

Area Dealt Glancing Blow In U.S. Base-Closing Plan

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More than 2,200 defense employees in Maryland could lose their jobs under a military cost-cutting plan announced yesterday, but new jobs at some Washington area bases could help soften the blow to the region's economy.

Two Navy research and electronics facilities in the Washington area would be hit hard by the plan. The Naval Surface Warfare Center in Silver Spring, an advanced research facility, would lose about 1,250 of its 1,800 civilian employees, including some scientists and engineers. And the Naval Electronic Systems Engineering Center in St. Mary's County, which processes sophisticated systems for the Aegis cruiser, would be shut down, eliminating 1,000 jobs.

Despite those cuts, the local effect of Defense Secretary Richard B. Cheney's plan would be far less than cuts suffered elsewhere in the nation.

Cheney has proposed that some bases in the area be expanded, including adding 1,800 jobs at the Naval Air Test Center in Patuxent,

Md., through transfers from other installations.

Statewide, Maryland would lose about 900 civilian jobs and the District would lose about 100. Virginia, which has one of the highest concentrations of Navy bases in the country, would gain about 1,500 jobs, although most of those would be outside the Washington area.

Most local lawmakers expressed relief yesterday that the area did not fare worse.

"We have been hit badly in a couple of places, but overall we're in pretty good shape," said Sen. Paul S. Sarbanes (D-Md.). "Compared to some states, the impact here is not very great. But I'm concerned about some of the individuals at bases most heavily impacted. These are highly skilled workers and we need to make the case for them."

Sen. John W. Warner (R-Va.) said in a statement that "I am pleased that Virginia has so many essential military installations that appear to have endured the stringent base-closing test. I urge my fellow Virginians to accept this circumstance without boasting."

Cheney's announcement yesterday was the first step in a process

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Md. Suffers Hardest Blow In Base Plan

CLOSINGS, From B1

designed to close 43 military bases and change the size of 28 others across the country. It marks the second time federal officials have taken on the politically difficult task of eliminating installations military officials believe are unnecessary. Several years ago, a similar process targeted Fort Meade in Anne Arundel County and Cameron Station in Alexandria for closing.

In the Washington area, most of the facilities that would shrink significantly or disappear under Cheney's plan are in Maryland. Along with the Silver Spring and St. Inigoes bases in St. Mary's, the David Taylor Research Center in Annapolis would lose about 650 workers and the Naval Ordnance Station in Indian Head would lose about 600 employees.

In the District, the Naval Electronic Systems Engineering Center would lose about 100 positions. And in Virginia, the Harry Diamond Laboratory in Woodbridge would be closed, transferring about 90 jobs elsewhere.

The only Washington area lawmaker to immediately condemn Cheney's proposal yesterday was Rep. Tom McMillen (D-Md.), whose district includes the David Taylor center in Annapolis. McMillen, Sarbanes and other Maryland lawmakers have urged Cheney to put military research centers in a separate category from operating bases and not to close or consolidate any until an ongoing study is complete. McMillen said he would oppose any base closings unless the research centers are removed from the list.

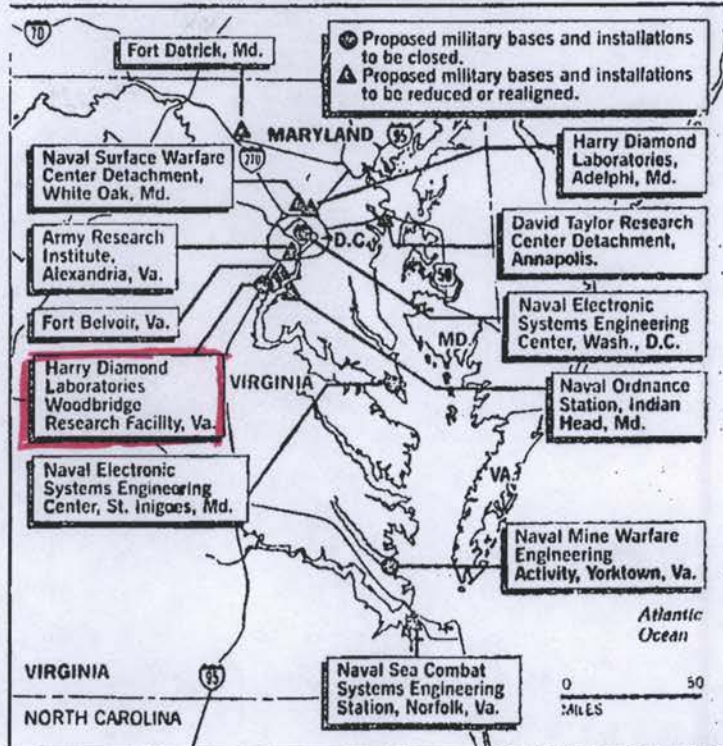
The Silver Spring research facility includes underground chemistry laboratories, three high-speed wind tunnels, a 1.75 million-gallon water tank for testing underwater missile launches and a nine-hole golf course. Under Cheney's plan, most of its research positions would be transferred to a base in rural Dahlgren, Va., just across the Potomac River from St. Mary's County. Other jobs would be cut through attrition.

"No one is particularly keen to go to Dahlgren. There's not much out there," said one employee who declined to give his name.

But most workers, citing previous rumors of moves or closings, seemed to take yesterday's announcement in stride. "We've been through this many times before," said Brian Federline, a machinist

AREA MILITARY INSTALLATIONS AFFECTED

PROPOSED CLOSINGS AND REALIGNMENTS



JOB LOSSES AND GAINS IN D.C. AREA

PROPOSED AREA CLOSINGS

- St. Inigoes, Md.: Naval Electronic Systems Engineering Center—losing 37 military, 1,018 civilian jobs
- Washington: Naval Electronic Systems Engineering Center—losing 41 military, 162 civilian jobs
- Woodbridge: Harry Diamond Lab Woodbridge Research Facility: losing 90 civilian jobs
- Yorktown, Va.: Naval Mine Warfare Engineering Activity—losing 12 military, 206 civilian jobs

PROPOSED AREA REALIGNMENTS

- △ Adelphi: Harry Diamond Laboratories—losing 21 military, 562 civilian jobs; gaining 14 military, 452 civilian jobs
- △ Alexandria: Army Research Institute—losing three military, 54 civilian jobs
- △ Annapolis: David Taylor Research Center Detachment—losing five military, 548 civilian jobs
- △ Fort Belvoir: losing 17 military, 147 civilian jobs
- △ Fort Detrick, Md.: losing nine military, 30 civilian jobs
- △ Indian Head, Md.: Naval Ordnance Station—losing two military, 30 civilian jobs
- △ Norfolk: Naval Sea Combat Systems Engineering Station—losing 12 military, 280 civilian positions; gaining 49 military, 856 civilian jobs
- △ White Oak, Md.: Naval Surface Warfare Center Detachment—losing five military, 1,701 civilian jobs
- △ Patuxent river, Md.: Naval Air Test Center—gaining 1,300 positions.

SOURCES: Washington Post reports and Associated Press

from Hagerstown, Md. "We'll just have to wait and see what happens."

Capt. Richard W. Moore, the officer in charge of the 730-acre, campus-like center, said 550 employees will remain when the cuts are completed in 1997. But he said the center's managers, who over-

see basic research used in such programs as the Strategic Defense Initiative and superconductive wiring, will have to cut back on research.

"You will destroy an awful lot of good work going on," Moore said.

Staff Writer Marylou Tonsignant contributed to this report.