

GAO Highlights

Highlights of [GAO-16-45](#), a report to congressional committees

Why GAO Did This Study

The 2005 BRAC round was the fifth round of base closures and realignments undertaken by DOD since 1988, and it was the largest, most complex, and costliest. DOD has relied on the BRAC process to reduce excess infrastructure and realign bases to meet changing force structure needs. According to the Secretary of Defense, BRAC 2005 provided opportunities to foster jointness among the military services. House Report 113-446 included a provision for GAO to review the status of BRAC 2005 recommendations to reduce infrastructure and promote opportunities for jointness. This report evaluates the extent to which DOD has (1) implemented the recommendations requiring the services to relocate select training functions to increase opportunities for jointness and (2) determined if implementing these recommendations has achieved cost savings. GAO reviewed guidance, course listings, and cost data; interviewed DOD and service officials.

What GAO Recommends

To help improve the implementation of jointness-focused recommendations in any future BRAC rounds, GAO recommends that DOD provide additional guidance for consolidating training and reporting BRAC costs and require the development of baseline cost data. DOD partially concurred with the recommendation to clarify guidance for reporting BRAC costs but did not concur with the other recommendations, stating that GAO misunderstood its approach to joint training. GAO believes its findings and recommendations are valid and addresses these points in the report.

View [GAO-16-45](#). For more information, contact Brian J. Lepore at (202) 512-4523 or leporeb@gao.gov

February 2016

MILITARY BASE REALIGNMENTS AND CLOSURES

More Guidance and Information Needed to Take Advantage of Opportunities to Consolidate Training

What GAO Found

For each of the six recommendations GAO reviewed from the 2005 Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) round, the Department of Defense (DOD) implemented the recommendations by requiring military services to relocate select training functions; however, GAO found that two of the six training functions reviewed were able to take advantage of the opportunity provided by BRAC to consolidate training so that services could train jointly. In implementing the remaining four BRAC recommendations, DOD relocated similar training functions run by separate military services into one location, but the services did not consolidate training functions. For example, they do not regularly coordinate or share information on their training goals and curriculums. DOD's justification for numerous 2005 BRAC recommendations included the assumption that realigning military department activities to one location would enhance jointness—defined by DOD as activities, operations, or organizations in which elements of two or more military departments participate. For these four training functions, DOD missed the opportunity to consolidate training to increase jointness, because it provided guidance to move personnel or construct buildings but not to measure progress toward consolidated training. Without additional guidance for consolidating training, the services will not be positioned to take advantage of such an opportunity in these types of recommendations as proposed by DOD and will face challenges encouraging joint training activities and collaboration across services.

DOD cannot determine if implementing the 2005 BRAC joint training recommendations that GAO reviewed has resulted in savings in operating costs. For three of the recommendations in this review, the services did not develop baseline operating costs before implementing the BRAC recommendations, which would have enabled it to determine whether savings were achieved. Without developing baseline cost data, DOD will be unable to estimate any cost savings resulting from similar recommendations in any future BRAC rounds. Further, costs reported to DOD by the training functions business plan managers for implementation of two of the six recommendations in this review likely did not include all BRAC-related costs funded from outside the BRAC account. A DOD memo requires BRAC business plan managers to submit all BRAC-related expenditures, including those funded from both inside and outside of the BRAC account. GAO identified at least \$110 million in implementation costs that likely should have been reported to DOD in accordance with the memo but were not; therefore the \$35.1 billion total cost reported for BRAC 2005 is likely somewhat understated. A DOD official stated that it was up to the military departments to ensure that all BRAC implementation costs were accounted for and that the military departments had the flexibility to determine which costs were associated with the BRAC recommendation and which were attributed to other actions. GAO found that this flexibility in determining which costs were to be reported as BRAC costs led to inconsistencies in what kinds of projects had their costs counted as BRAC implementation costs. By clarifying in guidance what is to be included as a BRAC implementation cost, DOD can help ensure that it has an accurate accounting of the final costs for any future BRAC implementation and that DOD and Congress are able to determine how much money is spent on any future BRAC rounds.