



U.S. Navy

*Nuclear shipyard workers with the docked nuclear submarine George Washington. The BRAC closures would disrupt 90 years of knowledge, skilled workmanship, and culture of excellence that built up the U.S. submarine capability.*

ers, a crucial skill absolutely necessary for getting ships back into the fleet. “If you don’t have enough painters and blasters, you will absolutely impact docking duration of an availability,” he said, “because much of the work that they do is exterior to the ship, and in tanks that are flooded when the boat goes in the water, and that work must be done before it comes out of drydock.” He reported that if Portsmouth is closed, the Navy would have to struggle with a 1,700-person-per-day shortage in skilled crafts people, who do the critical maintenance on Navy ships. Even with Portsmouth, the Navy is still running at about 300 to 500 workers short across the four shipyards, necessitating the deployment of groups of skilled workers among the shipyards in order to do critical work.

Paul O’Connor, the president of the Metal Trades Council, highlighted the cultural environment at the shipyard that makes Portsmouth the most efficient shipyard in the Navy. “More than a decade ago, we began to mold relationships of trust and respect between labor and management,” he said. “And what began all those years ago as individual relationships has evolved into a cultural metamorphosis where today labor is woven into the shipyard fabric.” As a result, the workforce is part of the management of the shipyard and is there-

## Base-Closing Plans Would ‘De-Construct’ Economy

The end of July marked the close of a two-month round of 13 regional hearings by the Base Realignment and Closure Commission (BRAC), concerning the Pentagon’s plans for relocating or shutting down at least 33 major bases, and more than 180 installations and functions of all kinds.

The hearings raised fundamental questions of constitutionality, competence, and military and national security policies involved in the BRAC process—serious questions that have been covered in past issues of *EIR*. They were also rightly used as platforms for state delegations to present expert briefings on vital military-civilian economic concentrations associated with the bases. These national assets range from nuclear technology, to medical research, nanotechnology, and machine tooling.

As one Connecticut expert said on July 6 in Boston, concerning the New London, Conn., nuclear shipyard: “De-constructing this complex would be a disaster.” The regional summaries here are taken from testimony at the hearings.

fore much more able to focus on its mission. “This approach to labor management relations has taken years to cultivate,” he said, “and it can’t be replicated at other shipyards simply by sprinkling meager numbers of our workforce across the country.” He noted that building this kind of relationship has been very hard work and has not happened at other shipyards. “You can transfer the billets,” he said, “but you cannot transfer the culture.”

### Mid-Atlantic Center of R&D: Fort Monmouth

Fort Monmouth, N.J., only 30 miles from New York City, is the home of the Communications and Electronics Command of the U.S. Army Materiel Command. Other tenant commands on the base include the Program Executive Office Command, Control and Communications Systems, Program Executive Office Intelligence, Electronic Warfare and Sensors, and the U.S. Military Academy Preparatory School. Fort Monmouth was originally established as an Army Signal Corps installation in 1917, and named Camp Vail, after Alfred Vail, an associate of Samuel F.B. Morse, who invented the system of dots and dashes used in Morse code. It soon became a center of research and development in radio communications with the establishment of the Radio Laboratory in late 1917. The Radio Laboratory operated