

U.S. CONGRESSMAN STENY HOYER

This is a very important convocation of experts throughout our state who can do extraordinary positive things for the growth opportunities for our state and our people, and for those who would like to live in Maryland. We have the kinds of jobs and opportunities they are looking for.

It is absolutely a commitment of the Democratic leadership in the Congress of the United States that we're going to fund our troops fully. Both the Senate and the House bills have all of the funds, plus what the President's asked for, plus we've put more funds in Afghanistan, where we believe the real war on terror is engaged.

John Savich –congratulations are in order. It's a tough job, but he can do it. John, not only are we appreciative of your leadership of this organization, which is going to be critically important to our state, but we are really pleased here in St. Mary's County. There's lots of development and economic activity in St. Mary's County.

We've been through the Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) process in 1989, 1991, 1993, 1995 and 2005. I was very much involved in the 1991 BRAC process, and even more intimately involved in the 1993 and 1995 BRAC as they relate to this region, and in the 2005 BRAC as well. Maryland, overall you can be very proud, not so much of the congressional delegation, which worked together – and you would not be able to tell who was a Republican or Democrat in our delegation. This was a Maryland effort, not a partisan party effort. Everybody worked together as a team.

I was on the Appropriations Committee for 25 years. I've been kicked off the committee because the Majority Leader does not serve on a committee. The Appropriations Committee was critical to the BRAC process in terms not only of funding of BRAC itself, but working with the Governor's Office on enterprises related to BRAC, whether they were transportation, education, or whatever.

General Mike Hayes has been a wonderful asset to our state. General Hayes was selected many years ago by Governor Glendening. Governor Schaefer was governor during the early 1990s, when we were starting this BRAC process. He focused very much on infrastructure needs. Then the Glendening Administration, Secretary Porcari and others, came in and completed the critically important initiatives.

In the Pentagon, and in bases and enterprises across this country, those in the military are talking about who's helping us and who's not, who's facilitating our moves and who's not, who's providing the infrastructure that we need and who's not. Who do we look to in the future as a possible accretion, as opposed to who to look to in the future as a decrease in their enterprise and effort. So what you are doing today is very critically important, and I'd like to thank you for including me in this effort.

In the BRAC process, we've had two bills already. The Democratic leadership in the House is very proud of the work that we have done over the last 90 days. I hope you have a sense that your Congress is working productively in the House of Representatives. We passed eight appropriations bills in the continuing resolution (CR), and included about \$1.5 billion in the CR for the BRAC process, and we have an additional \$3.4 billion in the supplemental appropriation that is pending. There will be some \$5 billion plus for the BRAC process implementation in the CR and the '08 bill.

During last fall's campaign season here in Maryland, I heard a line used several times – by a number of people – that does a very good job of describing the challenges facing those who are charged with guiding Maryland's economic growth. It goes: we must ensure that Maryland's character defines our development, rather than our development defining Maryland's character.

I grew up in Prince George's County, and in 1967 and 1968, it was the fastest growing county in the United States. It was at best a mixed blessing. We are to this day, paying the price for the extraordinarily rapid growth we experienced in Prince George's County in the late 60s and early 70s. We had a sewer moratorium in the 70s because we could not keep up with that growth. That is what that statement means.

St. Mary's County has exploded – a wonderful opportunity for our people here. One of the great challenges is what Governor Glendening talked so much about. Yes we want to grow. Growth is inevitable, growth is appropriate, I am pro-growth. But I am for smart growth. If we do not have smart growth, we will pay a horrific price, and undermine the quality of our life and define our character in a way that we don't want to, particularly those of us who live in a county like St. Mary's, or Calvert or Charles on great stretches of water that people see as providing them with extraordinarily good qualities of life. That line stuck with me because it reminds me that while economic growth is vital to Maryland's future, it must proceed in a way that enhances our communities and maintains the outstanding quality of life.

When I came to Southern Maryland from Prince George's County, people weren't sure they wanted someone from Prince George's County representing them in Southern Maryland. They did not want Prince George's County replicated in Southern Maryland. They had an idyllic rural life, and they wanted to keep it that way. The phrase in the county across the river is "keep Calvert country." They're not doing that, and the pressure's not to do that, any more than we are. I represent five suburban counties. Two of them admit to being suburban counties, and the other three do not, although Charles County would be hard pressed not to admit that. Calvert and St. Mary's certainly do not admit they're suburban counties. St. Mary's County, to its great credit, and because of the base across the street, is the one county that has more people working in the county than commuting out of the county to go to work. We're proud of that fact, and we'd like to accomplish that in some of our other counties if it were possible.

Finding that middle ground that exists somewhere between growth and sprawl will be your primary mission in the coming years – so I couldn't be happier to see that you are gathering here today to discuss the proactive steps that will allow us to make the most of the

opportunities that have been given to us over the years.

During the 1990s, the BRAC process presented some amazing opportunities for growth here in southern Maryland. You've seen them – those of you who drove down 235 when it was a two-lane road. I bought a house in St. Mary's County in 1989 – before redistricting. My brother-in-law bought a large piece of property, and he offered me a very old house that was on the property – a spectacular 12 acres of ground on the Patuxent River and Washington Creek. When we first came down here, 235 was a two-lane road – just that long ago. Now we have a bypass in Hughesville, a major bypass in the center of the world known as the Charles-St. Mary's intersection, and we're doing some very good things down here. We need to take full advantage of the opportunities that this has given us, but we need to be very careful in that process.

If you aren't prepared and properly positioned to maximize the benefits of these chances when they come along, then it becomes profoundly difficult to turn potential into progress and move forward in a way that improves Marylanders lives. That is, after all, our objective.

Here in 2007, opportunity is knocking once again in the form of another successful round of base realignment. In fact, Maryland, I believe, is the most advantaged state over the last 15 years of the BRAC process. I think we are number one. Obviously in 1993 and 1995, we had tremendous accretion here in Southern Maryland. In the 2005 BRAC, in Aberdeen and other parts of our state, including Bethesda and Fort Meade, we've had tremendous growth and that provides us with opportunity and challenge. In terms of that challenge, I want to mention the CAN group, which encourages young people. One of the problems we're having is that so many of our young people aren't able to take advantage of those opportunities because they've not had the education or access to higher education in the way that they should. I want to thank the Patuxent Partnership for the efforts they're making with CAN, which stands for College Access Network.

One of the agendas that we have at the House and Senate level, in terms of the change of leadership and the agenda that we have, is higher education and the need to educate more of our children in the sciences, math and the technical capabilities. If we don't, the businesses that we want to recruit here will look at the skills available to them to hire and they will not see what they want to see. Every day in the Pentagon, they're talking about the communities that offer them the opportunities, the resources and the infrastructure support that they need to continue to operate, expand or consolidate. I want to congratulate CAN on the efforts it's doing, and St. Mary's College and CSM are obviously partnering with others. To the extent that you represent private businesses, please look at the opportunities that CAN provides our community with expanding our capabilities.

The importance of a strong public-private partnership cannot be overstated. The Navy Alliance – we now have one in Charles County, and we started an alliance at Goddard – the partnership between the business community and the public sector on base is absolutely extraordinarily important and critical. That partnership was, in my opinion, part of the reason we were so successful, and that has been replicated in many parts of the country. Ours was

one of the first and one of the most effective.

Maryland is well poised to take advantage of the opportunities we've discussed. We are one of the wealthiest states in the nation, with an economy that grows stronger with each passing day. We have a well-educated, highly-skilled workforce from which to draw a wealth of talent and experience, and we need to do more, and we can do more.

Our proximity to the nation's capital makes Maryland a natural choice when the defense department makes decisions to consolidate its resources. One of the things that I argued when we were talking about what was the Naval Electronic Systems Engineering Activity (NESEA), was that our proximity to Washington, while at the same time being isolated, and we need to keep it isolated in terms of development around it, the opportunities that were provided there are critically important, but we need to meet those opportunities.

All of you deserve a great deal of credit for Maryland being as well-prepared as it is for this massive transition of DOD personnel. When we got 8,000 to 10,000 on-base and off-base contracting personnel, as well as the public sector, that is a tremendous infusion in a county that was then approximately 85,000 people. So that meant about 12 to 14 percent accretion of people, and that's a real challenge for any community and our state. That's what you are working together on.

You see, the BRAC process relies on a time-driven decision that can be reversed. God did not ordain that Pax River or Fort Meade or any other facility in the state of Maryland would stay as it is. Some people take for granted that the BRAC process is over. The BRAC process is never over. It's just that, from time to time, you see it, it is more defined, it is more process driven and visible. In 1989, there was a mini-BRAC. In 1991, 1993, 1995 and 2005, that was very visible and we could engage. I emphasize again – every day a BRAC process is going on in the minds of those in the Pentagon who are faced with extraordinary budget challenges. As we fight the war in Iraq, as we have a budget of some \$500 to \$600 billion for the Defense Department, we are still at about 3.9 percent of GDP, which is one of the lower points we have been in during the last 25 to 30 years. It appears that we are spending a lot of money. So much of it is going to Iraq and Afghanistan that those who run bases like Pax or Fort Meade or Indian Head or St. Inigoes are challenged. We have to make sure that we do our job to enhance their job and their ability to argue, when you save money and consolidate, here is where you ought to do it because we have the best support. The law allows six years to make this move. We've obviously completed Southern Maryland's moves, but we're still looking at implementation at Fort Meade and other places in Maryland.

Without strong community support, from both the public and private sectors, the opportunities before us can greatly diminish or even vanish entirely – and with the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan taking up a great deal of military resources, we must be sure not to give the Department of Defense any reason to reverse or delay the process. I told you we have \$5 billion in the supplemental, which is going to pass. We need to make sure the troops have the resources that they need. They're going to have those resources, but we need to look to efficiency and make sure we're doing our job.

That is why it is absolutely imperative that the public and private sectors work together. There are so many of you in the private sector, and it's important for you to be in this room. That's why it's so important for you who work in the public sector to interface with the private sector in partnership, so we're all singing off the same page. I don't mean that we'll all have the same opinions or the same exact objectives, but we need to have in common objectives that we all understand to be as effective as we can be. When we learned the BRAC process of the 1990s was going to bring 8,000 new jobs to the Naval Air Station, with local leaders we made provision for that growth.

With the Tri-County Council taking the lead, local chambers of commerce and local EDC officials worked with the public sector to prepare for the moves. That's what you're doing. Senator Raley headed up our efforts, and we had an infrastructure committee of the three counties that made a determination – what do we need, where do we need it, and how are we going to get it? It was critically important that it was not a competitive process, but a unity of purpose. They came to Governor Glendening or Secretary Porcari or to your predecessor, Secretary Skinner, and said this is what we need. Because they were unified, we were successful. Because local jurisdictions worked together – that was key.

Because the stakeholders in the BRAC process were highly organized and perfectly clear as to what was needed to fully take advantage of BRAC, they made a case that Governor Glendening and the General Assembly could not refuse. I suppose they could have, but it was so compelling that we knew they would not. They proved to the DOD that Southern Maryland was serious about making this transition of personnel as smooth and painless as possible. As much angst as there was from those who moved from Warminster, outside of Philadelphia, or from Crystal City in Virginia, and there was a lot of angst about moving, I think if you talk to 90 percent of them today, whether they're still at Pax or St. Inigoes or at Indian Head, they will say to you in the final analysis that the community was welcoming and supportive and they believe it was a positive effort.

Partnership between the public and private sectors, and between local jurisdictions as well – along with a proactive approach to confronting the challenges that BRAC presented – was the key. I cannot stress enough just how important that partnership is. The question you must answer right now is not which transportation project or infrastructure improvement is most important. The question before you is whether you are willing to work together towards our shared goals. All of you know that in any enterprise. If the enterprise that is seeking support is divided in what support it wants, the likelihood of getting that support is lessened. To the extent of your unity, you will enhance our success.

Here in 2007, you have an outstanding roster of public officials to work with in every one of the counties involved, some Republicans, some Democrats. We have a governor who's very focused on this issue. I've talked to him about it. As you know, he has named our Lt. Governor, Anthony Brown, as the point person on BRAC, and I don't think there is anyone better to take that job. He's wonderful to work with. He's still a Lt. Colonel, served active duty. I met with him in the Green Zone in Iraq a few years ago when he was there and I was there. He is perfectly suited to work with General Hayes and others and the consortium of the O'Malley Administration that he's put together. We have a number of the secretaries here – the

critical agencies that will be called upon to focus and to respond to enhancing our BRAC success.

Newly installed Secretary John Porcari, my good friend, is a seasoned veteran whose knowledge and expertise are second to none in this area. We are very advantaged. John, I think Governor O'Malley made a wonderful choice. I congratulate you on the job that you have done and the job that you're certainly going to do for all of us in Southern Maryland, as well as in Harford County, Anne Arundel County, Montgomery County and other places in our state. Your lunchtime speaker, DBED Secretary David Edgerley, is focused on BRAC as one of the foremost challenges facing our state. That's a mission given to him by the governor, and it's a mission I know the secretary would take himself. I can tell you that your congressional delegation is engaged and committed to success as well. What we got, there's not a community in the United States that wouldn't have welcomed and thought themselves extraordinarily advantaged. It is therefore difficult to turn around and say you've given us this great advantage, but we need some more money because we've been so advantaged. Therefore, the state's responsibility and the county's responsibility come first, in my opinion. We need to meet that responsibility. I and Senator Mikulski and Senator Cardin will be working very hard. Senator Mikulski now chairs a subcommittee of the Appropriations Committee, so she has great influence. As the Majority Leader, I have some influence as well. We're going to work very closely together to be your partners, whether you're in the private sector or the public sector, to take the maximum advantage we can of these possibilities.

Since the last round of BRAC moves was absorbed here in St. Mary's, the successes we have enjoyed are undeniable. Challenging, yes, but the successes have been undeniable and have advantaged our people. We have maintained one of Maryland's lowest unemployment rates, which is consistently below the state average and frequently below three percent. We led the state in personal income growth in 2001 and 2003. And we even had the highest property re-assessment growth in the state of Maryland in 2006 – at 84.3 percent.

Our progress demanded partnership between a variety of parties and a proactive mindset to take shape. This conference is about a proactive mindset. This conference is about making sure that we are ready, able and knowledgeable to act together as Team Maryland, as Senator Mikulski likes to call our congressional delegation. Your congressional delegation is very much on the team.