

ARMY RESEARCH LABORATORY, WHITE SANDS MISSILE RANGE, NEW MEXICO (JOINT CROSS SERVICE GROUP – TECHNICAL; DEFENSE RESEARCH SERVICE LED LABORATORIES)

SECRETARY OF DEFENSE RECOMMENDATION

Close the Air Force Research Laboratory, Mesa City, AZ. Relocate all functions to Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, OH.

Realign Air Force Research Laboratory, Hanscom, MA, by relocating the Sensors Directorate to Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, OH, and the Space Vehicles Directorate to Kirtland Air Force Base, NM.

Realign Rome Laboratory, NY, by relocating the Sensor Directorate to Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, OH, and consolidating it with the Air Force Research Laboratory, Sensor Directorate at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, OH.

Realign Air Force Research Laboratory, Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, OH, by relocating the Information Systems Directorate to Hanscom Air Force Base, MA.

Realign Army Research Laboratory Langley, VA, and Army Research Laboratory Glenn, OH, by relocating the Vehicle Technology Directorates to Aberdeen Proving Ground, MD.

Realign the Army Research Laboratory White Sands Missile Range, NM, by relocating all Army Research Laboratory activities except the minimum detachment required to maintain the Test and Evaluation functions at White Sands Missile Range, NM, to Aberdeen Proving Ground, MD.

SECRETARY OF DEFENSE JUSTIFICATION

This recommendation realigns and consolidates portions of the Air Force and Army Research Laboratories to provide greater synergy across technical disciplines and functions. It does this by consolidating geographically separate units of the Air Force and Army Research Laboratories.

A realignment of Air Force Research Laboratory Human Factors Division from Brooks City Base, TX, research to Wright-Patterson AFB was initially part of this recommendation, and still exists, but is presented in the recommendation to close Brooks City Base, TX.

This recommendation enables technical synergy, and positions the Department of the Defense to exploit a center of mass of scientific, technical, and acquisition expertise.

COMMUNITY CONCERNS

The Arizona AFRL Mesa City community argued there is a greater potential for synergistic activities by linking the Warfighting Training Laboratory with other Arizona activities, than from relocating to Wright-Patterson Air Force Base. The community felt the spirit of the DoD recommendation could be better met by re-establishing the Laboratory through a contractual privatization-in-place arrangement. This alternative would enhance future collaboration, improve training research, and reduce the Air Force's infrastructure footprint. The community estimates 20 year cost savings for the privatization-in-place option as \$76 million compared to \$66M estimated by DoD for its relocation recommendation. Community officials claimed Arizona State University would invest \$2M per year to enhance the potential of the Warfighting Laboratory under the community's alternative.

The Kirtland Air Force Base community believed that moving the Mesa Laboratory to Kirtland Air Force Base would better align the mission with two operational units. According to the community, the Warfighting training laboratory needs to be in the field and on an installation with warfighters. The community argued that moving the laboratory to Wright-Patterson (with no warfighting flying missions) will make it less effective.

The Rome Research Site community argued that DoD's assertion that unifying separate laboratory functions will result in superior research and reduced costs is a dubious justification for relocating Rome's sensors mission to Wright-Patterson Air Force Base. The Rome community contends that the recommendation would cause a loss of existing high value synergy for meeting the nation's homeland security and warfighting needs. The community further stated that a field survey at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, shows contractor savings assumptions are grossly overstated. In addition advocates claimed that net costs would exceed projected savings. The community further contended that unique sensor siting costs and frequency allocation issues were not properly considered. They also believed that when accurate and full information is considered, the payback period grows, savings decrease, and one-time costs increase.

The Rome Research Site community also believed that its high military value and cost-effectiveness were the defining reasons why DoD recommended that Rome remain as the headquarters for Information Technology. According to its advocates, relocation and splitting Information Technology functions from Wright-Patterson AFB and Rome to Hanscom AFB does not make sense and should be centralized at Rome Research Site.

The White Sands Missile Range community said DoD's BRAC criteria was supposed to primarily look at military value, with potential cost savings being just one part of the total criteria. They stated that the criteria used by DoD to develop its recommendations were based on the false and preconceived idea that combining all "like disciplines" would automatically create synergy and savings. The community also contends that DoD is under the illusion that moving individuals to a central location would create new "Centers of Excellence"; disregarding the existing Centers of Excellence developed by current test and evaluation directorates. The community believed that proper implementation of the BRAC criteria should have resulted in an expansion of Army Research Laboratory's role at White Sands Missile Range to take advantage of the of the excellent range capabilities, top-flight facilities and future joint operations expansion. The community also expressed concern over increased costs of transiting back and forth from Maryland to New Mexico to accomplish important testing activities that cannot be conducted at Aberdeen Proving Ground, MD.

COMMISSION FINDINGS

The Commission found that DoD rated Rome Laboratory (Rome Research Site) significantly higher in military value than either Wright-Patterson or Hanscom Air Force Base for the information technology research focus area. The Commission supports the concept of establishing and retaining a single site for information technology research, rather than multiple sites proposed by DoD. The Commission found that Rome Laboratory is the headquarters for the Information Systems Directorate, and rather than moving its Information Systems Directorate to Hanscom Air Force Base as originally called for in the Secretary's recommendation, it should be relocated to Rome.

The recommendation to relocate the Army Research Laboratory, White Sands Missile Range, NM to Aberdeen, MD was intended to consolidate geographically dispersed research activities performing similar work. Although Army has not specifically identified the number of research personnel to relocate to Aberdeen Proving Ground, MD, the Commission found that laboratory personnel need to be retained at White Sands Missile Range to support ongoing and future test and evaluation functions performed there. After conducting a cost and savings analysis of this portion of the recommendation, the Commission found that savings would not be realized until 100 years. While there appears to be some overlap in research capabilities resident at both White Sands and Aberdeen, the Commission found the poor return on investment, and the potential adverse impact on system effectiveness at the missile range in New Mexico, were greater than the marginal possible gains in military value.

COMMISSION RECOMMENDATIONS

The Commission found that the Secretary of Defense deviated substantially from final selection criteria 1, 4 and 5, as well as from the Force Structure Plan. Therefore, the Commission recommends the following:

Close the Air Force Research Laboratory, Mesa City, AZ. Relocate all functions to Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, OH.

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Realign Rome Laboratory, NY, by relocating the Sensor Directorate to Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, OH, and consolidating it with the Air Force Research Laboratory, Sensor Directorate at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, OH.

Realign Air Force Research Laboratory, Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, OH, by relocating the Information Systems Directorate to Rome Laboratory, NY.

Realign Army Research Laboratory Langley, VA, and Army Research Laboratory Glenn, OH, by relocating the Vehicle Technology Directorates to Aberdeen Proving Ground, MD.

The Commission found that this change and the recommendation as amended are consistent with the final selection criteria and the Force Structure Plan. The full text of this and all Commission recommendations can be found in Appendix Q.