

Don J. DeYoung, a defense analyst with experience from two prior base closure projects, is a member of the BRAC-05 Technical Joint Cross Service Group (TJCSG). This is the Pentagon's team responsible for assessing laboratories and technical centers, and it is one of seven JCSG's whose analyses were led by the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD).

DeYoung wrote at least eight analytical papers intended to improve the objectivity of the TJCSG's process, the accuracy of its results, and the defensibility of its proposals. One of the papers, "Military Judgment: Necessary — But Not Sufficient," was released by OSD (perhaps inadvertently), buried within the enormous mass of data posted on its official BRAC website. When the rest of DeYoung's papers were requested by Senator Warner, OSD responded by releasing five papers and a memo. The two papers discussed below were not included in that release.

Written in four versions from February through June 2004, DeYoung's first paper, "Shadows on the Wall: The Problem with Military Value Metrics," is an internal account of the apparently deliberate effort to bias these critical metrics to favor the largest centers. He provides evidence showing how the metrics for Intellectual Capital were "dumbed down" and how most metrics for Operational Impact measured gross budgets instead of the successful innovation of new war-fighting capabilities. His suggested methods to fix the problems were apparently not accepted.

"Defending the Technical Infrastructure Proposals of the 2005 Base Realignment and Closure Round," dated May 10, 2005, appears to be his last and most important paper. DeYoung concludes there are serious problems with the defensibility of the TJCSG's proposals. One is the aforementioned issue regarding the metrics for military value, and a second is that most, if not all, of the TJCSG's proposals were formulated well before the certified data were collected and analyzed. A third problem is a flawed study design that minimized joint solutions and maximized "brain drain" by shuffling thousands of technical personnel among sites that remain open. To this DeYoung makes the observation that, "The point of BRAC is to close sites when warranted, and to leave the rest in a stronger competitive and innovative position, not a weaker one."

The fourth problem has to do with the all-important measurements of excess capacity. His discussion of this issue makes it evident that the DoD is withholding critical data. This would violate the basic principle of a fair and transparent BRAC process.

Using data from a May 10 draft version of the TJCSG's final report (see footnote #28 in his paper), he reports current excess capacity to be a minimal 4.4% in FY03 (see p. 6). But more important, the data show that this excess disappears without BRAC action. By the final year of the Force Structure Plan — which must, by law, guide projections of required future capacity — the DoD will have a deficit of required capacity. BRAC actions proposed by the Pentagon will add to the deficit. His suggested methods to fix the problems were again apparently not accepted.

The official May 19 version of the TJCSG report, given to the BRAC Commission, blurs the issue by reporting current excess as 7.8%, based on a 3-year average from FY01 to 03. More importantly, unlike the May 10 draft version used by DeYoung's analysis, data on future capacity is missing from the official version even though the report says the analysis of future capacity was a "discrete phase in the process" (see p. 17) and the data were calculated (see p. A-3).

The most plausible explanation for why the data were not released is because it confirms minimal current excess and no future excess, thus undermining the basic justification for BRAC action, which is to reduce excess. In fact, DeYoung's paper alerted the TJCSG to that issue and considered it to be a defensibility problem for the proposals. Another possibility is that the data were withheld for reasons of inaccuracy or insufficiency. But this is doubtful because DeYoung goes into great detail and confirms the data's credibility by cross-analysis with other sources.

BRAC-05 was approved by Congress based on the DoD's oft-stated need to cut excess capacity, which was restated and certified in its March 2004 report to Congress. If the missing data reveal no problem with excess, then the TJCSG's recommended personnel cuts and closures may well contravene the intent of Congress. These actions furthermore create a risk of inadequate technical support for the Force Structure Plan. This in turn may constitute a substantial deviation from the Plan, which by law gives the Commission authority to reject the Pentagon's proposals.

To ensure an informed public debate on the closure of DoD technical infrastructure and to protect the integrity of the BRAC process, OSD should disclose the May 10 draft version of the TJCSG's final report used by DeYoung's analysis.

DeYoung's last paper also analyzes an outwardly innocuous proposal made by the Headquarters & Support Activities (H&SA) JCSG. It would create a joint base by merging the Bolling Air Force Base and the Naval Research Laboratory (NRL) into the Washington Navy Yard (WNY). A joint base with a common security fence-line, protected and maintained by the WNY, makes good sense. But plans to give the WNY ownership of NRL's research buildings and facilities, along with the centralized management of the lab's financial, facilities, personnel, contracting, and supply systems, do not. Much evidence is offered by DeYoung to show that a laboratory cannot be managed like a shipyard without destroying it.

His paper reveals that the H&SA JCSG proposal would also serve to ratify an ongoing challenge to civilian authority in the Navy. Since 2003, the military side of the Department, through its "Commander, Navy Installations" (CNI), has sought to assimilate NRL's facilities, which belong to the civilian Secretariat. Of the 98 installations within the Navy, NRL is the only one managed by the Secretariat, a deliberate distinction established in law because of its unique Navy-wide and national responsibilities.

The paper cites documents showing that the assimilation of NRL by the WNY (where CNI is headquartered) defies the Secretary of the Navy's stated position in Congressional testimony, disregards existing Secretariat policy, and exceeds orders given by the CNI's boss, the Chief of Naval Operations. Data is also used to establish that NRL's innovations generate billions more in real savings for the DoD than the conjectured cost reductions attributed to centralized base management approaches.

In the end, the assimilation of NRL can likely be done without the CNI initiative or the BRAC proposal. In 2004, OSD's Installation Capability Council appointed the CNI as Chair of the newly formed Common Delivery of Installation Support Working Group. The group's plans to deliver joint installation support do not appear to require BRAC authority to implement. Unless higher level action is taken, operational processes that are predictable, short-term, standardized, low-risk, and focused on efficiency will be levied upon R&D processes that are unpredictable, long-term, high-risk, non-standard, and focused on effectiveness.

Regardless of assurances to the contrary, a world-class laboratory that Senator Warner called "probably the biggest force-multiplier that we have in our military" will wither away under those operating conditions. But NRL is not the only laboratory at risk. All Army laboratories and Navy warfare centers are being assimilated by centralized, standard approaches designed to achieve efficiencies — whatever the cost.