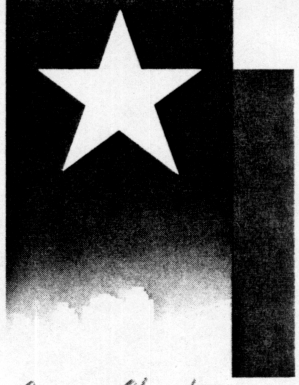
11/21/89
Dr Yeakel Gram



Corpus Christi
The New Star of Texas

November 21, 1989

MEMORANDUM

TO: Loyd Neal, Chairman of Governmental Affairs
Corpus Christi Chamber of Commerce

FROM: Gary Bushell, President
Corpus Christi Area Economic Development Corporation

SUBJECT: Naval Station Ingleside in the New Defense Environment

I have put down a few thoughts to toss around as we decide the next step in support of the base.

CONGRESS WILL NOT HAVE THE LEAD

As the attached stories indicate, the first step in the defense reduction process will be internal, with the services asked to recommend how they would allocate reduced resources. This poses special dangers for the battleship program.

While aircraft carriers cost more to operate, there is a very strong constituency in the Navy for aviation and there has been since WWII. There are more than a few who feel the only serious roll for the surface fleet is to protect carriers.

Should the Navy conclude it was willing to give up battleships in order to preserve a carrier group or some other assets, it will be virtually impossible to reverse that decision at the Department of Defense level or in the Congress. Congress is not going to mandate the Navy operate 45 year old ships with 1,600 personnel on board, if the Navy says their resources need to be spent elsewhere. First, a decision like that tends to produce operating and efficiency numbers that support its conclusion. Second, battleships do not have that strong of a constituency in Congress. If you look at manpower reductions, you have to take four cruisers or five destroyers out of service to get the same reduction in personnel as retiring one battleship.

OUR BATTLESHIP IS NEEDED MORE THAN SOME

The primary mission of the battleship is to show the flag in world trouble spots and to operate in a high intensity environment where a ship might be expected to sustain damage from conventional fire. A battleship would have been very useful in the Faulkland Islands conflict because of its ability to sustain damage from air-launched exocet missiles (which virtually every third world nation now has) and continue to be a platform for 32 cruise and 16 harpoon missiles. That is the kind of conflict which is more likely to occur in the Caribbean, Central or South America than in the North Atlantic, which is supported by the New York Homeport. Should the Navy decide to retire two battleships and keep one on each coast, we should have a strong case.

Corpus Christi Area
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Mr Loyd Neal

HOMEPORT WITH OR WITHOUT THE WISCONSIN

It's never going to be a 600 ship Navy in this new environment and it may or may not have battleships but there are going to be ships and they are going to have homeports. We will soon have a new homeport in an area that is extremely pro-Navy. In the era of an all volunteer force, that is an important asset. Regardless of what happens to battleships in this first round of cuts, we need to be identifying programs that could fit Naval Station Ingleside - everything from reserve forces to drug interdiction. Jim Scott and others who are familiar with Navy assets and how they are deployed, could be very helpful in this regard. But it needs to be an ongoing program.

DECEMBER VISIT TO SECRETARY OF U.S. NAVY

Given the current discussions within the Navy and the investment this community and the state have made to the Homeport effort, I think it would be most appropriate for us to request a meeting with Secretary of Navy, Lawrence Garrett, to do two things. One, to give him a brief background on this area's support for the base and second, pledge our support for a strong Navy program in the future. I think the request for the meeting should be made through the offices of both Senators and both members of the House of Representatives who represent the area.

GB:bsd