

GAO Highlights

Highlights of [GAO-16-853](#), a report to congressional requesters

Why GAO Did This Study

DOD's JIAC, currently located at RAF Molesworth in the United Kingdom, provides critical intelligence support for the U.S. European and Africa Commands and U.S. allies.

GAO was asked to review DOD's decision to consolidate and relocate the JIAC to RAF Croughton, United Kingdom. This report 1) describes key considerations that influenced DOD's decision and 2) evaluates the extent to which DOD's AOA process for its JIAC consolidation project aligns with best practices for such analyses.

GAO visited current JIAC facilities to observe their condition and discuss with officials how certain factors affect the JIAC's ability to effectively conduct its mission, and the base at which DOD plans to consolidate the JIAC. GAO also discussed this AOA process with officials who participated in, and are knowledgeable about, the process; reviewed documentation used by DOD during the process; and evaluated the information using best practices identified by GAO as necessary characteristics of a high quality, reliable AOA process.

What GAO Recommends

GAO recommends that DOD develop guidance that requires the use of best practices—including those identified by GAO—when conducting AOA processes for certain future military construction projects. DOD did not agree, stating that the best practices do not apply to military construction project decision-making processes. GAO continues to believe that its recommendation is valid, as discussed in this report.

View [GAO-16-853](#). For more information, contact Brian J. Lepore at (202) 512-4523 or leporeb@gao.gov.

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JOINT INTELLIGENCE ANALYSIS COMPLEX

DOD Partially Used Best Practices for Analyzing Alternatives and Should Do So Fully for Future Military Construction Decisions

What GAO Found

The Department of Defense's (DOD) decision to consolidate and relocate its Joint Intelligence Analysis Complex (JIAC) to Royal Air Force (RAF) base Croughton in the United Kingdom (U.K.) was influenced by the JIAC's current facilities' deteriorating condition and DOD criteria that guided its analysis of alternatives (AOA). DOD determined the current facilities are not well suited to the JIAC's mission, in poor condition, and uneconomical to upgrade. In light of this, DOD's AOA process was driven by five criteria. Two of these—impact on intelligence operations and impact on bilateral and multinational intelligence collaboration—were considered critical, and three others—impact on international agreements and relationships, impact on community quality of life, and the business case for consolidation—important but secondary.

DOD's AOA process for JIAC consolidation fully or substantially met 6 best practices, partially or minimally met 15, and did not meet 1. Thus, it partially met the four characteristics encompassing these practices that GAO has identified as necessary to produce a high quality, reliable AOA process:

- *Well documented:* DOD's AOA process partially met the best practice of tying benefits or effectiveness to mission need, with a general explanation of how mission needs will be met under DOD's five AOA criteria. However, DOD minimally met the best practice of documenting the AOA process in a single document.
- *Comprehensive:* DOD's AOA process fully met the best practice of defining mission need, but minimally met the best practice of developing life cycle cost estimates. Specifically, DOD officials characterized the level of detail for its 2011 preliminary estimates as "extremely rough."
- *Unbiased:* DOD's AOA process substantially met the best practice of ensuring that the process was impartial, in part because an independent DOD organization reviewed its conclusions. In contrast, DOD minimally met the best practice of comparing alternatives, as it did not provide evidence that all alternatives were evaluated against the same data.
- *Credible:* DOD's AOA process fully met the best practice of defining criteria, but minimally met the best practice of describing alternatives. Specifically, DOD's AOA body of work does not provide sufficient detail on each alternative to allow for robust analysis.

According to DOD officials, the department did not follow best practices when conducting its JIAC consolidation AOA process. This is because DOD does not have guidance outlining a set of AOA best practices for military construction decisions. Without guidance for using AOA best practices during certain military construction projects—such as those above a certain monetary threshold—DOD and Congress may face oversight challenges, and DOD may have trouble justifying its decisions for military construction projects in the future.

This is a public version of a classified report that GAO issued previously. It excludes classified information that provided additional detail on DOD's decision to consolidate the JIAC at RAF Croughton.