

Force Structure Provisions

Legislation at Issue: Sections 2842(a) and 2843 of H.R. 1588, the National Defense Authorization Bill for FY 04:

- Requires the Secretary to use the “1991 Base Force force structure” plan in making closure or realignment recommendations.
- Mandates an assumption that “there are no installations available outside the United States for the permanent basing of elements of the Armed Forces.”

Main Message: Rationalizing the Department’s infrastructure based on force levels that are a vestige of old threats and strategies jeopardizes the Department’s readiness to meet current and future threats to national security.

Key Points:

- DoD’s ability to conduct a comprehensive BRAC round should not be undermined by inflexible assumptions regarding surge or overseas basing.
 - To be a meaningful basis for developing national defense strategy, a force structure plan must be based on an assessment by the Secretary of the probable threats to national security in the future.
 - An outdated force structure ignores the significant advances made and knowledge gained in the last decade.
 - The Department should exploit, rather than ignore, the potential for new capabilities and operational concepts to achieve battlefield dominance with smaller forces, improving our capabilities to respond.
 - It is not necessary to artificially inflate force structure needs to ensure retention of surge capacity.
 - Previous BRAC military value selection criteria included the ability to accommodate future surges in force levels.
 - In 1999, DoD looked closely at its ability to accommodate surge and found that even after three rounds of base realignments and closures it could accommodate the reconstitution of 1987 force structure - a more robust level than the 1991 Base Force.
 - Maintaining excess capacity wastes resources better spent on defense capability.
 - It is more cost effective to rebuild or obtain in the private sector those assets that have been disposed of, if they should ever be needed, than to retain them in a fallow condition.
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