

G. V. Sonny Montgomery Weekly Radio Show

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Audio begins at 00:22

Interviewer: This is Congressman Sonny Montgomery's weekly radio report from Washington. You were in Meridian and Columbus last week when Base Closure Commissioners visited. This week you were here with them again at hearings on Capitol Hill. With less than 2 weeks to go what do you think about the prospects for Meridian and Columbus?

Montgomery: First talking about the Columbus and there were 4 commissioners out of 8 came to Columbus Air Force Base. They came in last Wednesday at night, spent Wednesday and then Thursday. Wednesday night Columbus and Golden Triangle people turned out and had a wonderful crowd, I'd say somewhere around 5 thousand. The commissioners were very very pleased what they saw at Columbus Air Force Base and then today when the Secretary of the Air Force testified before the Base Closure Commission here in Washington D.C. to talk about any changes or did the Air Force wanna talk about those bases that Base Closure Commission had added or do you wanna take any off. Columbus came out well, the Air Force is still insisting that they they want to close Reese Air Force Base in Texas and keep Columbus Air Force Base and these other two bases open. So, Columbus is still in good shape, this is the last hearing that we'll have. The commissioners will not go out and look at any more bases. So, it's just about over and then they'll start voting about June the 22nd. Now about Meridian. We had 2 commissioners come to Meridian. It was very hot, but we had about 20,000 people show up and those commissioner were impressed. We got we got the youngest training base in the country at Meridian Naval Air Station. So, we felt pretty good about that. But but today at this hearing where the Navy and the Secretary and Admiral Border the Chief of Naval Operations where they testified, and it was the same do you have any changes or what do you think we should do as commissioners. Well Admiral Border went off off the record or it was his only personal feelings that he was concerned about closing Meridian Naval Air station that it would not give him the search capability. We had problems around the world or if if something happened to Kingsville or Corpus Christi where they're carrying on the other training or Pensacola who could train these these naval aviators. The Secretary of the Navy said Meridian was a great base but still he would go along with their papers that said that Meridian Naval Air Station should be closed and there was an Assistant Secretary from the Secretary of Defense Perry's office and he stated that he thought Meridian should still be closed. And then and then Mr. Lee Cling a commissioner asked the question the first question about Meridian, then right at the end there the the Chairman of the of the Committee Allen Dixon said you don't seem to be very clear on Meridian Naval Air Station and we're fighting and arguing with with Meridian Naval Air Station and he ended up he asked the Navy to come back and say which is more important to the military value or risks or costs. Risk or cost. The way he put it. And now we've got to work with the Navy and see if we can get them kinda give us some way to get out of this thing. But I still say maybe there's a 50% chance that Meridian could come off the list or Columbus as I said early will come off of it. But now we've got we've got some more hard work to do and we're doing everything we can. I'm

working with the two senators I guess out best bet is to go see the Secretary of the Navy and tell him how we feel about Meridian and hope that he would think about the military value about the threats out there and take Meridian and recommend Meridian come off the Base Closure list. It's gotten down to that.

Interview: Thank you Congressman. This has been Congressman Sonny Montgomery's weekly radio report from Washington.

Audio ends at 05:00