DOD should resolve capability deficiencies and infrastructure risks and revise cost estimates.

DoD has coordinated the relocation of Marines from Okinawa to other locations in the Asia-Pacific region through developing a synchronization plan and organizing working groups. However, DoD has not resolved selected identified capability deficiencies related to the relocation of Marine units; training needs in the region; the reduction in runway length at the Futenma Replacement Facility in Okinawa; and challenges for operating in Australia. DoD guidance indicates that mission requirements—which would include the capabilities needed to fulfill the mission—largely determine land and facility support requirements. If DoD does not resolve the selected identified capability deficiencies in its infrastructure plans, DoD may be unable to maintain its capabilities or face much higher costs to do so.

DoD has taken steps to develop infrastructure plans and schedules for its relocation efforts, but it did not develop a reliable schedule for the Marine relocation to Guam and has not completed its risk planning for infrastructure in Guam. DoD developed plans that will support construction efforts in Guam and Japan, and developed some initial infrastructure plans for Hawaii and Australia. However, GAO found the Marines Corps’ integrated master schedule for Guam did not fully meet the comprehensive, well-constructed, and credible characteristics for a reliable schedule. For example, the schedule does not include resources needed for nonconstruction activities, such as information technology and design activities. Additionally, the Marine Corps has not completed its risk-management plan for infrastructure construction in Guam. Specifically, the Marine Corps has not identified its strategy to address construction risks including labor shortages and endangered-species protection. If DoD does not have a reliable schedule or has not completed risk planning for Guam, it may not have complete information to identify and address risks that may result in cost overruns and schedule delays.

DoD has made progress in developing cost estimates for Guam, but its estimates partially met GAO best practices for reliable cost estimates for the relocations to Guam and Hawaii and the establishment of a rotational presence in Australia. Cost estimates related to Guam military construction activities, DoD included ground rules and assumptions, but did not include some elements of a reliable cost estimate, such as a risk analysis. Additionally, DoD developed cost estimates for nonmilitary construction activities that provide a high-level planning overview of the requirements, but they did not incorporate several other best practices, including a unifying Work Breakdown Structure that defines in detail the work necessary to accomplish a program’s objectives. For Hawaii and Australia, the cost estimates are not considered reliable because they did not include all life-cycle costs or a Work Breakdown Structure. If DoD does not revise the cost estimates for these locations, decision makers in DoD and Congress will not have reliable cost information to inform funding decisions and to help them determine the viability of relocation of Marines to Hawaii and the establishment of a rotational presence in Australia.

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