

ARMY RESEARCH OFFICE, DURHAM, NORTH CAROLINA (JOINT CROSS SERVICE GROUP – TECHNICAL; CO-LOCATE EXTRAMURAL RESEARCH PROGRAM MANAGERS)

SECRETARY OF DEFENSE RECOMMENDATION

Close the Office of Naval Research facility, Arlington, VA; the Air Force Office of Scientific Research facility, Arlington, VA; the Army Research Office facilities, Durham, NC, and Arlington, VA; and the Defense Advanced Research Project Agency facility, Arlington, VA. Relocate all functions to the National Naval Medical Center, Bethesda, MD. Realign Fort Belvoir, VA, by relocating the Army Research Office to the National Naval Medical Center, Bethesda, MD. Realign the Defense Threat Reduction Agency Telegraph Road facility, Alexandria, VA, by relocating the Extramural Research Program Management function (except conventional armaments and chemical biological defense research) to the National Naval Medical Center, Bethesda, MD.

SECRETARY OF DEFENSE JUSTIFICATION

This recommendation co-locates the managers of externally funded research in one campus. Currently, these program managers are at seven separate locations. The relocation allows technical synergy by bringing research managers from disparate locations together to one place. The end state will be co-location of the named organizations at a single location in a single facility, or a cluster of facilities. This “Co-Located Center of Excellence” will foster additional coordination among the extramural research activities of OSD and the Military Departments. Further it will enhance the Force Protection posture of the organizations by relocating them from leased space onto a traditional military installation.

COMMUNITY CONCERNS

The Virginia community argued a “Co-Located Center of Excellence” already exists in Northern Virginia, promoting interagency synergy and providing mission-critical access to their civilian counterparts. DoD’s proposal would isolate defense researchers and impede mission essential exchanges. They asked the Commission to preserve the flexibility to find the best environment for the “Center of Excellence.” However, the community developed alternatives for consideration, which they contended would preserve vital synergistic relationships in the research community, meet AT/FP requirements, and cost less than DoD’s proposal.

The North Carolina community argued existing coordination between Army Research Office (ARO) researchers and adjacent academic institutions and high-tech commercial entities is superior to the so-called “synergy” that might be gained through consolidation with other service research agencies. They stated relocating the facility would not be cost-effective and, existing NCR ARO liaison offices can facilitate interagency synergy requirements. They counter-proposed relocating to federally-owned land or leased space meeting AT/FP requirements available inside Research Triangle Park. They also suggested ARO liaison offices in Fort Belvoir and Arlington, VA should relocate and expand to enhance interoperability between the service organizations.

COMMISSION FINDINGS

The Commission found DoD’s recommendation to collocate Extramural Research Program Managers at the National Naval Medical Center, Bethesda, MD would have a detrimental effect on the research managers’ ability to successfully perform their missions. Placing the organizations onto a military

installation would restrict their key partners' access to them, and the Commission found that visibility and public accessibility is mission critical in the performance of their functions. The Commission also had concerns about the availability of space at the Bethesda Campus. Additionally, the Commission found that a "Co-located Center of Excellence" currently exists in Northern Virginia, which already promotes interagency synergy.

COMMISSION RECOMMENDATIONS

The Commission found that the Secretary of Defense deviated substantially from final selection criteria 1 and 2, and the Force Structure Plan. Therefore, the Commission has rejected the recommendation of the Secretary.