

REMARKS OF SENATOR EDWARD M. KENNEDY AT THE MASSACHUSETTS HIGH TECHNOLOGY COUNCIL'S ANNUAL MEETING (3-4-05)

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Thank you Chris, for that generous introduction. Some of you may have seen recent press reports about other states and their efforts to protect their bases in the BRAC round. Just this week, a number of governors went in to lobby senior Defense officials to save their bases.

We're hard at work as well. We started this effort over a year ago, and I commend you for all you have done.

Our strong advantage in science and technology is worth a great deal in this effort, and our national defense as a whole will benefit immensely from it.

Obviously the upcoming BRAC round will have a major impact on our armed forces, and on Massachusetts as well.

The BRAC process is designed to allow the Department of Defense to reduce the number of bases in a process that is designed to be immune from political influence. In the initial stages of the process, the Secretary of Defense develops a force structure plan, an inventory of military installations, and establishes criteria for closing and realigning military bases.

The criteria are very important, as they will guide all the decisions that follow. In the last BRAC round, in 1995, those criteria included (1) military value, (2) whether the base had issues with encroachment, (3) whether the base had room to expand, (4) the cost of closing the base, and (5) economic impact of the base.

A decade ago, the focus was on consolidating air force bases with military missions. Hanscom was evaluated based on real estate, the length of its runway. One analysis recommended that Hanscom's Electronic Systems Center be moved to Fort Monmouth, New Jersey, simply because that base had extra space and a similar mission, while Hanscom could not absorb the Fort Monmouth base. Fortunately, wiser heads prevailed.

In just a few days, the President will appoint the BRAC Commissioners, in consultation with the leadership of the House and the Senate. Already, six of the commissioners' names are public. If any of you know them, please let them know how effective the Massachusetts bases are.

By May 16th, the Department of Defense will put together an initial list of possible closings based on the criteria, and will send the list to the

Commission. The Commission will then conduct local and regional hearings on whether the goals and criteria are met in each of the decisions to close or consolidate a base. At least one commissioner will visit each base.

By the end of the summer, the Commission will send the list back to the President with its modifications. The President must then approve the list by November 7th. Congress will then have an opportunity to vote up or down on the list as a whole, not on individual bases.

Secretary Rumsfeld had said that this BRAC round will be the "mother of all BRACs" and that more decisions will be made at the Secretary's level, rather than deferring to each service, as in past rounds.

In past BRAC rounds, the Department did a poor job of evaluating high-tech bases like Hanscom. They simply looked at the availability of office space or the length of the runway, which didn't begin to capture Hanscom's value.

We found that Hanscom and Natick had been criticized in past BRAC rounds because they did not have sufficient excess space to allow consolidation of other missions at their sites.

We knew that the most important thing was to get in early to talk to the Department about BRAC. Under the timeline, we knew that most of the BRAC decisions would be made long before the commissioners were appointed. We knew from past rounds that once we were on the Defense Department list, it was an uphill battle, so our goal now is to stay off the list.

The BRAC process tends to reduce bases to their basic numbers, which makes it difficult to quantify the value of high-tech bases like Hanscom and Natick. The process did not quantify the value of the surrounding high-tech community that contributes so much to the success of their mission. It could not quantify the program disruption and lost connections of attempting to move those bases to a new location.

The criteria needed to take into account all these factors. It was obvious that our outstanding high-tech workforce in the area would not want to leave Massachusetts, and with our strong economy, these workers would find jobs here at home.

We asked the Department to take into consideration the value of academic institutions like MIT, BU, UMass and others whose professors and students do so much research for the military. We also asked them to consider think tanks like MITRE, Lincoln Labs, Draper, and Battelle.

Our high-tech economy has produced excellent results. We're second in the nation in both Defense and non-Defense SBIR grants.

The impressive work at Hanscom allowed coordination of the air war in Iraq, where we had to coordinate thousands of planes of different services and countries. The engineers and scientists at Hanscom and the surrounding companies produced a revolution in military communications. In the first Gulf War, it took 72 hours from the time we identified a target until we fired a missile at it. We couldn't strike fast-moving or emerging targets.

Now, with the help of Hanscom, that process takes only 20 minutes. Our military is able to act on intelligence almost immediately.

Not only is Hanscom important to our National Defense, it is important to our regional economy as well. Hanscom employs nearly 9,000 workers and brings \$3 billion a year to the region. As many of you know, its not just Massachusetts. The entire 128/95 corridor is affected by the base. That's why Senators Judd Gregg and John Sununu from New Hampshire have working with us to keep this crucial asset here.

Natick Soldier Center is also indispensable to the state and our national security. We all know that the soldier is the backbone of our nation's defense, and Natick produces the materials the soldier needs in the future. Gear that's smaller and lighter and has better communications. Massachusetts has expertise in making these improvements, especially in areas such as nanotechnology, sensors, medical research, wireless networking, and next-generation textiles.

Natick has a strong history of success. It has been named the best small DOD lab three of the past four years, and the one year they didn't win was the year they didn't enter.

Natick produces the body armor and helmets that are saving soldiers' lives even today. Walking through Walter Reed Army hospital, you can see the real value of this technology in the soldiers who are alive today because of their high-tech armor.

Natick has even improved the food. When I was a private in the Army, our old C-rations were about as good as the cardboard they came in. Soldiers today can choose from chicken fajitas, Jambalaya, and Cajun rice, just to name a few.

We needed to make sure that this expertise wasn't lost in the BRAC round and avoid a too simplistic evaluation of military bases.

So Governor Romney and I organized a joint effort with Massachusetts and New Hampshire to encourage the Department of Defense to include special criteria for technical centers in the BRAC round. We asked them to include the availability of skilled personnel in the communities around the bases, the strength of local high-tech institutions available to support the base, an evaluation of the base's past performance, and the disruption that would occur if the base is closed.

The Governor and I took our show on the road and met with senior BRAC officials. We knew that the earlier we convinced the Department of the merit of our bases, the more likely they would be evaluated.

We met with Ron Sega, the Director of Defense Research and Engineering, and Ray DuBois, the BRAC leader, to discuss the importance of these criteria. Mike Wynne, the Pentagon's chief acquisition executive, came to Hanscom. Some of you may remember that visit, and how impressed Secretary Wynne was with our presentation. They all understood what we were saying, and acknowledged the high quality of work done in Massachusetts. The Department of Defense acknowledged that we were right, and that the intellectual

cluster in Massachusetts was very important to the success of a base.

We also analyzed the weaknesses of Hanscom and Natick tried to address them.

Hanscom had been criticized for its inability to expand and absorb new missions, and also for the high cost of its operations. We realized that if we were to expand the amount of office space on the base without expanding its footprint, it would be more efficient. We worked closely with urban planners and others to come up with a plan that doubled the mission space of Hanscom, so that it could absorb new missions. The Governor generously agreed to finance the expansion.

Governor Romney and the state legislature have pledged to pay the full cost of the expansion for Hanscom and Natick, and they passed a \$230 million bond bill last month to pay for it.

We've committed to expanding the mission space at Hanscom by 125 percent over a million square feet, which will be able to accommodate an additional 4,000 personnel. We'll have 800 new housing units, 5,000 more parking spaces, and make 120 acres of additional land available in the immediate vicinity. The Commonwealth will also improve access to the base by building new roads and intersections by the base and improving mass transportation.

Support for Natick is just as strong. The Commonwealth proposes to expand the Soldier Systems Center's mission capacity and establish a new technology development organization to improve its collaboration with industry and academic institutions.

The Natick expansion plan will add 110,000 square feet of additional space, including 70,000 square feet for office space, 36,000 square feet for R&D, and 4,000 square feet for a new conference center. The Commonwealth will invest \$18 million in Natick and enable it to accommodate 200 additional personnel.

The Governor and I went on the road again, to Ohio and Virginia, to talk to senior Air Force, Army, and Defense officials about our expansion plan.

We saw General Gregory Martin, the head of Air Force Materiel Command at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base in Ohio, which is the parent organization for Hanscom. He called the plan extraordinary, and said he'd seen such strong community support only once before, when communities has made bids to be the site for the Air Force Academy. That was before I came to the Senate.

General Benjamin Griffin, head of the Army Materiel Command, came to Natick. He was impressed with our plan and our ties with the intellectual cluster here in the state. General Griffin's staff and the people at Natick have been working closely with the Massachusetts Defense Technology Initiative and the Adams Institute to strengthen those ties.

None of this would be possible without the support of the Commonwealth and the local communities around the bases. They realize how valuable these bases are to the state, and they're committed to keeping them in

Massachusetts. Local leaders from Lincoln, Bedford, Lexington and Concord have already endorsed the expansion plan.

They understand that the base is a major asset to the whole community, and we've worked hard to address the communities' concerns. The expansion plan narrows access to Hanscom field, making it less likely the site will be used for a commercial airfield. It also improves the traffic pattern. If the base is closed, all the commuter traffic going to the base each day will become part of the already busy morning rush hour in other areas.

Each of the communities passed resolutions in support of the expansion plan a very impressive documentation of local support and cooperation.

In sum, working together, our local communities, our defense industry, our colleges and universities, and our state have put together the strongest possible effort to protect our bases. I'm optimistic we'll succeed. We've laid the groundwork, and we'll keep working hard in coming months to see that Hanscom and Natick continue to serve our Commonwealth and our country.