

DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE

TESTIMONY TO THE

DEFENSE BASE CLOSURE AND REALIGNMENT COMMISSION

JOINT STATEMENT
OF

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Mr. Chairman and distinguished members of the Commission, we are pleased to appear before you today to discuss the Air Force base closure and realignment recommendations. We look forward to working with you as you consider all Department of Defense recommendations over the next few months.

Overview

Downsizing infrastructure is a difficult task, as all Air Force bases are outstanding installations. They stand as a credit to our Nation as a whole and to the exceptional communities that support them. However, we must make difficult decisions and reduce and realign our infrastructure, to posture ourselves for the security challenges we face, and to preserve our limited resources for readiness and modernization. The Air Force recommendations represent bold steps to accomplish those ends. We will move our smaller force structure into fewer, larger, and more effective combat squadrons. Air Force recommendations include 10 base closures and 62 base realignment actions. Each of these individual closure or realignment recommendations may affect multiple bases. Our 72 actions will affect 115 of the 154 installations the Air Force considered within the BRAC process.

Air Force Goals for BRAC

The Air Force recommendations reaffirm the Department of Defense's commitment to defend the homeland, establish a capabilities-based defense strategy, and challenge the military departments to transform themselves to better meet new threats in a changed security

environment. Consistent with the goals outlined by the Secretary of Defense, the Air Force established four BRAC goals to support right-sizing of the force and to enhance our capabilities:

- Maximize war-fighting capability efficiently.
- Transform the Total Air Force by realigning our infrastructure to meet future defense strategy.
- Maximize operational capability by eliminating excess physical capacity.
- Capitalize on opportunities for joint activity.

We are pleased to report that the Air Force would meet its goals through these recommendations, and in turn meet the overarching goals set for the Department by the Secretary of Defense.

Maximizing War-Fighting Capability

The Air Force recommendations maximize our war-fighting capability by effectively consolidating older weapons systems into fewer, but larger squadrons. These more optimally sized units are more efficient and more operationally effective because of economies of scale. For example, we base weapons systems such as the F-16 fighter to allow us to leverage common support requirements for these weapons systems while reducing cost and duplication. And we consolidate like weapons systems where practical at the fewest operational locations; for example, we place the entire B-1 bomber fleet at Dyess AFB, Texas, and the entire active duty CONUS C-130 tactical airlift fleet at Little Rock AFB, Arkansas.

Our recommendations increase almost all fighter squadrons from 15 aircraft to 18 or 24 aircraft. The Air National Guard's F-15 squadron at Hickam AFB, Hawaii, is the only exception to this fighter basing strategy because of location and recruiting. Hickam's F-15 fighters are important to Homeland Defense, but Hawaii's geographic location can pose training challenges, as it is expensive to host adversarial fighter units for training. In addition, Hickam's Air National

Guard wing also flies KC-135 aircraft and will have a C-17 mission; therefore, leaving the unit sized at its current 15 fighter aircraft to recruit to these other weapons systems was the right solution.

Our recommendations also increase mobility squadrons from 8 aircraft to 12 or 16 aircraft. We made some exceptions to increasing reserve component mobility squadron sizes, either because of capacity or recruiting. We applied military judgment to size these units either to the maximum available installation capacity at no extra cost, or at the current or maximum force structure size that capitalizes on that location's recruiting demographics.

Our recommendations leverage the inherent strengths and advantages of our Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve forces to maximize the Air Force's capabilities. At the same time, we have maintained the balance across the active duty and reserve components, both in aircraft and in manpower. Reserve component manpower that becomes available as a result of Air Force BRAC recommendations will be reinvested into emerging Air Force missions. Our recently established Future Total Force (FTF) office on the Air Staff will work with the Reserve Component and the Adjutant Generals to determine how to distribute those emerging missions across Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve forces and organizations. BRAC and the FTF are fundamental, complementary elements that will reshape the Air Force for the future.

Meet Future Defense Strategy

The Air Force recommendations also realign Air Force force structure to better support future defense strategy. The strategic objectives of the 2005 National Defense Strategy include defending the United States homeland from direct attack, securing strategic access, and retaining global freedom of action. The Air Force recommendations help secure the homeland

by providing the required capability to meet North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD) and United States Northern Command (USNORTHCOM) missions from our proposed constellation of bases. Our recommendations ensure we retain the right bases to support enduring missions of Global Strike, Global Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance, and Global Mobility, and ensure we maintain unimpeded access to space. For example, we retain C-17s near new Army Stryker brigades in Alaska and Hawaii, providing strategic mobility and response in the western Pacific. Our recommendations also retain the right bases for emerging needs, such as the Joint Strike Fighter, Unmanned Aerial Vehicles, and the Joint Unmanned Combat Aerial System.

Eliminate Excess Physical Capacity

As mentioned earlier, we have made 10 closure and 62 realignment recommendations that will eliminate excess capacity within the Air Force. Of the 142 Air Force installations that have operational flying missions today, our recommendations reduce that number by 28 flying units, representing a 20% reduction. We reduce our excess flightline infrastructure by 37%, but still retain sufficient ramp space for surge, emerging missions, or to accommodate Air Force aircraft permanently based overseas in the event we ever have to return those forces. We also reduce excess building and facility infrastructure by 79%, yet retain sufficient square footage for surge or emerging missions. Though we eliminate this excess, we maximize operational capability and maintain the surge capacity we need.

Capitalize On Opportunities For Joint Activity

Finally, our recommendations, independently and in conjunction with recommendations from other Services and the Joint Cross-Service Groups, capitalize on opportunities for joint

activity by hosting sister Service combat and combat support organizations. For example, we will host the Headquarters for the Third Army--the Army's United States Central Command (USCENTCOM) supporting component command--at Shaw AFB, South Carolina, where it will be located with the Air Force's USCENTCOM component, Headquarters Ninth Air Force.

Through the Department's recommendations we will host the joint initial training location for the Joint Strike Fighter at Eglin AFB, Florida, to provide Air Force, Navy, and Marine operators and maintainers with a location that meets the needs of all -- while providing easy access to the range and airspace complexes near the Gulf of Mexico. Eglin AFB will also host the Army's Seventh Special Forces Group, pairing this combat unit with Air Force special operations forces and the robust training areas of the Eglin complex.

While we transfer ownership of Pope AFB, North Carolina, to the Army at Fort Bragg, enabling other Army recommendations that move forces to Fort Bragg, we retain an airlift squadron and an aerial port capability to continue to support the Army's XVIII Airborne Corps. In addition, our recommendations place optimally sized A-10 fighter squadrons in proximity to Fort Polk, Louisiana, and Forts Benning and Stewart, Georgia, to provide the close air support assets needed to support joint training.

Air Force BRAC Process

The Air Force's BRAC analysis was grounded in the force structure plan, our physical infrastructure inventory, and the BRAC selection criteria. Our Air Force infrastructure analysis was shaped by three underlying tenets. First, military value, both quantitative and qualitative, was the predominant factor. Second, all installations were treated impartially, regardless of

whether or not they were considered for closure or realignment in the past. Third, military value was not determined solely on an installation's current mission, but also on its capacity to support other enduring Air Force missions.

The Base Closure Executive Group (BCEG) developed Air Force BRAC recommendations. The BCEG was comprised of 12 general officers and civilian executives representing the Air National Guard, Air Force Reserve, and a wide array of Headquarters Air Force functional staff areas. The Air Force Audit Agency was integrated throughout our entire process to ensure Air Force data collection and analytical processes were comprehensive and auditable.

Rather than focus on fungible attributes of an installation, such as assigned personnel or equipment and forces that could be relocated, our military value assessment stressed installation characteristics that were outside the control of the Air Force or would be difficult to replicate elsewhere without great expense or complexity. These characteristics include an installation's geographic location and proximity to other physical features or defense activities, terrain, and prevailing weather. Those installation characteristics that would be difficult to reconstitute elsewhere might include high volume military training airspace, the local transportation infrastructure, intercontinental ballistic missile silos, or basic airfield infrastructure.

The Air Force assessed the military value of its operational bases using certified data obtained from the individual installations. We not only considered the physical capacity of our installations, but also the operational capacity--to include airspace and ranges--and the natural capacity. Applying operational capability data collected through a Web-based tool to BRAC Selection Criteria 1-4, and the weighted guidance assigned by the BCEG, each of the 154

installations the Air Force considered under BRAC received a score for each of eight mission areas considered by the BCEG. These eight mission areas were: fighter, bomber, airlift, tanker, space, Special Operations Forces (SOF)/Combat Search and Rescue (CSAR), Command and Control, Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (C2ISR), and unmanned aerial vehicles. The objective was to find an optimal long-term basing plan that, within physical and operational constraints, located the Air Force's long-term force structure at installations that had the highest overall military value.

The Air Force started the scenario development process using an optimization model developed by the Air Force Studies and Analysis Agency. We then deliberated to refine the optimization model output until we achieved a set of potential scenarios. Once an optimal basing plan was identified, the Air Force analysis teams developed a related group of potential base closure and realignment options to implement this basing plan. The BCEG reviewed these proposals and, often with refinement, selected the most promising to become scenarios and to undergo further analysis. Again, an iterative process of review and refinement continued until the BCEG approved each candidate recommendation for consideration by the Department of Defense review group, the Infrastructure Executive Council (IEC).

The costs and savings for each scenario were determined through application of a costing model, the Cost of Base Realignment Action (COBRA). Air Force scenario analysis also considered BRAC Selection Criteria 6-8: the economic impact on the communities; the ability of the infrastructure of the communities to host missions, forces, and personnel; and the environmental impact. Unlike the first four selection criteria, which were installation-dependent, selection criteria six, seven, and eight were scenario-dependent, meaning the information

gathered for these criteria was related to a proposed action, not to the status quo. However, certain factors related to selection criteria seven and eight also were captured in military value analysis as they contributed to an installation's ability to support future and existing missions and the availability and condition of land and airspace.

During this process, scenarios from other Services that affected Air Force installations were worked through the Joint Action Scenario Team (JAST). Opportunities for joint basing were worked into Air Force scenarios and formal analysis, and were considered as part of the development of the Service's own candidate recommendations. Similarly, scenarios from the seven Joint Cross Service Groups (JCSG) that affected Air Force installations were worked in coordination with the Air Force.

Anticipated Costs and Savings and Implementation Schedule

We estimate a total savings and cost avoidance of over \$2.6 billion dollars for both personnel and infrastructure during the implementation years, and savings and cost avoidance of over \$1.2 billion each year thereafter. The Air Force will reinvest any reserve component manpower made available as a result of BRAC realignments or closures into other high priority Air Force missions, including emerging missions.

The Air Force has begun to develop an implementation schedule for these 2005 recommendations should they be approved, and we will work closely with the Air National Guard, the Air Force Reserve, and our active duty major commands to further develop and refine this schedule.

In prior rounds of BRAC, the Air Force established an excellent record of closing bases

as quickly as possible. This aggressive approach provides the quickest savings to the Air Force and assists the local communities in their efforts to develop the closure and implementation plans necessary to begin economic revitalization. The Air Force will ensure that efforts are undertaken to maximize savings at these installations and to work closely with the local communities to facilitate a prompt transition and the best reuse opportunities.

Summary

In conclusion, BRAC offers the Air Force the opportunity to accomplish four things. First and foremost, it transforms our smaller force structure into fewer, larger, more effective combat squadrons. Second, it ensures the transformed force and the infrastructure we retain provides the capabilities necessary to support the future defense strategy. Third, it increases overall efficiency by eliminating excess plant capacity while retaining the surge capability we need. Fourth, it supports joint basing initiatives in smart ways.

Mr. Chairman, we have looked to the future for our mission and our infrastructure requirements, and these recommendations provide for an Air Force that is and will be capable of responding to any challenge, in any theater, at any time. Thank you again for this opportunity to appear before you today. Our staff will be made fully available to answer the Commission's questions as it considers the Department's recommendations.