional aides into a full scale effort to prevent the move. Rep. Brown was especially opposed to the closing of the Ballistic Systems Division because it was set to occur at a time when the local economy would be vulnerable to the problems caused by the closing of Norton Air Force Base. The Air Force has begun to back away from its original position of moving the division because of the protests of the congressmen. Rep. Brown has assured his constituents that he would not back down from the fight, and in a statement to the press he said, "'I didn't like having Norton closed to begin with, and I lost on that,... But in losing that, we got a clear statement that BSD remains. Now it is the Air Force's turn to try to change the law, not mine.'"\(^1\)

Another incident which required the attention of the local iron triangle was the problem of environmental cleanups at the base. According to Rep. Jerry Lewis (R - Redlands) the Air Force told the Commission on Base Realignment and Closure that some waste sites at Norton would not be completely clean until 1998. The report to the Commission disturbed

\(^{12}\text{Ibid.}
Rep. Lewis who feared that the Pentagon would place more importance in purchasing new weapons than in cleaning old bases. He urged the Commission to keep the focus of the Pentagon on cleaning the old bases. Rep. Lewis was supported by Rep. Brown who requested an increase in Defense Department funding for the cleanup at Norton and other polluted bases around the country.¹³

Rep. Brown also lobbied members of the House Energy and Commerce Committee concerning the future land-use of Norton Air Force Base. The economic development assistant to congressman Brown pointed out that some aspects of the cleanup at Norton could take ten or twenty years. Therefore, Rep. Brown asked the congressional committee to look into ways to allow Norton's land to be redeveloped without preventing efforts to protect the environment.¹⁴

THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT OF THE NORTON AIR FORCE BASE CLOSURE

The environmental cleanup of Norton Air Force Base


is a particularly important issue for the people living near the base because Norton Air Force Base is amongst the 1,000 sites across the country listed as part of the Superfund list. Julie Andrews was the chief of the Environmental Protection Agency's Federal Enforcement Section in March of 1989 when the people of Norton Air Force Base were having difficulties with the cleanup of the base. Andrews complained that the officials at Norton Air Force Base were moving too slowly towards drafting cleanup plans for the base. The people at the Environmental Protection Agency felt the process was going so slow that at one point in early 1989 they considered getting the Department of Justice to sue the Department of Defense in order to speed up cleanup efforts. Fortunately for all parties concerned, the Environmental Protection Agency and the Department of Defense came to an agreement in May of 1989 without legal action. The goal of the agreement between the two agencies was to speed up the cleanup process, and the agreement obligated the Air Force to search a wider and deeper area for environmental contamination. The agreement also obligated the Air Force to check and remove ruptured underground tanks and commit to

specified deadlines for completing the cleanup. Alexis Strauss, the chief of the Superfund enforcement branch for the Environmental Protection Agency, pointed out that, "'The biggest change is that what they have been doing in the past has been at their own direction. What will happen at the base from now on will be driven by EPA and the state.'"16

The estimated cost of cleanup at Norton Air Force Base was $44.8 million, and an additional $4 million is expected to be used to monitor the area for twenty years to insure that no environmental pollutants remain. More than half of the money will be spent to cleanup a single dump located in the northeastern corner of the facility. The dump operated for 22 years from 1958 to 1980, and it received large quantities of general refuse and smaller quantities of industrial waste like: trichloroethylene, carbon tetrachloride, refrigerant, acids, paint strippers, paint thinners, and waste oils. All these chemicals were placed in large trenches which were twenty to forty feet deep.17

The dump in the northeastern portion of the bases'


17"Cost of Norton toxic cleanup pegged at $44.8 million, documents show," San Bernadino Sun, 8 May 1989, (Newsbank Index, p. INT 52: E2).
property is a major concern for the redevelopment plans of Norton, but it is not the only concern. For example, the Air Force is going to dig up property near the 11th tee of their golf course because it was once used as a radioactive waste burial site. Materials placed underground were used for painting radioactive radium on dials used by the Air Force. Another problem is a waste drum storage site which has been used since 1961 to store hazardous waste temporarily until it could be shipped to a permanent facility. The storage drums may have leaked over the last two decades. Finally, the base has a problem with twelve old industrial wastewater treatment plants. The beds have high concentrations of lead which in some cases are within 500 feet of municipal wells outside the bases' property.\textsuperscript{18}

The Air Force has a great deal of cleanup work to do, but they are not concerned about the local communities' inability to redevelop the facility and integrate it into the local economy. According to Gary Vest, the Air Force deputy assistant secretary for environment, safety, and occupational health, the majority of the base can be transferred to the community even if the cleanup is not completed before \textsuperscript{18}\textit{Ibid.}
the base closes. The reason is because most of the toxic waste contamination is located in the northwestern section of the base. In this section of the base the ground water contains dangerous levels of petroleum wastes and solvents.19

A more difficult problem concerning the local communities surrounding Norton Air Force Base is the effect of military pollutants on municipal water reserves. The municipal wells that provide the city of Riverside with its water supply are currently being threatened by an underground plume of pollutants from the base. The plume is moving through the water table at a rate of six inches a day below the base property, and some people feel it may be moving even more quickly in areas outside the base property. Almost 75% of Riverside's water is provided by twenty wells which are located within a mile of the property, and at least two of them currently demonstrate levels of contamination. The Air Force has agreed to reimburse the city for contaminated water supplies, and they have started the process of digging wells near toxic hot spots. The goal of these newly constructed wells is to extract polluted water, cleanse it, and replace it in the water

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The Norton base closure started off better than any of the other base closures previously examined. The community realized the lack of control they had over the future fate of their base, and they opted to put all of their efforts into redevelopment of the property. Therefore, the communities did not have to go through the wasted money, time, and effort that Monterey and Long Beach endured when they vainly attempted to preserve the existence of their bases. Therefore, it would be safe to assume that the community had a smooth transition from military facility to private real estate, but Norton's transition was plagued by more problems than any of the other case studies experienced. The primary reason for these problems sprouted from a lack of unity in the community concerning the redevelopment of Norton.

Initially, the communities did not suffer from a lack of unity when they came together to form a redevelopment committee for Norton Air Force Base. The

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end result of their labors was the Inland Valley Development Agency which was comprised of city, county, state, and federal authorities. The Inland Valley Development Agency also had a great deal of good luck in their first attempts to lure clients to the base property. In January of 1990 the Lockheed corporation requested permission to utilize some of the old facilities at Norton for a commercial aircraft maintenance center. The maintenance facility was expected to employ as many as 970 workers by the year 1994, and the Lockheed corporation's marketing study projected highly positive business opportunities for the center into the year 2000. According to the study, Lockheed projected that commercial airlines would contract out $900 million dollars worth of repair and maintenance work for its fleets of Boeing 747 passenger jets. H.T. Bowling, the president of Lockheed Aircraft Service Company in Ontario, pointed out that the four old hangar bays at Norton were well suited to 747's and would save the company $20 million in new construction.


Overall, the project appeared to be perfectly suited to the base, and it would seem difficult to imagine any opposition to the plan. However, mayor Bob Holcomb of San Bernadino delayed the development of the proposal because he felt he had not been adequately familiarized with the plan. His delay did not kill the project, but the delay of future negotiations cost Lockheed $50 million in lost contracts and it cost the San Bernadino economy $1.8 million per month in local payroll.23

Mayor Holcomb's actions complicated the Lockheed project and cost the company a considerable amount of money, but it was not the end of the problems that Lockheed would have while doing business in the San Bernadino area. By September of 1991 the company received approval to use the hangars, but they needed to replace the floors in the hangars before they could begin operations at the facilities. Lockheed removed the floors and discovered the soil underneath the hangars was contaminated with various toxic chemicals. The discovery of the pollutants brought a series of state and federal orders to stop progress on the project until the contaminatees were removed. The

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The opposition of Mayor Holcomb and unknown environmental pollutants at the base could have meant the end to Lockheed's bid to redevelop a portion of Norton Air Force Base. Fortunately, one community leader's opposition to a project was not enough to scare investors away, but it was not the only example of disunity in the community. In fact, the struggle to control the redevelopment of Norton Air Force Base has sparked five separate law suits, and it has helped San Bernadino County earn the reputation of being home to the most vicious base-reuse battle in the nation. Apparently, the lack of local unity demonstrated in the Lockheed project is a chronic problem of the San Bernadino area. William Leonard Sr., a state Republican Party chief, pointed out the problem when he lamented that, "'It's unfortunate, but our political leaders have a tendency to be very parochial... I think the biggest problem is the mistrust between individuals..."  

at the local level.'

The law suits were started by the communities of San Bernadino, Redlands, and Highland. All three communities have an interest in how Norton Air Force Base is developed because Norton Air Force Base is located in San Bernadino and is surrounded by the communities of Highland and Redlands. These three communities filed their law suits over disputes concerning how much land and money each community would have to contribute to the development of Norton Air Force Base and how much profit each community would receive from the redevelopment project. For example, the city of Highland complained that it would have to give away half of its extra property tax on approximately 88% of its land in order to join the Inland Valley Development Agency. The city of Redlands also complained that being a part of the bases' redevelopment process would be too costly. Swen Larson, a Redlands City Councilman, complained about proposals to turn over real estate located near Interstate 10 in Redlands. Larson pointed out that, "That's some of the prime real estate in the Inland Empire,... I am very reluctant to see it diluted into a

tax-sharing arrangement with that agency."

However, Highland and Redlands are not the only cities complaining about the greedy demands of other cities in the area. The city of San Bernadino is expected to collect millions of dollars from sales and utility taxes when the base moves out of federal hands. The city of San Bernadino has never been allowed to collect taxes on Norton Air Force Base in the past, and both Highland and Redlands feel that the city government of San Bernadino should share the Norton tax base with other communities in the surrounding area. Mayor Holcomb feels that the city of San Bernadino is entitled to all of the taxes generated within their city's borders since they will have to pay for all the city services provided to the Norton Air Force Base area like police and fire services.

Another redevelopment fiasco occurred in December of 1990 although local community tensions were not responsible for its occurrence. A Los Angeles developer by the name of Iddo Benzeevi proposed a master plan for the development of Norton Air Force Base. The master plan included the building of a high

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26Ibid., (Newsbank Index, p. INT 63: A13).

technology research facility and a sports center. It also included an amusement park which was to be designed by the movie mogul George Lucas.\(^{28}\) The project was ambitious and required a great deal of financial backing which became its downfall. The project was troubled by developers who backed away from financing the project, and by June of 1991 Benzeevi lost his exclusive right to develop the area.\(^{29}\)

By 1992 the local communities had succeeded in developing the bases' hangars, but their attempt at a master plan for the base had failed. However, the local communities were still willing to develop a second master plan for the area which was started in 1993. By September 9, 1993 the San Bernadino area had succeeded in convincing the Air Force Base Disposal Agency to lease the base to local authorities so that it could be developed into a commercial mixed use airport. Finally, the communities of the Inland Empire had come to an agreement as to how the base should be developed, but the communities neglected to take into consideration the desires of certain community


organizations. One such organization was the Western Eagle Foundation which provides food for approximately 100,000 homeless people in the San Bernadino and Riverside areas. Western Eagle requested that the entire base and its 10,000 foot runway be given to the organization so that it could develop a job training center and a base of operations for conducting worldwide humanitarian flights. Normally, the community organization would have been overlooked because it had not petitioned the Air Force first. However, federal laws gave priority to local homeless charities which petitioned the government for ownership of base facilities. Therefore, the San Bernadino International Airport Authority was denied a long term lease on the land until Western Eagle's request could be considered.30

The local communities failed to consider the needs of Western Eagle, and they would have had great difficulty protecting their dreams of developing a commercial airport if Western Eagle's fiscal integrity had not been questioned. According to the Riverside Press Enterprise the base could cost up to $300 million to renovate over the next twenty years. The cost was high, but Western Eagle claimed that it had enough

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backers to make a serious bid for the base. Western Eagle's backers included a Russian development group and a lawyer from Utah who promoted food supplements that allegedly cured cancer. The Department of Health and Human Services was understandably curious about the backgrounds of Western Eagle's financial backers and requested more information. Along with the mysterious background of the financial backers of Western Eagle there were other questions surrounding the charity organization. For example, why did none of the other well established local charities in the area have any knowledge of Western Eagle's operations in the Inland Empire? Why was Western Eagle reluctant to release a list of the organization's directors when it applied to join Survive Food Bank? Finally, when Western Eagle applied for usage of Norton Air Force Base, why were three homeless people listed as three of the directors in charge of Western Eagle's operations?\footnote{"Mystery jolts Norton AFB," Riverside Press Enterprise, 3 October 1993, (Newsbank Index, p. INT 70: C7).}

In the end, the federal Department of Health and Human Services determined that Western Eagle had not demonstrated the financial ability and experience to accomplish its goals. Therefore, the Department of Health and Human Services only awarded the organization
five warehouses on the base for food banks. The rest of the base property in dispute was given to the local community for development into a commercial airport.32

ANALYSIS OF THE NORTON AIR FORCE CASE STUDY

In reviewing this case study it is necessary to discuss how successful the process was behind the closing of Norton Air Force Base? The Norton Air Force Base closure was done quite successfully by comparison to both of the previous case studies reviewed in chapters three and four. One reason why this particular base closure was so much more successful than the others was because the local iron triangle of San Bernadino had a stronger respect for the base closure commission's power than the iron triangles of Monterey and Long Beach. The people of San Bernadino understood that they had little chance to save their base, and they did not choose to challenge the Commission. Ironically, the Commission was arguably less powerful in 1988 than in the future rounds because its legitimacy was not originally based upon legislation in the 1988 round of base closures.

The base closure was also successful because

politics played virtually no role in the decision making process of closing Norton Air Force Base. The decision to close Norton was based upon the fact that Norton was an outdated facility in a category of Air Force bases that had a surplus. Norton's closure was a natural choice.

The review of the Norton Air Force Base case study also needs to consider whether or not there were any unusual or unique patterns of political behavior displayed in their case. In this case, there is very little evidence that can be compared with that of the Fort Ord and the Long Beach case studies. The local iron triangle of San Bernadino never truly attempted to engage in a political fight against the Commission. Instead it opted to invest all its efforts into redevelopment of the property. The economic redevelopment of Norton Air Force Base is probably the single most unique aspect of this case study because it illustrated what many people feared would happen in the economic redevelopment of Fort Ord. Fortunately, the Monterey Peninsula did not suffer from such a high level of disunity, but the potential for disagreement still exists. They would be wise to observe the political and economic problems of the Inland Empire.

Certainly, the news from San Bernadino is not all bad, and in fact, many good things have come from the
closure of Norton. For example, the redevelopment of the base was successful. Redevelopment still has many obstacles to overcome like environmental pollution and the lose of military jobs, but the community has gained a modern airport facility which will produce more jobs and benefits than the former base ever could have produced. In addition to the community receiving benefits, the United States government saved money by closing the facility.

Overall, the closure will be viewed as a success in the future, but in the short term it has caused a considerable amount of damage to the political relationships of the area's local city governments. It has also hurt relations between city governments and corporations like Lockheed who were subjected to petty political squabbles that cost them a considerable amount of money. In some cases, the base closure may have even hurt relationships between city government and community charity organizations who felt they may have been overlooked in the redevelopment of Norton Air Force Base.
CONCLUSION

ARE THE ELITES, INTEREST GROUPS, OR A COMBINATION OF THE TWO RESPONSIBLE FOR RECENT BASE CLOSURES IN THE UNITED STATES?

Chapters one and two pointed out that the responsibilities for base closures were shared between the Department of Defense and the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission. However, the case studies of Fort Ord, Long Beach, and Norton point out the fact that the local iron triangles also played a valuable role in the process of base closures. In each case study it can not be debated that the unelected bureaucrats of the Defense Department and the base closure Commission had the final word concerning which bases were to remain open and which bases were to close, but once their judgements were made they no longer participated in any valuable way concerning the fate of the bases. The future redevelopment plans for the bases were determined by local iron triangles because they had to live with the decisions made by the Commission.

The decisions made by the local iron triangles differed from the decisions made by the bureaucrats of the Defense Department in the fact that local iron
triangles considered the needs of local interest groups. The Commission and Defense Department based their decisions primarily upon the needs of policy makers in the United States government. Therefore, military base closure decisions in the 1980's & 1990's were determined by the political elites, but the end results of those decisions were influenced by local interest groups.

Of course these were not the only groups responsible for the base closures. Both the President and the Congress played roles in approving the base closures, but their roles were only minor by comparison to the other political elites and interest groups. Their roles were minor because of the actions taken by the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission and the Department of Defense. These two institutions produced small lists of base closures which allowed a majority of congressmen and the President to avoid angry reactions from their constituents. The lack of a voter backlash to their actions allowed both the President and the Congress to close the bases according to the wishes of the Commission.

Certainly, the United States government can consider the actions taken by the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission a great success, but can the United States government look back upon its decision to
close bases and claim that it was a wise decision? It has been pointed out before that closures are fiscally wise because of the federal budget deficit of the 1980's and 1990's, but it is arguable that the greatest damage of these decisions will be felt in the local communities. The wisdom of the federal government's decisions may be debatable in the localities, but historically, communities have become economically stronger because of base closures. In fact, this has been demonstrated in the case studies of Fort Ord and Norton Air Force Base. In these cases the building of a University and an international airport will bring a better economy to the area. The Long Beach Naval Complex's redevelopment may not be as successful as the Fort Ord or Norton Air Force Base redevelopment, but its success is difficult to ascertain since the future of the complex has not yet been fully determined.

FUTURE RESEARCH CONCERNING THE POLITICS BEHIND BASE CLOSURES: WHAT CAN BE DONE TO IMPROVE AND EXPAND UPON WHAT IS ALREADY KNOWN?

At least four tasks face future researchers of this topic. First of all, future researchers need to analyze the roles of civilian and military personnel in base closures. It is possible that the reason why the people of the Long Beach Naval Shipyard were so hostile towards their base being closed is because of the fact
that they were not military personnel. Civilian employees are more strongly tied to their municipality than are military employees. Future analysis of hostile base closures during the 1980's and 1990's may reveal that the majority of the opposition to the base closures came from civilian employees.

A second task facing researchers of this topic is the need to create more case studies of actual base closures. No scholarly work currently exists concerning the base closures of Fort Ord, Norton Air Force Base, and the Long Beach Naval Complex. The only material currently available concerning these bases can be found in newspapers and magazines. More case work needs to be done before anyone can truly be able to claim they have found patterns of political behavior in the recent bout of base closures.

The third task facing researchers of this topic is comparing the base closures of the 1980's and 1990's with previous base closures. The contrasts and comparisons between various periods of successful and unsuccessful base closures may reveal new information concerning how public policy works in the United States. However, this task will probably have to be done after more case studies have been accumulated.

The final task facing researchers is a problem facing not just people who are researching base
closures but anyone who is doing public policy research about the military. The current information available today concerning the military iron triangle rarely discusses the influence of the iron triangle upon military bases. The main focus of books about the iron triangle usually is the military industrial firm or the political action committee of the military industrial firm. Authors are much less likely to discuss how the iron triangle prevents a base from closing, and this problem in the literature needs to change before the iron triangle's role in base closures can be more fully understood. Therefore, researchers in the field of military public policy ought to begin putting more emphasis on how the iron triangle affects bureaucratic decisions behind base closures.
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