THE UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
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WASHINGTON, DC 20301-3010

ACQUISITION,
TECHNOLOGY
AND LOGISTICS

MAR 23 2011

The Honorable James P. Moran
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Moran:

Thank you for your January 19 letter to the Secretary of Defense regarding Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) recommendation #133. I am responding on his behalf. The Department of Defense (DoD) appreciates your concern about the potential impact of the Mark Center on traffic congestion and the provision of fire and emergency medical services in northern Virginia, and we welcome your recommendations as to actions the Department can take to mitigate the impact. The following responds to each of your recommendations.

Recommendation 1: Waive the Defense Access Road (DAR) program criteria and fund the short- and medium-term transportation improvements from the most recent Virginia Department of Transportation study. The Department recently completed a full evaluation of these improvements and determined that a waiver of DAR program criteria is not necessary. We are proposing to fund these improvements within the BRAC 2005 account, and we will soon submit our re-programming notification to Congress.

Recommendation 2: Subsidize local transit that already serves stops surrounding the Mark Center. DoD personnel will remain eligible for mass transit benefits to subsidize their use of buses and other transportation options. Additionally, under the Army's approved Transportation Management Plan, which was developed in coordination with the City of Alexandria and Fairfax County, the DoD will fund a robust system of shuttle buses between the Mark Center and four Metrorail stations. We are examining whether local transit authorities could provide the service on some of these routes as you suggest. For example, we are talking with the City of Alexandria about the potential for DASH to serve the route connecting the King Street Metrorail station and the Mark Center. Under such an arrangement, the Department would fund the operating costs for these routes as part of the shuttle system.

Recommendation 3: Pay to put local traffic police at intersections near the Mark Center. The Department cannot pay for local police services because such a payment would amount to a tax on the Federal Government. The arrangement that you point to as precedent is actually quite different: the Department contracts with a private firm to provide certain security measures for its facilities. Although the security firm may employ *off-duty* Arlington County police officers, the DoD does not fund the local police department. While the DoD cannot pay for local traffic police, we are looking at other options – for example, requiring contractors that receive DAR funding to assign traffic control personnel to mitigate construction-related congestion.

Recommendation 4: Do not fully implement this BRAC recommendation until sufficient transportation infrastructure is in place to ensure there will be no degradation of service to local intersections. The Department has a statutory obligation to close and realign all installations as recommended in the 2005 BRAC Commission's Report to the President and to do so by September 15, 2011. Although we will continue to work to mitigate the impact of the Mark Center, the Department must comply with the BRAC law.

Recommendation 5: Update a mutual aid agreement for provision of fire and emergency medical services at the Mark Center with all of the signatories of the northern Virginia Emergency Services Mutual Response Agreement. The Northern Virginia Emergency Service Mutual Response Agreement was signed by all parties in March 2009, and it remains in effect even though new personnel from several jurisdictions have not yet affixed their signatures to the document. We expect the agreement to be fully re-signed within weeks.

Thank you again for raising these concerns. We hope we can continue to work with you to smooth the BRAC implementation. A similar letter has been sent to the other signatories of your letter.

Sincerely,

Ashton B. Carter