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*U.S. Military Overseas Basing: New Developments and
Oversight Issues for Congress*

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January 26, 2006

Abstract. On August 16, 2004, President Bush unveiled one of the most sweeping changes to the numbers and locations of military overseas basing facilities since the beginning of the Cold War. Announcing a plan that had been under study for approximately three years, the Department of Defense would move thousands of personnel from installations in Europe and Asia to bases within the United States. Simultaneously, the military would shift its approach away from huge bases such as Ramstein Air Force Base, which has all of the comforts of the U.S. - family housing, supermarkets, convenience stores, theaters, and so forth, to reliance on more austere facilities in Central Asia, Africa, and the Middle East that would be less elaborate and lack most of these benefits. In 2004, the Congress chartered the Commission on the Review of Overseas Military Facility Structure of the United States (also known as the Overseas Basing Commission) to provide an independent assessment of the DOD overseas basing needs.¹ The DOD plan could prompt budget and oversight decisions for the second session of the 109th Congress. These might include approval, modification, or rejection of the DOD proposal. Congress could also have to consider appropriations requests for construction of infrastructure at new overseas or expanded continental United States (CONUS) locations, as well as fund increased impact aid to local communities. Congress would have to oversee new acquisition programs for mobility and logistics capabilities (such as airlift) needed for the strategy. Congress may also consider whether the plan will be executable given the results of the 2005 round of the Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) process. Finally, the Senate may consider new or revised treaties with new basing partners submitted for its advice and consent.

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January 26, 2006

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U.S. Military Overseas Basing: New Developments and Oversight Issues for Congress

Summary

On August 16, 2004, President Bush announced a program of sweeping changes to the numbers and locations of military basing facilities at overseas locations, now known as the Integrated Global Presence and Basing Strategy (IGPBS) or Global Posture Review. Roughly 70,000 personnel would return from overseas locations from Europe and Asia to bases in the continental United States (CONUS). Other overseas forces would be redistributed within current host nations such as Germany and South Korea, while new bases would be established in nations of Eastern Europe, Central Asia, and Africa. In the Department of Defense's (DOD) view, these locations would be better able to respond to potential trouble spots. The second session of the 109th Congress could have to consider approval of the DOD proposal, or review appropriations requests for construction of infrastructure, increased impact aid to local communities, and new acquisition programs for mobility and logistics capabilities (such as airlift). Finally, the Senate may have to consider ratification of new or revised treaties.

In August 2005, the congressionally mandated Commission on the Review of Overseas Military Facility Structure of the United States (also known as the "Overseas Basing Commission") formally reported its findings. It disagreed with the "timing and synchronization" of the DOD overseas re-basing initiative. It also saw the initiative as potentially at odds with stresses on the force from operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, and possibly hampering recruiting and retention. The Commission questioned whether sufficient interagency coordination had occurred. It expressed doubts that the military had enough airlift and sealift to make the strategy work, and noted that DOD had likely underestimated the cost of all aspects associated with the moves (DOD budgeted \$4 billion, the Commission estimated \$20 billion). DOD disagreed with much of the Commission's analysis. Meanwhile, some have voiced concern that the DOD plan would harm long-standing alliance relationships, while others questioned DOD's plans to accommodate the thousands of troops returning to the U.S. Critics also argued that the 2005 Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) round, which entered into force on November 9, 2005, and the Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR), which is to be completed in early 2006, should have been finalized before completing the overseas basing plan.

Congress acted on some of its concerns with the re-basing plan in the FY2006 Defense Authorization Act, tasking DOD with follow-on studies of overseas basing criteria and mobility requirements. It also directs DOD to further examine the state and local impacts on installations gaining personnel from the re-basing implementation.

Recent international diplomatic and security developments could further influence debate on overseas basing. Uzbekistan, one of the test cases for the new strategy, recently evicted U.S. forces from the base in that Central Asian nation. Some analysts argue this eviction was prompted by Russia and China, who have begun to express concern with U.S. expansion of influence in the region. This report will be updated as necessary.

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U.S. Military Overseas Basing: New Developments and Oversight Issues for Congress

Introduction and Issues for Congress

On August 16, 2004, President Bush unveiled one of the most sweeping changes to the numbers and locations of military overseas basing facilities since the beginning of the Cold War. Announcing a plan that had been under study for approximately three years, the Department of Defense would move thousands of personnel from installations in Europe and Asia to bases within the United States. Simultaneously, the military would shift its approach away from huge bases such as Ramstein Air Force Base, which has all of the comforts of the U.S. — family housing, supermarkets, convenience stores, theaters, and so forth, to reliance on more austere facilities in Central Asia, Africa, and the Middle East that would be less elaborate and lack most of these benefits. In 2004, the Congress chartered the Commission on the Review of Overseas Military Facility Structure of the United States (also known as the Overseas Basing Commission) to provide an independent assessment of the DOD overseas basing needs.¹

The DOD plan could prompt budget and oversight decisions for the second session of the 109th Congress. These might include approval, modification, or rejection of the DOD proposal. Congress could also have to consider appropriations requests for construction of infrastructure at new overseas or expanded continental United States (CONUS) locations, as well as fund increased impact aid to local communities. Congress would have to oversee new acquisition programs for mobility and logistics capabilities (such as airlift) needed for the strategy. Congress may also consider whether the plan will be executable given the results of the 2005 round of the Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) process. Finally, the Senate may consider new or revised treaties with new basing partners submitted for its advice and consent.

¹ FY2004 Military Construction Appropriations Act (H.R. 2559/P.L. 108-132 of November 22, 2003), sec. 128. This Commission was chartered to make a “thorough study of matters relating to the military facility structure of the United States overseas.” This study would also consider issues pertaining to overseas military construction and facilities, host nation support payments, training ranges, and opportunities to close or realign overseas bases. It was specifically chartered to provide “a proposal ... for an overseas basing strategy for the Department of Defense,” see House of Representatives, Conference Report on H.R. 2559 (H.Rept. 108-342), *Making Appropriations for Military Construction, Family Housing, and Base Realignment and Closure for the Department of Defense for the Fiscal Year Ending September 30, 2004, and for Other Purposes*, November 4, 2003; for historical perspective on the debates that drove the chartering of the Overseas Basing Commission, see CRS Report RL32310, *Appropriations for FY2005: Military Construction*, by Daniel H. Else.

Background

The Department of Defense Strategy

The Department of Defense Global Posture Review, also known as the Integrated Global Presence and Basing Strategy (IGPBS), is intended to realign United States overseas forces over a six-to-eight-year period from the bases (basing “posture”) left over from the Cold War² to a new posture optimized to support current allies and confront new potential threats.³ Overall, U.S. installations overseas would decline from 850 to 550. Roughly 70,000 personnel, mostly from the Army, would return to the United States. The Congressional Budget Office projects the initial cost of this relocation effort to be \$7 billion, but with a potential savings payoff of \$1 billion per year if the number of U.S. troops permanently based overseas were reduced to a minimum number needed to receive and host deployments.⁴

The Defense Department plan envisions three tiers of bases. It would retain some of the large “main operating bases,” such as Ramstein AFB in Germany, which have all of the comforts of the United States — family housing, schools, supermarkets, convenience stores, theaters, and populations in the tens of thousands.⁵ Secondly, the military would establish an overseas network of “forward operating sites,” which would be more austere installations and hosting smaller numbers of personnel. Military personnel would deploy to these bases for temporary duty (typically one year or less, unaccompanied by families), in contrast to the permanent change of station moves in which an entire family moves to a new base for two or more years. Finally, minimalist “cooperative security locations,” would likely be run by host nation personnel and would not host U.S. forces on a day-to-day basis. These locations would be used in the event of a crisis to give U.S. forces access to the region. They would also allow U.S. forces to train with local allies and participate in cooperative activities, such as disaster relief or peacekeeping, which could

² During the Cold War, U.S. troops were positioned to stop an invasion by tanks and aircraft of the U.S.S.R. and Warsaw pact from Eastern Europe into Western Germany. This required an extensive infrastructure of bases, runways, and training areas to support large numbers of conventional forces. The U.S. also maintained large forces in Japan and South Korea, both to deter the Soviets in Asia and to support security guarantees to the South Koreans, where to date a formal peace treaty ending the 1951-53 war with North Korea does not exist.

³ Donald H. Rumsfeld, *Secretary of Defense Annual Report to the Congress and the President*, (Department of Defense, 2004), p. 60.

⁴ Mark Mazzetti, “U.S. to Cut Number of Overseas Bases,” *Los Angeles Times*, September 24, 2005; “U.S. to Close 35 Percent of Overseas Bases,” *New York Times on the Web*, September 23, 2004; Congressional Budget Office, *Options for Changing the Army’s Overseas Basing*, May 2004.

⁵ For comparison, Ramstein AB in Germany has 14,300 military permanent party personnel as of May 2005, see “Guide to Air Force Installations Worldwide,” *Air Force Magazine* 88, no. 5, (May 2005): 136.

improve military-to-military ties.⁶ U.S. forces would also rely increasingly on off-shore prepositioning and sea basing to provide logistical support.⁷

The biggest changes would happen in Europe, where the military would shutter nearly 200 facilities and ultimately draw down roughly 40,000 troops (from 105,570 as of June 2005).⁸ Some of the forces remaining in Europe would periodically deploy from bases in Germany for temporary duty to locations in Romania, Bulgaria, or Central Asia. Both Romania and Bulgaria have energetically campaigned to win U.S. bases. Camp Bondsteel in Kosovo, Eagle Base in Bosnia-Herzegovina, and Manas Air Field in Kyrgyzstan typify the new forward operating sites. While representing a full time U.S. presence, these bases would lack the elaborate infrastructure of the major installations that evolved in western Europe. Overall, the focus of military basing would shift south and east, closer to current Middle-Eastern hot-spots and Central Asia.⁹

For East Asia, the plan advocates consolidating bases in South Korea, with a drawdown of nearly 12,500 personnel (from a strength of 32,744 troops in June 2005),¹⁰ and move headquarters for remaining units out of expensive Seoul to locations further south. Adjustments are also envisioned for troop dispositions in Japan. Reports indicate the United States is proposing to move the 1st Army headquarters from Washington state to Camp Zama, near Tokyo; to reposition the 5th Air Force headquarters from Tokyo to Guam; and to relocate 7,000 of the 15,000 Marines currently on Okinawa to Guam or to other locations in Japan.¹¹ Other U.S.

⁶ “U.S. to Close 35 Percent of Overseas Bases,” *New York Times on the Web*, September 23, 2004.

⁷ Maritime prepositioning uses a fleet of cargo ships preloaded with supplies and equipment located near potential trouble spots. Prepositioning this material reduces the time required for a military unit and its equipment to deploy to a combat area. The best known example is stationed near the island of Diego Garcia in the Indian Ocean. For more information, see CRS Report RL32513, *Navy-Marine Corps Amphibious and Maritime Prepositioning Ship Programs, Background and Oversight Issues for Congress*, by Ronald O’Rourke.

⁸ Department of Defense, “Active Duty Military Personnel Strengths By Regional Area and By Country,” June 30 2005, [<http://www.dior.whs.mil/mmid/military/history/hst0605.pdf>]

⁹ Vince Crawley, “Pentagon Gives Congress Plan for Overseas Basing,” *Air Force Times*, October 11, 2004; Vince Crawley, “European Chief Considers Using Existing, Austere Bases,” *Army Times*, January 17, 2005; Ann Scott Tyson, “New U.S. Strategy: ‘Lily Pad’ Bases,” *Christian Science Monitor*, August 10 2004; Vince Crawley, “Closer to New Allies, Potential Trouble Spots,” *Marine Corps Times*, June 6, 2005; Vince Crawley, “Discussions Push for Bases in Romania, Bulgaria, Georgia,” *Army Times*, May 16, 2005.

¹⁰ Department of Defense, “Active Duty Military Personnel Strengths By Regional Area and By Country,” June 30 2005, [<http://www.dior.whs.mil/mmid/military/history/hst0605.pdf>]; also note that the Korea moves began in 2004 and will continue through 2008, so over 5,000 of the 12,500 have already been moved.

¹¹ Yoshio Okubo, “Moving U.S. Bases Splits Nation,” *Daily Yomiuri*, December 2, 2004; “Impatient U.S. Seeks June Talks on Bases,” *Financial Times*, March 12, 2005; Kuniichi Tanida, “Locals Up in Arms Over Deal That Leaves Combat Units Untouched,” *The Asahi Shimbun*, October 31, 2005; Anthony Faiola, “US Agrees to Relocate Marines On
(continued...)

forces in Asia could potentially deploy to the Philippines, Malaysia, or Singapore for exercises, training, and as-needed forward basing. Reliance on air and naval capability would increase in the Pacific given the vast distances in the region.

The U.S. military presence in Africa is expanding.¹² Officials view Africa as an increasingly important region in the war on terror. The U.S. already has established Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) with Gabon, Ghana, Namibia, Senegal, South Africa, and Uganda, where the focus would be on training and cooperation.¹³ The United States established a Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa (CJTF-HOA) in 2002, which is currently located at Camp Lemonier in Djibouti. This task force currently focuses on delivering military-to-military training and performing public works projects in an area including Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, Sudan, and Yemen. The United States hopes to expand these activities into Uganda and Tanzania. There is even discussion within DOD of transforming the CJTF-HOA into a unified command with responsibility for all of Africa. U.S. Central Command and U.S. European Command currently split responsibility for Africa.¹⁴

Re-basing Rationale

There are strong arguments motivating the need for a revision to the alignment of U.S. bases overseas. This structure is a legacy of the Cold War confrontation, and in some cases the U.S. presence may now be less welcome. In testimony before the Senate Armed Services Committee, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld listed multiple reasons for reworking the overseas military basing dispositions. He argued that the current arrangements were “seriously obsolete,” oriented to deter and fight the large standing militaries of the Warsaw Pact in Europe rather than the current threats. However, he gave no geographic specifics on where he viewed the new threats as residing. He stated that updating the military’s global posture was part of the Department’s larger transformation effort, but his comments did not clarify how the transformational goals such as speed or precision (in his words, to “do more with less”) drove the overseas basing strategy decisions. He argued that relocating

¹¹ (...continued)

Okinawa,” *Washington Post*, October 27, 2005; Kuniichi Tanida, “Locals Up In Arms Over Deal That Leaves Combat Units Untouched,” *Asahi Shimbun*, October 31, 2005.

¹² Kurt M. Campbell and Celeste Johnson Ward, “New Battle Stations?” *Foreign Affairs* 82, no. 2 (September/October 2003): 95-103; Robert L. Maginnis, “Calling Troops Home,” *Washington Times*, August 14, 2005; Andrew Krepinevich, “The New Pax Americana: Restructure Base Strategy, Defense Program,” *Defense News*, September 20 2004; John T. Bennett, “DOD in Talks with South, West African Nations About Basing Rights,” *Inside the Pentagon*, October 21 2004; Andrew Koch, “U.S. Basing Plans in Africa Gain Clarity,” *Jane’s Defense Weekly*, June 1, 2005.

¹³ CRS Report RL32758, *U.S. Military Operations in the Global War on Terrorism: Afghanistan, Africa, the Phillippines, and Columbia*, by Andrew Feickert, includes detailed discussion of some of the recent U.S. military initiatives in Africa.

¹⁴ Joshua Kucera, “Djibouti: US Foothold In Africa,” *Jane’s Defense Weekly*, October 26, 2005; Gordon Lubold, “Officials Look to Put Africa Under One Watchful Eye,” *Army Times*, January 23, 2006.

personnel and facilities in some cases could reduce frictions with host governments and enhance cooperation with allies. He also indicated that nations that imposed restrictions or conditions on the use of U.S. forces from their territory would be viewed as less satisfactory locations.¹⁵ He did not specifically cite the countries he saw as sources of friction with respect to the presence of U.S. forces or the conduct of U.S. operations. However, it was widely assumed he was referring to friction with Germany over the invasion of Iraq and German restrictions on U.S. training exercises.

During his June 2005 testimony to the Senate Armed Services Military Construction Subcommittee, Principal Deputy Undersecretary of Defense for Policy Ryan Henry echoed many of Secretary Rumsfeld's themes. He noted an increased reliance on pre-positioned equipment and forces that move to forward operating sites on a temporary basis, but did not explain the anticipated mix between these forces and permanently stationed forces, or what the department would need for airlift and sealift to sustain this approach. He also suggested that the new strategy would improve military families' quality of life because they would experience fewer disruptive overseas moves, and the military member would have a more predictable deployment schedule. However, the strategy's reliance on more frequent short deployments which would increase the frequency of family separations would seem to some to contradict this assertion.¹⁶

Deputy Undersecretary Henry also claimed a linkage with the 2005 BRAC round and the anticipated Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) study, a study that Congress mandates DOD to accomplish every four years to allocate missions and guide military procurement.¹⁷ He did not, however, address the criticism that the first QDR performed after 9/11 should precede a realignment of global basing structure, rather than trail it by over a year. Likewise, the interaction of impacts from the re-basing and from the relocations driven by the 2005 BRAC process have not been clearly articulated. While it is possible that basing arrangements optimized for Cold War adversaries may not be suitable to counter current threats, the selection criteria for new base locations have not been delineated.

¹⁵ Department of Defense, "Global Posture," Testimony as Prepared for Delivery by Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld, Senate Armed Services Committee, September 23, 2004, [<http://www.defenselink.mil/speeches/2004/sp20040923-secdef0783.html>].

¹⁶ U.S. Congress, Senate, Appropriations Committee, Military Construction and Veterans' Affairs Subcommittee, "Statement by Ryan Henry, Principal Deputy Undersecretary of Defense," June 28, 2005.

¹⁷ "Statement by Ryan Henry," June 28, 2005.

The Overseas Basing Commission

Commission Report Findings

On August 15, 2005, the congressionally chartered Overseas Basing Commission released its final report. The Commission visited with senior military leaders, defense analysts, and senior officials from other government agencies, and traveled extensively for site visits. While the Commission concurred with the need to reshape the structure of U.S. overseas basing, in general, the report was critical of the DOD's overseas restructuring process and proposal.¹⁸

There were several areas in which the Commission's report concurred with DOD. It lauded the concept of transforming of the military from a Cold War structure to meet new requirements. It agreed that the shifting of forces in South Korea and the return of most Army heavy forces from Central Europe was appropriate. It also supported the concepts of forward operating sites and cooperative security locations, with their reduced personnel and smaller infrastructure. The Commission agreed that these arrangements would give more options in a crisis and more opportunities to work with new allies, thus expanding positive U.S. influence. However, the report's major finding held that "the timing and synchronization of the global re-basing initiatives must be rethought."¹⁹

Chairman Cornella argued that DOD's plan overemphasized a purely military perspective, and neglected to fully reflect the concerns of all members of the national security interagency community. For example, State Department concerns about opportunities to enhance alliance relationships through exercises and exchanges and to exert political and diplomatic influence in the regions under review were allegedly given inadequate attention. The Commission believed the desire to implement base withdrawals quickly, rather than specific strategic decisions and coordination, seemed to be driving the selections. Further, the report held that the locations were picked based on today's threats rather than a long term threat assessment. It expressed concern that the plan disregards the politics and values of some of the new potential allies, which might not dovetail with U.S. interests.²⁰

The report questioned the timing of the moves in a environment of fast-paced current military operations. The Commission expressed concern that the strain of conducting this sweeping series of moves, while also conducting major conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan has the potential to threaten the capability of the force. Forces would either be preparing to deploy, deployed, or returning from deployment, while

¹⁸ "New Report on Overseas Basing Plans Remains Critical of Pace, Timing," *Inside the Pentagon*, August 18, 2005; U.S. Congress, Senate, Appropriations Committee, Military Construction and Veterans' Affairs Subcommittee, "Opening Statement of Al Cornella, Chairman, Overseas Basing Commission," June 28, 2005.

¹⁹ Commission on Review of the Overseas Military Facility Basing Structure of the United States, "Report to the President and the Congress," August 15, 2005, pp. i-xii, [<http://obc.gov/documents>].

²⁰ Commission on Review of the Overseas Military Facility Basing, pp. ix, 4-11.

also trying to reestablish their unit's support structure, military personnel, and families at new bases. Further, it viewed the pace of the aggressive time line proposed by DOD, projected as 2006 through 2011, as overly ambitious.²¹

The Commission noted that mobility and equipment prepositioning were key to the success of the re-basing strategy. However, it expressed concern that current and projected strategic airlift and strategic sealift were inadequate for the Defense Department's concept, which relies heavily on transporting troops to crisis areas rather than permanent forward basing. It also held that sufficient prepositioned supply stocks do not now exist. Most importantly, it argued that future budget plans for projected sea and airlift procurement did not account for the re-basing plan's needs.²²

The report highlighted claims that the re-basing plan would harm the quality of life of volunteer military personnel. It noted that the military has insufficient plans to ensure both that required support facilities at U.S. bases gaining personnel are in place for new personnel on arrival, and that facilities are preserved at the losing base overseas until the last person is gone. These support facilities include commissaries, exchanges, hospitals, and child care capacity on base, and off base support capability provided by the local and state communities such as schools and housing. Without this support, young military families with limited incomes may suffer in areas of spouse employment, family health, and cost of living. The Commission also argued that the heightened tempo of temporary overseas rotations that is central to the plan will result in frequent family separations over the course of a career that could threaten retention and recruiting. The decision to stay in the military is very much a family decision, and when many child growth milestones are missed, or a spouse experiences enough home emergencies and worry while the military member is deployed overseas, the decision can tip to separation from the military.²³

Significantly, the report contended that the DOD might have underestimated the total cost to implement their base realignment process. The Commission's independent analysis calculated a \$20 billion bill for the moves, while the DOD has only budgeted \$4 billion through 2011. The danger is that the services will need to spend from their operations and maintenance budget accounts (which should normally be used to buy day-to-day material such as expendable equipment, fuel, or ammunition) to cover the difference. This could result in potential damage to force readiness, given the concurrent budget demands caused by combat operations in Iraq and Afghanistan.²⁴

²¹ Commission on Review of the Overseas Military Facility Basing, pp. ix-x, 11-16.

²² Commission on Review of the Overseas Military Facility Basing, pp. x,16-20. The Congressional Budget Office recently completed a study comparing strategic mobility alternatives, including an examination of new types of systems like heavy lift airships (blimps). See Congressional Budget Office, *Options for Strategic Military Transportation Systems*, September 2005.

²³ Commission on Review of the Overseas Military Facility Basing, pp. x-xi, 20-25.

²⁴ Commission on Review of the Overseas Military Facility Basing, pp. xi, 25-29.

The Commission, given all its reservations, recommended a slowing and reordering of the pace of overseas re-basing until that the acquisition of key capabilities, such as mobility and prepositioned supplies, required to support the new strategy had occurred. It also maintained that better budget support for establishing forces at new locations (mainly back in the U.S.), such as funding for the movement of people and equipment and building at these locations is required. Further preparatory activities were needed for local communities to absorb thousands of new military families, such as support for additional schools and roads.²⁵

In general, the Commission held that a coherent national strategy did not sufficiently guide the overseas posture review and that a formal national debate on the larger scope of American security post-Cold War should precede further re-basing moves. It argued that completion of the 2005 Quadrennial Defense Review, the Base Realignment and Closure Commission report, and the Mobility Capabilities Study²⁶ were key to providing an overall architecture for updating our overseas posture. The Commission strongly recommended diligent Congressional oversight of this process to ensure a cohesive basing strategy.²⁷

Responses to the Commission Report

The Defense Department responded to the Commission's report upon its release in May 2005. Principal Deputy Undersecretary for Policy Ryan Henry and Acting Under Secretary of the Army Ray Dubois met with the press and delivered specific counterpoints to many of the report's findings. Mr. Henry rebutted the Commission's critique of the DOD choices for strategic dispositions. Where the Commission viewed the DOD selections as based on today's threats, he asserted that the concept strove to base the forces in locations that supported flexibility and speed of response to anywhere in an unpredictable environment.²⁸ Critics may contend, however, to simply assert that future threats are unpredictable sidesteps the challenge of articulating a strategic vision, which includes a projection of anticipated threats.

Mr. Henry also took issue with the Commission's argument that DOD had not sufficiently coordinated the Global Posture Review across government agencies. He cited meetings with the regional combatant commanders that began shortly after the 2001 QDR, as well as consultations with the Department of State, the National Security Council, and 45 briefings to Members of Congress and to committee staffs.

²⁵ Commission on Review of the Overseas Military Facility Basing, pp. xi-xii, 29-32.

²⁶ The Mobility Capabilities Study is a Department of Defense project to analyze how much airlift and sealift will be required for the future. It relies on computer modeling of multiple deployment scenarios to determine how much capacity will be needed. In turn, that data will be used to guide procurement programs for new airlift aircraft, air refueling aircraft, fast sealift ships, and maritime prepositioning assets. See CRS Report RL32887, *Strategic Mobility Innovation: Options and Oversight Issues*, by Jon D. Klaus, for an overview of the Mobility Capabilities Study and options under consideration.

²⁷ Commission on Review of the Overseas Military Facility Basing, pp. xii-xiii.

²⁸ U.S. Department of Defense, "Defense Department Special Briefing," May 9, 2005, [http://www.defenselink.mil/transcripts/2005/tr20050509-2701.html].

He maintained that Congress had indicated satisfaction with the amount of oversight consultation to this point. He also highlighted visits to the leadership in over 20 foreign countries that could be affected by the relocations. While he noted the number of meetings, he did not indicate whether the briefings were in-depth or ongoing, nor the state of progress, particularly regarding the delicate status of forces agreements that guide basing rules with the foreign countries. He stated that the Global Posture Review was intended to serve as a starting point to feed the 2005 QDR, as well as the 2005 BRAC and the Mobility Capability Study, all of which were to be coordinated in parallel. Therefore, it would fall to the QDR to address the timing of lift procurement and other needed equipment acquisition to ensure it supports the Integrated Global Presence and Basing Strategy (IGPBS). However, since the QDR is intended to be the keystone document outlining DOD's future strategic vision, selecting how the military will align its bases before determining the strategy they are trying to achieve raises questions of appropriate sequence.

Mr. Dubois disputed the Commission report's concerns that DOD was shortchanging military families' quality of life. He responded that the re-basing plan's decisions were incorporated into the BRAC analysis. He noted that the DOD held discussions with the Department of Education, as well as state governors and leaders of communities that would be vital partners in supporting returning personnel and dependents. He did not, however, indicate if additional impact aid for these communities was planned. He also did not address plans to expand infrastructure on or near affected installations. He held that the re-basing would give other payoffs to improve quality of life; noting that the number of family permanent changes of station (PCSs) would be fewer, thus reducing the turmoil of overseas moves. Although reducing the number of PCS moves may offer greater stability, it assumes that all military bases are of equal desirability in their geographical location and facilities, which is often not the case. DOD also appears to assume the overseas stationing in permanent European bases (such as Germany, Italy) are undesirable to military families, which is also often not the case. In fact, the opportunity to periodically live overseas is, for some, an advantage of a military career. Mr. Dubois also did not address, however, the stress that increased unaccompanied overseas deployments would place on families, or the troops deployed at isolated, "bare-bones" locations. Neither official addressed the potential impact on recruiting or retention.

Finally, Mr. Henry downplayed the disparity between the Defense Department's and the Commission's cost figures. He suggested that the Commission's study included costs that other programs in the defense budget covered, while DOD figures only focused on the additional costs driven specifically by the moves. Mr. Dubois also noted that the military would eventually accrue savings in operations and maintenance accounts as they drew down from maintaining expensive overseas locations. Yet even if these costs will be covered by other programs in the budget, there is no indication that the department has proposed an increase for those budget items, such as construction, airlift procurement, or sealift procurement. Further, it is unclear that the compensation the U.S. would get from the new host nations would offset that currently received from established allies. Commonly, countries in which U.S. bases are located provide various forms of "host nation support." This could include basic utility services, construction, and even cash payments in recognition of the benefit to local economies. However, many of the new locations, such as

Kyrgyzstan, are demanding payments from the U.S. to allow basing in their countries.

Reaction to the Pentagon's plan continued to emerge from beyond the Commission. Alliance relationships formed one topic for debate. Historically, European allies have been especially desirous of keeping a significant U.S. presence, which they view as supporting European stability and integration. Security guarantees to other allies have encouraged their support of non-proliferation regimes. Some critics, such as Philip H. Gordon at the Brookings Institution, fear that moving forces away from long term allies to basing in nations less likely to restrain U.S. military operations would give the Administration more latitude to take unilateral military action in future crises without consultation, thus further harming relationships and the U.S. image.²⁹ Others have reinforced the concern that the moves could erode ties with traditional, long term American allies, with particular focus centered on the relationship with Germany. Some, such as Pat Towell at the Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments, even suggested that the moves were intended as punishment of Germany by the Bush administration for its opposition to U.S. operations in Iraq.³⁰ At the same time, it bears recognition that land restrictions and real estate costs for some U.S. allies has led to limitations on training and exercises. Further, prudent U.S. relocations could reduce frictions with local populations, especially in Okinawa and South Korea.

Advocacy groups for military personnel and families echoed the report's warnings regarding the impact of the re-basing strategy on quality of life. Some, like Joyce Raezer of the National Military Family Association, suggested that DOD's record of preparation for past unit moves showed that services were not ready for families at new locations, and that services closed before old locations were empty. Likewise, they fear the strain on civilian infrastructure, such as roads, schools, and housing, could cause problems with the relocations. For example, as a new brigade recently assumed posting at Fort Drum (Watertown, New York), soldiers had to move up to 75 miles away for housing.³¹ Such long commutes will strain soldiers on shift work or delay their response in a crisis. Scarce housing also could harm troops' standard of living, particularly for families where both adults are active duty members, or single parent households. It could also drive up rent costs for junior enlisted members and could limit civilian spouse employment opportunities. For example, schools in Watertown became overcrowded, and the single hospital in town lacked capacity for the new patients. However, other larger communities, such as El Paso Texas, have expressed enthusiasm for the job growth and homebuilding surge these moves would prompt.³²

²⁹ Ronald Brownstein, "Turnabout on Troops Abroad," *Los Angeles Times*, August 18, 2004.

³⁰ Dave Moniz and Steven Komarow, "Pullback Could Alter Ties With Allies," *USA Today*, August 17, 2004.

³¹ Gordon Trowbridge, "Unease on Family Front," *Marine Corps Times*, June 6, 2005.

³² Mark Sappenfield, "A Rush to Make Room for Returning Troops," *Christian Science Monitor*, August 15, 2005.

Recent Developments

Department of Defense

Other Department of Defense transformational programs that interact with the IGPBS continue to progress. The 2005 round of Base Realignment and Closure findings entered into force on November 9, 2005. The BRAC Commission reviewed Pentagon proposals to close or realign over 800 installations. Most of the DOD BRAC list remained unchanged, with the Commission adopting 86% of the DOD's proposal. Congress did not approve a resolution that would have prevented the BRAC results from automatically entering into force (H. J. Res 65). However, DOD will not have implementation plans ready until early 2006. Closings must start by 2007, and must be complete by 2011.³³

The 2005 Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) is under final review and scheduled to be sent to Congress on February 6, 2006. To spur movement on the contentious QDR study, acting Deputy Secretary of Defense Gordon England recently directed Pentagon leadership to focus their analysis on three core missions: homeland defense, global war on terrorism, and conventional major warfare in order to streamline deliberations from more than 160 issues originally nominated for consideration. Ensuring sufficient "enabler" forces, which include logistics and mobility functions, remains a point of contention and is a critical aspect of QDR linkage with the Global Posture Review. With regard to force structure, reports indicate that in order to free funds for a potential QDR call to increase Army and Marine forces for the war on terror, the Navy might drop from 11 to 10 carrier battle groups. Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld had proposed this idea as early as September 2004, but it would also seem to cut into the power projection and mobility concepts pivotal to the global re-basing strategy.³⁴

The Mobility Capabilities Study was completed at the end of July 2005 and DOD has been briefing the results to Congressional defense committees and staffers.

³³ David S. Cloud, "Panel on Base Closings Wraps Up Work," *New York Times*, August 28, 2005; 2005 Base Realignment and Closure Commission, "BRAC Commission Delivers Final Recommendations to the President," press release, September 8, 2005, [http://www.brac.gov/docs/PressRelease_8Sep2005.pdf]; Rick Maze, "Move to Block Base Closings Is Defeated," *Air Force Times*, November 7, 2005; John M. Donnelly, "House Refuses to Block BRAC Decisions, Paving Way for Base Closures," *CQ Today*, October 27, 2005; Donna Miles, "BRAC Deadline Expires, DOD to Begin Closures, Realignment," *US Department of Defense Information*, November 10, 2005; "BRAC Implementation Plan On Schedule," *FDCH Federal Department and Agency Documents*, December 12, 2005.

³⁴ Michael Sirak, "Senior DOD Official Provides Insights Into Forthcoming QDR," *Defense Daily*, January 18, 2006; "England Sets QDR Endgame; Giambastiani Joins Review," *InsideDefense.com Defense Alert*, August 16, 2005 at [<http://www.insidedefense.com>]; Elaine M. Grossman, "Defense Leaders Put Final Touches on New Force-Planning Mechanism," *Inside the Pentagon*, August 18, 2005, at [<http://www.insidedefense.com>]; Elaine M. Grossman, "Army, Marine Corps Seen as Early Winners in Quadrennial Review," *Inside the Pentagon*, August 18, 2005, at [<http://www.insidedefense.com>]; Richard Mullen, "Rumsfeld Says Navy Can Operate With Fewer Carrier Groups," *Defense Today*, September 24, 2004.

Despite assumptions of a changed threat environment, the study finds that the currently planned program, which was shaped before the September 11, 2001 attacks, is sufficient to support national strategy. It argues that no additional airlifters, sealift ships, or aerial refueling tankers are needed and calls for ending purchases of C-17 and C-130J transports. It also requires retaining and modernizing all Air Force C-5 transports, which historically have a poor availability rate.³⁵ The recommendation to end C-17 construction contradicts recommendations from former U.S. Transportation Command commander General John Hardy, who called for at least 42 more aircraft.³⁶ A September 2005 Defense Science Board report also questioned the sufficiency of airlift and tanker capabilities and proposed that DOD should “keep open the option to acquire additional C-17s” given the unpredictable threat and budget environment.³⁷ In examining the DOD methodology behind the Mobility Capabilities Study, the Government Accountability Office also expressed concerns regarding the validity of the modeling and simulation tools used in developing the results.³⁸

Congressional Action

Congress incorporated its concerns regarding the Global Posture Review into the FY2006 National Defense Authorization Act (PL 109-163). Congress directed the DOD to submit a report by March 30, 2006. This report would address selection criteria, a process for analyzing alternative locations, and descriptions of minimum infrastructure for each the types of facilities envisioned. The legislation requires DOD to detail funding for these overseas locations in the annual budget submission. Congress also ordered DOD to notify congressional defense committees when basing agreements are completed with foreign governments. One unidentified congressional staffer expressed concern that the information DOD had forwarded to Congress has been too “subjective.”³⁹

The FY2006 Authorization specifically addressed the mobility requirements for the overseas basing plan and seemed to express skepticism regarding the findings of

³⁵ Michael Bruno, “Mobility Capability Study Analysis Done, Under Review,” *Aerospace Daily & Defense Report*, July 29, 2005; Megan Scully, “Mobility Study Unlikely to Impact Budget,” *National Journal’s CongressDaily*, October 25, 2005; Jason Sherman, “Study: DOD Has the Sealift, Airlift Capacity to Execute Military Strategy,” *Inside Defense*, November 7, 2005.

³⁶ Amy Butler, “Sunset for Airlifters?” *Aviation Week & Space Technology*, October 31, 2005.

³⁷ Jason Sherman, “Advisory Panel to Rumsfeld suggests More C-17s Are Required,” *Inside the Air Force*, November 11, 2005.

³⁸ United States Government Accountability Office, “Defense Transportation: Opportunities Exist to Enhance the Credibility of the Current and Future Mobility Capabilities Studies,” September 14, 2005.

³⁹ United States House of Representatives, “Conference Report to Accompany HR 1815, National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2006,” H Rept 109-360, December 18, 2005, sect. 1233, pp. 338-339; Sebastian Sprenger, “Defense Authorizers Ask for DOD Report on Overseas Basing Choices,” *Inside the Pentagon*, December 22, 2005..

the Mobility Capabilities Study. Congress included authorization for the Air Force to purchase up to 42 additional C-17 airlifters. However, exercise of that authority is contingent on the DOD first conducting a re-assessment of airlift requirements for national defense. This assessment must specifically take into account the structure proposed by the IGPBS. The legislation tasks DOD to submit this assessment with the QDR, or up to 45 days after the QDR is delivered to Congress, if more time is required.⁴⁰

Congress also gave direction regarding the stateside infrastructure needs that would arise from returning forces. The FY2006 Authorization legislation also requires the Secretary of Defense to consult with state and local governments, as it develops its global posture implementation plans, regarding infrastructure and support needs driven by personnel returning from overseas basing.⁴¹ The legislation also included a Sense of the Congress that the quality-of-life support facilities should be ready at bases gaining personnel before they arrive, and maintained at closing bases until the personnel have departed.⁴² Lastly, the FY2006 Authorization incorporated a Sense of the Congress that roads leading to military installations that gain significant numbers of personnel from the IGPBS or BRAC should be designated as defense access roads.⁴³ This section also directs the Secretary of Defense to conduct a study of the surface transportation infrastructure around bases affected by BRAC and the IGPBS and its adequacy to support the gains from redeployments. That report is due to Congress by April 15, 2007.⁴⁴

International Arena

There have been several recent positive events that help the implementation of the Global Posture Review to move forward. On December 6, 2005, Secretary of State Rice signed an agreement with Romanian Foreign Minister Razvan Ungureanu to station U.S. forces at the Mihail Kogalniceanu air base near Constanta, on the Romanian Black Sea coast. U.S. forces would also be able to use the Babadag, Smardan, and Cincu training ranges. The new location would house the Eastern European Task Force, with roughly 1,500 personnel. Reports indicate that negotiations for basing in Bulgaria are also nearing conclusion.⁴⁵ The United States also concluded an agreement with Japan regarding operations on Okinawa. The

⁴⁰ H Rept 109-360, sect. 131, pp. 27-28.

⁴¹ H Rept 109-360, sect. 2835, pp. 389-390.

⁴² H Rept 109-360, sect. 2836, pp. 390.

⁴³ Defense access roads include the roads, bridges, tubes, and tunnels that provide access to military reservations, defense industries, defense industry sites, or sources of raw materials, which the Secretary of Defense certifies as important to national defense. DOD receives funds which it may use to reimburse states and localities for use and upkeep of these roads. See 23 US Code Section 210.

⁴⁴ H Rept 109-360, sect. 2837, pp. 390-391.

⁴⁵ Gordon Lubold, "Deal With Romania Signals New European Base Strategy," *Air Force Times*, December 19, 2005; "US Signs Deal for First Permanent Military Base in Ex-Soviet Block," *Agence France Presse*, December 6, 2005.

agreement would relocate the 3,000 Marines at Futenma to land to be reclaimed offshore at Camp Schwab.⁴⁶

Other recent international developments potentially cast shadows on key assumptions underlying the Global Posture Review. There might be indicators of an international shift in the degree of welcome extended by other countries to basing U.S. forces. For example, a statement by South Korean President Roh Moo-hyun would seem to place limits on the United States ability to employ forces stationed in Korea to missions beyond the peninsula.⁴⁷ In another case, Kyrgyzstan has demanded a 100-fold increase (from \$2 million to \$200 million) in the rent the United States pays for use of Manas air base. Kyrgyz President Bakiyev had also been trying to charge the United States an additional \$80 million for jet fuel. The United States had already paid for this fuel, but the payment was allegedly misappropriated by former President Akayev. The DOD has refused this additional charge, claiming the corruption is a Kyrgyz internal problem. The Kyrgyz government has also begun agitating for compensation for claimed environmental damage due to aircraft emergency fuel dumping.⁴⁸ In yet another instance, Russian officials quickly expressed dismay at the recently concluded U.S. basing agreement with Romania. Russian Defense Minister Ivanov suggested that the move put the future of the Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE) treaty in doubt and appeared to threaten withdrawal from the treaty. The State Department countered that the U.S. agreement was in compliance with CFE and other understandings with Russia.⁴⁹

Of particular concern to the re-basing plan are recent developments in Uzbekistan. On July 29, 2005, the United States was formally notified that it had 180 days to leave its air base at Karshi-Khanabad, in Uzbekistan. This base has served as a vital hub for missions flown to support operations in Afghanistan, and was prototypical of the cooperative security locations envisioned in the Pentagon re-basing plan. The last contingent of U.S. troops departed on November 21, 2005, ending four years of operations there. One reason for this eviction might have been State Department pressure on the Tashkent government regarding recent human

⁴⁶ Anthony Faiola, "US Agrees to Relocate Marines On Okinawa," *Washington Post*, October 27, 2005; Kuniichi Tanida, "Locals Up In Arms Over Deal That Leaves Combat Units Untouched," *Asahi Shimbun*, October 31, 2005.

⁴⁷ "Roh Tells U.S. to Stay Out of Regional Affairs," *Washington Times*, March 11, 2005.

⁴⁸ Demetri Sevastopulo, Hubert Wetzell, "Kyrgyz Rent Rise Intensifies US Battle over Base Pentagon Dispute," *Financial Times*, December 15, 2005; "Kyrgyzstan's Base Proposal," *Washington Times*, December 27, 2005; Nathan Hodge, "Base Hypocrisy," *Slate Magazine*, December 8, 2005.

⁴⁹ "US Seeks to Reassure Russia Over Military Bases," *Defense News*, December 7, 2005. The Conventional Forces in Europe treaty (CFE) places national and regional limits on troops and equipment that may be permanently stationed or temporarily deployed by member states. It also requires advanced notification of significant force movements. For further information, see CRS Report RL30033, *Arms Control and Nonproliferation Activities: A Catalog of Recent Events*, by Amy F. Woolf.

rights abuses.⁵⁰ Another reason for the eviction might have been encouragement from China and Russia, who have indicated increasing unease regarding U.S. military activity in the Central Asia region — a region seen by the United States as strategically vital to the war on terror. Commentators contend that Russia, and particularly China, are exploiting the perception of U.S. support for democratic revolutions in Georgia and the Ukraine as examples of a U.S. threat to the power of the area's authoritarian leaders, such as President Karimov in Uzbekistan. During the demonstrations that prompted the harsh Uzbek government response and attendant U.S. criticism, China publicly expressed support for Karimov's actions. Furthermore, shortly before the United States' eviction, Karimov visited Beijing, where he garnered \$1.5 billion in contracts and agreements between China and Uzbekistan.⁵¹

Finally, the political and security climate in some locations proposed for U.S. forward bases could require a disproportionate amount of manpower be dedicated to local security requirements. For example, while President Hamid Karzai has signaled a desire for a permanent U.S. military presence in Afghanistan, an upsurge of violence killed seven U.S. troops in a four day period in August 2005. This increase of attacks also wounded two embassy staffers, four years after the defeat of the Taliban.⁵² Other countries reported to be under consideration for, or already hosting U.S. troops confront significant terrorist threats of their own. For example, the "Lord's Resistance Army" continues to stage brutal attacks in Uganda, with a limited cease-fire having failed at the beginning of the year. In Turkmenistan, a country under consideration to host the U.S. forces removed from Uzbekistan, government crackdowns on terrorists have led to accusations of major violations of human rights and civil liberties curtailments.⁵³

Potential Oversight Issues for Congress

The Overseas Basing Commission pointedly emphasized the importance of Congressional oversight of the overseas basing realignment process. Some of the issues Congress may wish to consider include the following:

⁵⁰ Robin Wright, Ann Scott Tyson, "U.S. Evicted from Air Base in Uzbekistan," *Washington Post*, July 30, 2005; Will Dunham, "US Pulls Out of Uzbekistan Base After Eviction," *Reuters News*, November 21, 2005.

⁵¹ Christopher Brown, "Uzbekistan Signals," *Washington Times*, August 14, 2005.

⁵² Halinma Kazem, "Karzai Hints at Permanent U.S. Military Basing," *Los Angeles Times*, April 14, 2005; Jonathan S. Landay, "4 GIs Killed as Afghan Attacks Increase," *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, August 22, 2005.

⁵³ U.S. Department of State, "Country Reports on Terrorism, 2004," at [<http://www.state.gov/s/ct/rls/c14818.htm>]; John T. Bennett, "DOD in Talks with South, West African Nations About Basing Rights," *Inside the Pentagon*, October 21, 2004; Interfax, "Transfer of US Base from Uzbekistan to Turkmenistan 'Possible,'" *BBC Monitoring Central Asia*, August 29, 2005, [<http://global.factiva.com>].

Strategy

Does the IGPBS have adequate linkage to an overarching strategic framework agreed upon by all key government parties in the national security strategy process? While most may agree that a revision of the overseas basing structure left from the Cold War is overdue, some would argue that developing a re-basing strategy without completing the Defense Department's Quadrennial Defense Review and achieving buy-in across government agencies and with Congress is premature. These moves may have major impacts across many aspects of U.S. foreign and security policy. The lack of overarching strategy and analysis may also be construed by some to miss vital linkages in execution timing and schedule, which could lead to implementation pitfalls in the future.

Cost

Are the Defense Department's cost projections for the overseas realignment accurate? Will projected savings outweigh the cost of realignment and associated systems procurement? The DOD and the Overseas Basing Commission disagree on these points. Others might also contend that proposing a re-basing strategy before completing the 2005 Base Realignment and Closure round and the Mobility Capabilities Study could result in mismatches of supporting infrastructure or mobility assets. The consequence could be a shift of these unfunded requirements onto the services, which are already under pressure from the cost of ongoing combat operations.

Operational Tempo

Is it feasible to conduct the basing realignment moves given the deployment tempo driven by ongoing military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan? Units returning from combat deployments, only to immediately pack up families and relocate, can put immense burdens on an already stressed force. This burden is exacerbated if the bases receiving new troops lack sufficient supporting infrastructure. Can the services permanently sustain the long term pace of frequent deployments required by the strategy? At some undetermined point, members may experience enough degraded quality of life for their families, and endure such frequent separations, that retention or recruiting begin to suffer.

Diplomacy

What will be the effect of the re-basing on the relationship with long term U.S. allies, such as Germany, where a drawdown is proposed? Lack of presence could find the United States reducing its voice in European or Asian affairs, and finding it harder to motivate international coalitions or support when needed. Have sufficient legal arrangements, such as status of forces agreements and overflight rights, been negotiated in advance of the arrival of U.S. forces in new host nations? The Overseas Basing Commission argued that the preliminary diplomatic legwork had not been fully accomplished. Do the political climates in the new host nations support U.S. values of democracy and human rights? While some nations, such as Romania, have actively sought a U.S. presence, others, such as Uzbekistan, have

ended those arrangements as soon as they begin to annoy or lose their profitability. Is the re-basing proposal affected by standing treaties to which the U.S. is a state party, such as the Conventional Forces in Europe treaty? Early evidence may indicate that DOD and the State Department need to further examine potential treaty impacts.