



Highlights of [GAO-10-482](#), a report to congressional committees

Why GAO Did This Study

Decisions by the military services on where to base their force structure can have significant strategic, socioeconomic, and cost implications for the Department of Defense (DOD) and the communities surrounding the bases. Each service uses its own process to make basing decisions. The House Committee on Armed Services directed GAO to review the services' basing decision processes. GAO examined the extent to which (1) the services have comprehensive processes in place that are designed to result in well-informed basing decisions and (2) DOD exercises management control of these processes. GAO reviewed and analyzed DOD and service guidance, studies, and relevant documents on implementation and oversight of the services' basing processes.

What GAO Recommends

GAO recommends that the Navy better link its basing guidance documents and ensure they adequately address management control, and the Secretary of Defense identify a lead office for oversight and establish guidance on the consideration of departmentwide priorities as part of the services' basing decision processes. DOD concurred with two, partially concurred with two, and nonconcurred with one of the recommendations.

[View GAO-10-482](#) or [key components](#).
For more information, contact Brian Lepore at (202) 512-4523 or Leporeb@gao.gov.

DEFENSE INFRASTRUCTURE

Opportunities Exist to Improve the Navy's Basing Decision Process and DOD Oversight

What GAO Found

The Army, Marine Corps, and Air Force basing decision processes fully incorporate the key elements, associated factors, and management control standards that GAO identified as necessary in a comprehensive process; however, the Navy needs additional guidance for its process to be complete. GAO found that while the Army, Marine Corps, and Air Force each have issued comprehensive guidance for their basing processes that describes the organizational roles and responsibilities within the service, establishes links among all of the service's strategic and environmental guidance documents, and identifies the service's basing criteria, some of the Navy's guidance documents lacked detailed information about specific actions taken during the process and defined responsibility for completing certain types of analyses. For example, the Navy's Strategic Dispersal Flow Chart—one of the five guidance documents used to implement the Navy's process—shows that some types of analyses are conducted to review a range of considerations, such as access to training areas, sailor and family quality of life, and ship size, for a particular basing decision. But the document does not describe in any detail how and by whom these analyses will be conducted. Additionally, Navy guidance does not provide a clear explanation of how its five guidance documents are linked together in implementing the Navy's overall basing process. Without comprehensive and clear guidance on all aspects of the Navy's overall basing decision process, the Navy may lack the completeness and management control to ensure that Navy basing decisions can facilitate external stakeholders' examination and scrutiny or ensure effective implementation of the Navy's basing process.

The Secretary of Defense has not set a policy or assigned an office a clear role for providing management control of the services' basing decision processes within the United States, and as a consequence may lack reasonable assurance that certain departmentwide initiatives will be fully supported in the services' basing decisions. The Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) officials said that OSD is promoting joint sharing of DOD facilities and seeking to ensure that domestic basing decisions support global operations. However, OSD has not fully promoted service consideration of the joint sharing, global operations, and potentially other initiatives because the Secretary of Defense has neither provided a comprehensive policy for, nor clearly assigned an office within OSD to oversee domestic service basing processes. Without OSD guidance and an office to provide effective oversight of military service basing decision processes, the Secretary of Defense lacks reasonable assurance that departmentwide initiatives are adequately considered by the services in their domestic basing decision making.