



Highlights of [GAO-08-722T](#), a testimony before the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, U.S. Senate

Why GAO Did This Study

To reduce the burden of the U.S. military presence on Japanese communities while maintaining a continuing presence of U.S. forces in the region, in 2005 and 2006 the U.S.-Japan Defense Policy Review Initiative outlined the effort to relocate American military units in Japan to other areas, including Guam. The Department of Defense (DOD) plans to move 8,000 Marines and an estimated 9,000 dependents from Okinawa, Japan, to Guam by the 2014 goal.

GAO was asked to discuss the planning effort for the buildup of U.S. forces and facilities on Guam. Accordingly, this testimony addresses (1) DOD's planning process for the military buildup on Guam, (2) potential challenges for DOD and the government of Guam associated with the buildup, and (3) the status of planning efforts by the government of Guam to meet infrastructure challenges caused by the buildup.

This testimony is based largely on findings of a September 2007 GAO report on DOD's overseas master plans and prior work on issues related to the U.S. military presence in Okinawa. It is also based, in part, on preliminary observations from an ongoing GAO review of DOD's planning effort to address the challenges associated with the military buildup on Guam and on other GAO work on the effects of DOD-related growth on surrounding communities in the continental United States.

GAO is not making recommendations at this time.

To view the full product, including the scope and methodology, click on [GAO-08-722T](#). For more information, contact Brian Lepore at (202) 512-4523 or leporeb@gao.gov.

DEFENSE INFRASTRUCTURE

Planning Efforts for the Proposed Military Buildup on Guam Are in Their Initial Stages, with Many Challenges Yet to Be Addressed

What GAO Found

DOD has established a framework for the military buildup on Guam; however, many key decisions remain, such as the final size of the military population, which units will be stationed there, and what military facilities will be constructed. This part of the planning process is ongoing, along with the development of a required environmental impact statement, currently expected to be issued in 2010. However, DOD will submit budget requests for fiscal year 2010 prior to that date, and thus may not know the full extent of its facility requirements before asking Congress to provide the associated funding. Officials of the Navy's Joint Guam Program Office told us that immediately after the environmental impact statement is completed, DOD will commence construction of facilities in efforts to meet the 2014 goal discussed in the Defense Policy Review Initiative. However, other DOD and government of Guam officials believe that this is an optimistic schedule considering the possibility that the environmental impact statement could be delayed, the complexities of moving thousands of Marines and their dependents to Guam, and the need to obtain sufficient funding from the governments of United States and Japan to support the move.

DOD and the government of Guam face several significant challenges associated with the proposed military buildup on Guam. DOD's challenges include obtaining adequate funding and meeting operational needs, such as mobility support and training capabilities. There are also challenges in addressing the effects of military and civilian growth on Guam's community and civilian infrastructure. For example, according to DOD and government of Guam officials, Guam's highways may be unable to bear the increase in traffic associated with the military buildup, its electrical system may not be adequate to deliver the additional energy needed, its water and wastewater treatment systems are already near capacity, and its solid waste facilities face capacity and environmental challenges even without the additional burden associated with the projected increase in U.S. forces and their dependents.

The government of Guam's efforts to plan to meet infrastructure challenges caused by the buildup of military forces and facilities are in the initial stages, and existing uncertainties associated with the military buildup contribute to the difficulties Guam officials face in developing precise plans. These challenges are somewhat analogous to challenges communities around continental U.S. growth bases face. Government of Guam officials recognize that the island's infrastructure is inadequate to meet the projected demand; however, funding sources are uncertain. These same officials are uncertain as to whether and to what extent the government of Guam will be able to obtain financial assistance for projected infrastructure demands due to the military buildup. In September 2007, GAO reported that most communities experiencing civilian and military population growth at Army installations in the continental United States will likely incur costs to provide adequate schools, transportation, and other infrastructure improvements, and many of these communities are also seeking federal and state assistance.