

Rendell and Specter at odds on Navy Yard

The mayor urged private investment. The senator has called that a "doomsday scenario."

By Ralph Cipriano
and Marc Duvoisin
INQUIRER STAFF WRITERS

Mayor Ed Rendell and U.S. Sen. Arlen Specter are still arguing over the fate of the Philadelphia Naval Shipyard.

"The Navy is downsizing. There's going to be less work," Mayor Rendell said yesterday during a news conference outside his office. "So we have to understand that. We've got to look ahead."

The mayor spoke after aides handed out a report that says the city cannot rely on the federal government for a bailout that would save the shipyard from closing in 1996. Instead, the report says, the city should look to private investment and retraining for the shipyard's 5,300 workers.

It was that kind of talk that Specter has decried as a "doomsday scenario" that will undercut efforts by him and other elected officials to reverse the Navy's decision to mothball the yard.

Specter and a group of regional political and union officials filed a lawsuit in federal court that is now before the Supreme Court. The suit challenges the legality of the pro-

See SHIPYARD on B4

SHIPYARD from B1
posed shutdown, saying the Navy rigged the base-closing process by suppressing its own experts' evidence that the shipyard should be kept open.

Rendell said yesterday that he supported the lawsuit, but also thought it necessary to prepare for a phase-out of the yard.

"I am not against the lawsuit, nor would I do anything to undermine the lawsuit," he said. Rendell said he contributed \$5,000 in unused campaign funds to help pay for the litigation.

But he said that even if Specter and the others succeed in overturning the Navy's decision, it will take two to three years. During that time, he said, the Pentagon could shut down virtually all operations at the facility, leaving only a skeletal maintenance staff.

"If we stick our heads in the sand and wait for that lawsuit... we'd be doing something that was very, very wrong and hurtful to the workers," Rendell said.

Later that afternoon, speaking on his car phone in Washington, Specter was also talking about the welfare of shipyard workers.

Because of publicity over the city's shipyard report, "there are going to be a lot of despondent people, working men and women in the Navy Yard, that are going to say it's all over," Specter said.

The senator also said he was worried about what effect the city's position would have on federal officials and judges.

"Yes sir, if they see that the city is giving up on the Navy Yard, that has to effect the feel and flavor of the case," he said.

Specter also complained that the mayor had not returned his weekend phone calls over news accounts of the shipyard report. He asked a reporter to give Rendell, who lives "four doors away" in the city, "my home phone number."

For his part, Rendell said he was puzzled by Specter's comments criticizing the administration's report on the Navy Yard. He said Specter knew the administration was preparing the report, contributed material to it and had no reason to be surprised by its contents.

Specter said his staff reviewed the proposed report, and sent the mayor's staff several memos.

"These memos raised a lot of concerns," Specter said. "We never understood that the administration was really giving up on substantial future Navy work or didn't think the lawsuit was worth mentioning."

PHILA INQUIRER
METRO SECTION B
11-30-93