MILITARY BASE CLOSURES

Management Strategy Needed to Mitigate Challenges and Improve Communication to Help Ensure Timely Implementation of Air National Guard Recommendations

What GAO Found

Through a consultative process that involved key stakeholders, the Air Force identified and ANG assigned 30 replacement missions for affected units that supported either the future force structure or the National Guard goal to maximize flying missions. On the basis of consultation with its major commands and the combatant commanders, the Air Force developed a prioritized list of potential mission areas for ANG, but let ANG, with input from state leadership, decide which missions to assign to specific units. ANG assigned affected units 23 missions from the prioritized list. ANG also assigned 7 new flying missions to affected units on the basis of its leadership goal to have at least 1 flying mission per state and to maximize the number of flying missions where possible.

ANG is making progress in planning to implement the BRAC recommendations, but lacks a strategy to address implementation challenges. Without such a strategy, several challenges could delay when some units are able to perform their new missions. ANG has developed programming plans for the BRAC-related actions affecting the ANG and a plan to move hundreds of aircraft. However, ANG faces challenges in managing the timing and sequencing of many actions required to implement BRAC, such as developing manning documents that provide the specific skill mixes required, and in ensuring there is sufficient space in Air Force schools to accommodate personnel requiring training. For example, ANG projects that about 3,000 personnel need to be trained for intelligence missions, but the school can currently accommodate only a portion of this requirement. ANG has worked with the Air Force to develop potential solutions, but these have yet to be fully implemented. There may also be delays in obtaining security clearances for personnel due to the lengthy clearance process. Further, bridge missions have not been identified for some units that will face a gap between old and new missions. ANG also faces possible delays in obtaining required funding for new equipment, construction, and training. Finally, some ANG units believe there has been insufficient communication with ANG headquarters about new mission requirements, which impacts their ability to recruit and train personnel.

GAO’s analysis of current Air Force estimates indicates that there will be annual recurring costs of $53 million rather than estimated $26 million annual recurring savings for the ANG related actions. Further, the Air Force is not using BRAC funds for over $300 million for military construction, training, and equipment to establish replacement missions for units losing their flying mission. However, because these costs are not included in the Air Force BRAC budget submission, Congress does not have full visibility over BRAC-related implementation costs.