

## **UTAH BASES WIN BIG BATTLE, BUT CLOSURE WAR NOT OVER UTAH BASES WIN KEY BATTLE IN CLOSURE WAR**

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Hill Air Force Base and Defense Depot Ogden may have pulled their necks off the chopping block in the list of bases the Clinton administration is expected to propose for closure, but the Utah facilities still could be sliced and diced.

The bulk of the administration's draft proposal that was leaked Saturday contained the dreaded closure list -- those bases where operations will be shut down. Hill and DDO were not on that list.

But the entire draft proposal, which the defense secretary could change before releasing it Tuesday, reportedly has 80 proposed base realignments, only some of which have been revealed.

"Without knowing what is being recommended in the category of realignments, we don't know how good the news is," said Mike Pavich, head of the Hill-DDO 1995 Committee, which is working to save the Utah bases from closure.

"As far as we're concerned, total success would be for the bases to continue to exist and gain work from the other military missions," said Pavich, a former Air Logistics Center commander.

Rep. Jim Hansen, R-Utah, said he has not seen "any authentic reports," but added it is highly unlikely Hill Air Force Base will be among the bases closed.

"If I sat down and guessed, Hill would be OK, but it could face some realignment," Hansen said.

"There will be a downsizing on every military base in America, which has been going on for about four years," he said. "So I don't think we need to be downsized any more than that."

The secretary's list goes to the base-closure commission, which cannot remove a base from the list unless it finds that a Pentagon recommendation was a "substantial deviation" from the criteria for closure.

Pavich said the probability Hill will not be targeted for closure is not a surprise. It is one of five Air Logistics Centers, and rumors in Washington in recent weeks were that the Air Force wanted to keep all five.

As for the Defense Depot Ogden, Pavich and others had feared it would be closed. It is part of the Defense Logistics Agency, whose strategy for cutting excess warehouse capacity is to consolidate on the East and West coasts, closer to potential world trouble spots.

An economic analysis prepared by the Utah Governor's Office of Planning and Budget last year predicted closure of Hill Air Force Base would mean the loss of 17,000 jobs and \$176.5 million in state and local revenue.

Pavich said Saturday that closure of DDO could mean the loss of a \$70 million payroll. The depot employs 1,840 people, including 539 at Hill Air Force Base and 212 at Tooele Army Depot.

He also said the committee will review all the data supporting the defense secretary's proposal. "We'll see if there are things we have to fight or defend to prepare ourselves."

Maj. Gen. Pat Condon, commander of the Ogden Air Logistics Center, said the omission of Hill from the closure list will not affect the pending layoffs of approximately 700 workers at the northern Utah base.

According to officials, political pressures and the up-front costs of closing bases kept the Clinton administration's draft closure list shorter than many expected.

The list spares facilities in politically important states while recommending far more "realignments" than outright closures. The proposed shutdowns awaiting approval by Defense Secretary William Perry include none of the huge bases that formed the bulk of earlier cuts.

"There are no big-time bases on that list," a congressional official familiar with the closure process said Saturday. "The easy ones have already been done. Now we're getting into the tough choices."

The Pentagon list still must win approval from the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission, as well as Congress. In the three previous base-closure rounds, most of the Pentagon's recommendations were approved.

The independent base-closure panel begins hearings on the Pentagon list Wednesday. May 17 is the deadline for the commission to identify additional bases that may be considered for closure or realignment. The panel makes its final recommendations to President Clinton by July 1.

Bases would begin shutting down within two years.

This year's draft list spares Senate Majority Leader Bob Dole's home-state Army post, Fort Riley, Kan., and protects facilities in the all-important presidential-election states of New Hampshire and California.

Ellsworth Air Force Base near Rapid City, S.D., home state of Senate Minority Leader Tom Daschle, also dodged the ax.

Also missing from the list is the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard in Kittery, Maine, just across the harbor from New Hampshire, scene of the first presidential primary a year from now.

Texas appears to be one of the hardest-hit states in this round.

On the draft closure list:

-- Army Closings: Fort Indiantown Gap, Pa.; Red River Army Depot, Texarkana, Texas; Fitzsimons Army Hospital, Aurora, Colo.; Fort Chaffee Reserve Center, Fort Smith, Ark., Oakland Army Base, Oakland, Calif.; Fort Hamilton, Brooklyn; Fort McClellan, Anniston, Ala.

-- Army Shrinking or Consolidations: Fort Eustis, Va.; Marine Ocean Terminal, Bayonne, N.J.; Fort Monmouth, Eatontown, N.J.

-- Navy Closings: South Weymouth Naval Station, Mass.; Naval Air Engineering Station, Lakehurst, N.J.; Long Beach Naval Shipyard, Calif.; Indianapolis Naval Air Warfare Center, Ind.; Naval Ordnance Station, Louisville, Ky.; Meridian Naval Air Station, Miss.

-- Navy Shrinking: Corpus Christi Naval Air Station, Texas; New London Submarine Base, Conn.

-- Air Force Closings or Shrinkings: Rome Laboratory, Rome, N.Y.; Ellsworth AFB, Rapid City, S.D.; Kirtland AFB, Albuquerque, N.M.; Hanscom AFB, Bedford, Mass. Reese AFB, Lubbock, Texas.