MILITARY BASES

DOD Should Address Challenges with Communication and Mission Changes to Improve Future Base Realignment and Closure Rounds

Why GAO Did This Study

The 2005 BRAC round was the costliest and most complex BRAC round ever. In contrast to prior rounds, which focused on the goal of reducing excess infrastructure, DOD’s goals for BRAC 2005 also included transforming the military and fostering joint activities.

GAO was asked to review DOD’s performance outcomes from BRAC 2005. This report examines the extent to which DOD has (1) measured the achievement of its goals for BRAC 2005 and (2) implemented prior GAO recommendations on BRAC 2005 and addressed any additional challenges to improve performance for any future BRAC round. GAO reviewed relevant documents and guidance; met with a nongeneralizable selection of 26 military organizations and 12 communities involved with BRAC 2005; and interviewed DOD officials.

What GAO Found

The Department of Defense (DOD) components generally did not measure the achievement of goals—reducing excess infrastructure, transforming the military, and promoting joint activities among the military departments—for the 2005 Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) round. In March 2013, GAO recommended that, for any future BRAC round, DOD identify measures of effectiveness and develop a plan to demonstrate achieved results. DOD did not concur and stated that no action is expected. Without a requirement for DOD to identify measures of effectiveness and track achievement of its goals, Congress will not have full visibility over the expected outcomes or achievements of any future BRAC rounds.

Of the 65 recommendations GAO has made to help DOD address challenges it faced in BRAC 2005, as of October 2017 DOD had implemented 33 of them (with 18 pending DOD action).

What GAO Recommends

Congress should consider requiring DOD to identify and track appropriate measures of effectiveness in any future BRAC round. Also, GAO recommends that in any future BRAC round DOD (1) take steps to establish clear and consistent communications while collecting data and (2) provide specific guidance to the military departments to monitor and report on mission-related changes during implementation. GAO also continues to believe that DOD should fully implement GAO’s prior recommendations on BRAC 2005.

DOD objected to Congress requiring DOD to identify and track performance measures, but GAO continues to believe this to be an appropriate action for the reasons discussed in the report. Lastly, DOD concurred with the two recommendations.

View GAO-18-231. For more information, contact Brian Lepore at (202) 512-4523 or leporeb@gao.gov.