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Military Base Closures: DOD's 2005 Internal Selection Process

Daniel Else and David Lockwood
Analyst and Specialist in National Defense
Foreign Affairs, Defense, and Trade

Summary

The Department of Defense (DOD) is going through a process which will result in recommended actions for base realignment and closure (BRAC) in the United States. DOD is now preparing a list of BRAC actions designed to change the uses of its installations to conform to the current and future needs of its military forces. This list, after approval by the President, must be presented to Congress no later than November 2005. Congress can halt the execution of these actions by then enacting a joint resolution of disapproval within 45 days or before the adjournment sine die of the session, whichever occurs first. This report outlines how DOD has organized to gather and analyze BRAC-related data and document the process. It also describes DOD's selection criteria process, and the Secretary of Defense's requirement to certify the need for a BRAC round. The report then explains how the list of recommended BRAC actions will be drawn together for submission by the Secretary of Defense to the President. This report will be updated as necessary.

Introduction

Through the BRAC process, DOD is responding to statutory requirements while attempting to transform the U.S. military services. The Defense Base Closure and Realignment Act of 1990 (as amended) provides the exclusive statutory authority and outlines the process for the 2005 round of base realignment and closure (BRAC 2005) in the United States. This authority expires on April 15, 2006. In addition to reducing excess capacity of its bases, the Department of Defense, through BRAC 2005, intends to transform its installation infrastructure to coincide with its other transformation initiatives — changing an organization created to fight the Cold War to one that will provide a military security to the United States for the foreseeable future.

The Department of Defense has already taken significant steps in the process to implement BRAC 2005 by preparing three major analytical documents: a list of BRAC selection criteria; a Force Structure Plan; and a Comprehensive Base Inventory. The **Selection Criteria** provide the general guidance from which detailed measures for

creating BRAC actions will be drawn. The **Force Structure Plan (FSP)** assesses the long-term security threats to the United States, and the projects the means necessary to counter them. The **Comprehensive Base Inventory** describes the “baseline footprint” of installations that will be affected by BRAC 2005.¹

In assessing the need for a new round of base closures and realignments, DOD projected the force structure that will exist in 2009 and compared it to the much larger force that existed in 1988, the year just prior to the commencement of the first round of base closures. The Department then compared the base inventory existing then with the current inventory. The Secretary then concluded that the base infrastructure that exists now exceeds the requirements of the force that will exist in 2009, justifying BRAC 2005.

On March 25, 2004, the General Accounting Office (GAO) testified before Congress on the new BRAC round. It reported that the 2005 selection criteria follow a framework that is similar to that employed in prior BRAC rounds, with “more specificity” in selected areas — especially in those regarding military value.² It also said that, while the criteria were sound, DOD needed to consider total costs to DOD and other federal agencies, as well as environmental costs, in its analyses.

Organization of BRAC within the Office of the Secretary of Defense

The Secretary of Defense has delegated broad BRAC policy and decision making responsibilities to the Deputy Secretary of Defense, who chairs an **Infrastructure Executive Council (IEC)**. The council consists of 10 members, including the secretaries of the military departments, the chiefs of staff of the military services, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics. The council creates the BRAC selection criteria, makes policy decisions regarding the BRAC process, coordinates the efforts of the analytical organizations, and recommends the resulting list of actions to the Secretary of Defense.

Each military department (Army, Navy, and Air Force) is responsible for BRAC data analysis relevant to *military operations*, and each has formed appropriate analyst teams.

An **Infrastructure Steering Group (ISG)**, created within the Office of the Secretary of Defense, is responsible for BRAC analysis relevant to *defense functions*. This ISG is chaired by the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics. The Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the military department assistant secretaries for installations, the military service vice chiefs of staff, and the Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Installations and Environment are also members.

¹ U.S. Department of Defense. “Report Required by Section 2912 of the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Act of 1990, as amended through the National Defense Authorization Act for FY2003,” March 2004, p. 2.

² U.S. General Accounting Office. “Military Base Closures: Observations on Preparations for the Upcoming Base Realignment and Closure Round,” (GAO-04-558T), March 25, 2004, p. 3.

Seven functional analysis teams subordinate to the Infrastructure Steering Group will perform the actual analysis. They include (1) education and training; (2) industry; (3) supply and storage; (4) headquarters and support; (5) medicine; (6) technology; and (7) intelligence. Three of these seven Joint Cross-Service Groups are headed by uniformed officers, while the other four are chaired by civilians.

A Base Realignment and Closure Office exists within the Office of the Principal Assistant Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Installations and Environment. Its director is responsible for providing support to the seven analysis teams. The Inspector General of the Department of Defense is available to the defense agencies, military departments, and the Joint Cross-Service Groups, to provide advice and review the accuracy of BRAC data as well as the certification process (as explained below).

Selection Criteria, Force Structure Plan, and Certification

The Secretary of Defense has published a list of eight discrete “selection criteria” created by the Infrastructure Steering Group.³ These will guide the collection of defense installation data and analysis by the military services and the Joint Cross-Service Groups within the Office of the Secretary of Defense. This will lead to the creation of the list of recommended BRAC actions to be released in May 2005. These criteria form the basis for the measures and factors used by the military departments and Joint Cross-Service Groups in their analyses.

As required by the legislation creating BRAC 2005, the Secretary has submitted a 20-year Force Structure Plan to Congress. The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff was responsible for the writing of this classified document. It broadly outlines the defense organization that the future base infrastructure will support. A revised Force Structure Plan, if needed, is to be submitted with the Department of Defense budget for FY2006. All BRAC 2005 recommendations are to be based on the final Force Structure Plan.

The BRAC enabling legislation requires the Secretary of Defense to certify that the 2005 BRAC round is necessary. The Secretary issued that certification on March 23, 2004, stating:

I hereby certify that the need exists for the closure or realignment of additional military installations, and that the additional round of closures and realignments that was authorized by Public Law 101-510, as amended, would result in annual net savings for each of the military departments beginning not later than fiscal year 2011.

To make this determination, the Department established a baseline force and major installation inventory as of 1988 (reflecting the Department as it existed before the first BRAC round). It then calculated the likely size of the force in 2009 and used that to estimate the infrastructure then needed. This notional future infrastructure was found to be smaller than the current inventory of installations, thereby justifying the Secretary’s certification to Congress.

³ The list of selection criteria can be found on line at the DOD BRAC website: [<http://www.dod.mil/brac/>].

Creating the Recommended BRAC Action List

DOD has created an internal BRAC process that includes extensive documentation and analysis of defense functions (supply, training, etc.) and military operations. The Infrastructure Executive Council will combine these analyses with additional considerations in creating the recommended BRAC action list.

Documentation

Records. Each of the defense organizations and the Joint Cross-Service Groups are required to develop and keep:

- Descriptions of how BRAC policies, analyses, and recommendations are being made, including minutes of all deliberative meetings;
- All policy, data, information, and analyses considered in making BRAC recommendations;
- Descriptions of how recommendations meet BRAC selection criteria and follow the Force Structure Plan and current base infrastructure inventory; and
- Documentation for each BRAC recommendation.

These records will be released to the BRAC Commission along with the Secretary's list of BRAC recommendations.

Additional Deliberative Considerations

The military departments and Joint Cross-Service Groups are considering consolidating or relocating active and reserve component (federal or National Guard) activities onto any retained base where it make operational and economic sense. Before recommending changes to **reserve component** activities, the analyzing organization must complete a demographic study to ensure that a new location will satisfy the recruiting requirements of the reserve component unit.

The data and analyses used in creating BRAC recommendations **will not be released** until the Secretary has forwarded his list to the 2005 BRAC Commission. The Department of Defense includes the factors and measures used to generate data calls in its definition of "data and analyses."

The statute establishing the 2005 BRAC requires the Secretary of Defense to consider any **notice received from a local government** in the vicinity of a military installation that the government would approve of the closure or realignment of the installation. Recommendations not supporting such community requests must be explained in the documentation provided to the Commission and congressional defense committees.

Internal Control Plan. Each element involved in the process is required to develop a written plan, the Internal Control Plan, that lays out the process by which the accuracy of all data collection and analysis is to be carried out. The intent of this requirement is to create a "chain of custody" for the information used in BRAC analysis and to establish uniform guidance for defining each data element and the sources from

which it is derived, the methods for verifying the accuracy of data, the procedures for checking its accuracy, and the protection of data from premature release. The military departments, defense agencies, and the Office of the Secretary of Defense are required to incorporate comprehensive auditor participation to ensure a thorough assessment of the data and the process. Also, audits will assess the specific applications of data calls and the accuracy of the data collection process.

Collection of Data

All data used by the Department of Defense in generating BRAC recommendations must be “certifiable.” This means that they must be generated by, and traceable to, officials within the military departments (installation managers) who are specifically appointed to the tasks of data collection and certification. This data must be submitted in response to electronic or hard copy requests (“data calls”) issued by the Joint Cross-Service Groups to the military departments. Once created, this data must be certified as true and accurate by the designated official before it is forwarded to the analytical organizations.

The initial call for data was issued during January 2004. Additional calls are anticipated as new factors and measures are adopted throughout the analytical stage of the process.

Analysis of Data

Three principal analytical tools are used during the BRAC process, an Optimization Methodology, an Installation Visualization Tool, and the updated COBRA.

Installation Visualization Tool. The Air Force has been given responsibility to develop computer programs combining satellite and other imagery, graphics and analytical tools to enable the user to visualize and analyze current and future uses of each installation’s resources. This will be of use principally during the base reuse and realignment portion of the BRAC process and is not described further here.

Optimization Methodology. The Navy is responsible for creating the linear programming tools that will be used by the Joint Cross-Service Groups in analyzing military value. The service has subcontracted this task to the Center for Naval Analyses, a federally funded research and development center. These computer models will be customized for the requirements of each Joint Cross-Service Group (medical, technology, education and training, etc.) and will be run repeatedly to assess alternative distributions of functions across various basing configurations in order to determine the optimal distribution of functional capability. This will be the principal analytical tool guiding the creation of recommended BRAC actions.

COBRA. An updated version of the Cost of Base Realignment Actions, or COBRA, will be used by the Joint Cross-Service Groups and Department of Defense agencies to calculate the costs, savings, and return on investment of each proposed realignment and closure action.

Each analysis team or group will use the same pool of certified data in its deliberations, subjecting it to analysis by its own customized version of the Optimization Methodology and the COBRA.

Merging Operations and Functions into a List of BRAC Actions

The Infrastructure Executive Council, chaired by the Deputy Secretary of Defense, will be responsible for using the analyses generated by the Joint Cross-Service Groups and the military departments to create a list of recommended BRAC actions for the Secretary of Defense. The Secretary will, in turn, forward his approved list of recommendations, along with the supporting documentation described above, to the BRAC Commission.

For additional information on BRAC, see CRS Report RL30051, *Military Base Closures: Agreement on a 2005 Round*, and CRS Report RL32216, *Military Base Closures: Implementing the 2005 Round*, both by David Lockwood, and the CRS web page, *Defense: Base Closure/Defense Conversion*, maintained by Linwood Carter, at [<http://www.crs.gov/reference/topics/defense/closure.shtml>].

Steps in the BRAC Process	
Dec. 03	Initial base selection criteria
Feb. 04	Final base selection criteria
Mar. 04	Force Structure Plan, Base Inventory, and BRAC requirement certification submission *
May 04	GAO certification evaluation
Mar. 05	Commission nominations sent to Senate *
May 05	DOD-recommended actions list due to Commission
July 05	GAO report on DOD list
Sept. 05	Commission actions list to President
Sept. 05	Presidential review complete
Oct. 05	Revised Commission actions list to President (if needed)
Nov. 05	Presidential actions list to Congress, potential for joint resolution of disapproval *
Apr. 06	Commission terminates
2005-2011	BRAC actions carried out

* Failure terminates BRAC process.

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