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Base Instincts

A Case for Base Realignments and Closures at Home and Abroad



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Taxpayers for Common Sense

Cover page image: An aerial view of the John C. Stennis Space Center, where the Mississippi Army Ammunition Plant was closed as a result of the 2005 BRAC process and transferred to NASA, creating new opportunities and strengthening the local economy. July 25, 2001. NASA photo.

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Executive Summary

The United States military operates a vast network of installations both domestically and overseas. In the late 1980s, recognizing that U.S. laws had made it nearly impossible for the Pentagon to close domestic military installations, Congress established a novel process to address excess capacity in the military's domestic installations known as Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC). Under this process, Congress empowers an independent commission to evaluate the Pentagon's recommendations for closing or realigning installations, and then Congress must vote on the recommendations as a single package without amendment. Adjusting for inflation, as well as environmental remediation costs and other concerns with the Pentagon's estimate of net annual recurring savings, prior BRAC rounds are saving taxpayers an estimated \$13.8 billion per year. From FY 2012 through FY 2023, prior BRAC rounds have saved taxpayers an estimated \$166 billion.

Despite calls from previous BRAC Commissions and the Pentagon to authorize a new round of BRAC, Congress has not authorized a BRAC round since 2005. This can largely be attributed to political concerns stemming from the 2005 BRAC round's higher-than-anticipated implementation costs and potential economic impacts on communities located near base realignments and closures.

However, by addressing cost drivers in the 2005 BRAC round—such as its subordination of cost and savings criteria to military value criteria—a future BRAC round could significantly reduce implementation costs. Furthermore, economic data on the counties that faced major closures as a result of the 2005 BRAC round show that, on average, in the decade following the closure announcements, impacted communities saw their unemployment rates drop by more than the change in the national average and saw their per capita personal incomes rise by nearly as much as the change in the national average.

Overseas base closures and realignments can also save taxpayer dollars and may be more easily achievable, as the executive branch has the authority to close or realign overseas installations without congressional approval. Reining in U.S. military installations overseas by addressing excess capacity can also help reduce regional tensions, mitigate direct risks to U.S. military personnel, and mitigate the risk of costly military escalations in defense of those personnel.

In light of the fiscal and national security benefits of reining in the U.S. military's vast network of military installations, this report urges Congress and the executive branch to pursue additional realignments and closures to address excess military infrastructure. It urges a new BRAC process to address excess capacity domestically, and executive branch actions to address excess capacity overseas.

The Need for a New Round of BRAC

Providing for the national security of the United States is one of the primary responsibilities of the federal government. As international relations and global threats constantly evolve, so do U.S. national security strategies, as reflected in regular updates to the National Defense Strategy, most recently updated in October 2022.¹ However, while strategies are constantly shifting to respond to current and future threats, the same cannot be said for the network of military installations—domestically and overseas—that serve as the

infrastructural backbone of those strategies. In fact, the composition of U.S. military installations has not been comprehensively assessed and altered since 2005, when the last round of Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) was initiated.

In its report to the President, the 2005 BRAC Commission underscored that “the need for such a process will continue after the 2005 Commission ends,” and recommended “that the next round of BRAC formally begin in 2015...”² It even proposed legislative text for a subsequent BRAC round.³ Nearly 20 years later, this recommendation has gone unanswered.

The most recent publicly available estimate by the Department of Defense (DOD) found that the U.S. military has excess infrastructure capacity of roughly 20 percent, accounting for domestic as well as overseas installations. Specifically, a 2017 DOD infrastructure capacity report estimated 19 percent excess capacity across the Department of Defense based on FY 2012 Force Structure needs, and 22 percent excess capacity based on projected needs for FY 2019 Force Structure.⁴ The only more recent publicized data on the Pentagon’s excess infrastructure lies in a report required by the FY 2024 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), which is currently only available for viewing in person at the House and Senate Armed Services Committees in Congress. However, according to a Pentagon official familiar with the report, its data is thoroughly unreliable—the numbers were self-reported by installation commanders who are incentivized to underreport excess capacity because their installations will lose 85 percent of their sustainment funding for each square foot declared to be in excess.⁵

Department	Estimated Percentage of Excess Capacity (above 1989 baseline) FY 2019 Force Structure	Estimated Percentage of Excess Capacity (above 1989 baseline) FY 2012 Force Structure
Army	33	29
Navy	7	6
Air Force	32	28
DLA	12	13
Total DoD	22	19

Source: “Department of Defense Infrastructure Capacity.” Department of Defense. October 2017.

In light of the findings in the 2017 report (the most recent reliable and widely available report on excess infrastructure), the Department of Defense argued that this excess capacity “requires a comprehensive BRAC process to reduce excess while enhancing military value, achieving recurring savings, and ensuring retention of excess

space for contingency and surge requirements such as changed missions, tactics, and technology.”⁶

Excess infrastructure capacity comes with serious financial costs—from personnel costs to construction, maintenance, energy use, and equipment costs. It also comes at a cost to national security, as resources spent on operating and maintaining unnecessary military installations cannot be spent on legitimate national security needs. These costs are not going anywhere—on the contrary, they are likely increasing.

The 2017 infrastructure capacity report underscored that since DOD’s most recent BRAC analysis in the early 2000s, “the Department has undergone considerable changes that have impacted the force structure, mission

requirements, and threats facing the United States.”⁷ As it has been more than seven years since this report was published, excess capacity today is likely even higher. The report’s authors also noted that their use of a 1989 baseline—intended to maintain consistency with previous excess capacity reports—assumed there was no excess capacity in 1989. They concede this assumption “indicates the excess found in this report is likely conservative because significant excess existed in 1989, as evidenced by the subsequent BRAC closures.”⁸

It also bears mentioning that the Pentagon’s estimates of excess capacity are based on a national security strategy that views the U.S. military’s ability to project power anywhere in the world at a moment’s notice as central to national defense. A more pragmatic national security strategy—focused on protecting the U.S. homeland and enhancing the ability of our allies to defend themselves without a permanent U.S. military presence—would reveal far more excess capacity than the Pentagon’s 2017 excess capacity report.

A new BRAC process is also necessary to help address the Pentagon’s deferred maintenance. As of FY 2020, the Pentagon had a \$137 billion backlog of deferred maintenance at its facilities, posing a significant risk to its ability to carry out its missions.⁹ By addressing excess basing capacity, the Pentagon could reduce this backlog and focus on maintaining the bases we need most.

Perhaps counterintuitively, a new BRAC process is also necessary to protect communities near military installations that the Pentagon would prefer to close or realign. In 2015, Anthony Principi, former Secretary of Veterans Affairs and the Chairman of the 2005 BRAC Commission, issued a warning:

Without a BRAC commission, realignments and closings will still take place, in a kind of “stealth” BRAC. Fiscal constraints allow DoD no choice but to reduce the number of its personnel, cut training and operations and maintenance costs, and defer modernization, all of which will have an adverse impact on the communities and businesses that bring military communities to life. This is taking place right now.

*These reductions have a serious economic impact on local communities—who are helpless to counter the Pentagon’s decisions. They would fare better under a BRAC that would provide transparency on decisions for states and local defense communities, and the means to advocate before an independent BRAC Commission.*¹⁰



Anthony Principi, chairman of the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission and then-Secretary of Veterans Affairs, spoke to soldiers at Al Faw Palace, Camp Victory, Iraq, July 14, 2004. Courtesy photo. The appearance of U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) visual information does not imply or constitute DoD endorsement.

More recently, Karen Holt, then-president of the Association of Defense Communities, penned an op-ed in *Stars and Stripes* highlighting a similar concern, warning that the alternative to a new BRAC round could be “a hasty, unstructured approach—closing bases quickly to chase savings.” As she explained, “the Department of Defense tried this in the 1970s and ‘80s, and history shows it doesn’t work. Without transparency or planning, closures devastated local economies and triggered political backlash so intense that future closure became nearly impossible. That’s why BRAC was created in the first place: to ensure structure, fairness and accountability in making difficult — but necessary — decisions.”¹¹

The risk of a “stealth” BRAC to local communities, the persistent and likely rising costs—both financial and strategic—of maintaining excess infrastructure capacity, the need to address deferred maintenance, and the fact that estimated net annual recurring savings from previous BRAC rounds measure about \$13.8 billion (based on estimates detailed later in this report) all underscore the pressing need for a new round of BRAC.

Impediments to Base Realignments and Closures

Despite calls from both the 2005 BRAC Commission and the Department of Defense for additional rounds of BRAC, efforts to authorize another round have not been forthcoming due to persistent political challenges.

First and foremost, with respect to domestic military bases, lawmakers are generally disinclined to be associated with any effort that might lead to the closure or realignment of military installations in or near their state or district. This disinclination is tied to the belief that closing or realigning military installations will have negative economic impacts on surrounding communities. However, this belief overlooks mechanisms within the BRAC process for mitigating the negative economic impacts of closures and realignments, such as economic adjustment assistance for communities located near military installations slated for closure or realignment, and outplacement assistance for civilians employed at such installations.¹² It also overlooks the fact that communities impacted by closures have often seen their economies improve as former bases are repurposed for more productive economic activities.

Remarkably, this political problem persists even though the entire BRAC process was established in part to relieve lawmakers of the burden of having to decide which military installations to close or realign. By empowering an independent commission and requiring lawmakers to cast a single up-or-down vote on the commission’s full recommendations without amendment, the BRAC process was meant to shield lawmakers from blame for any decision to close a specific base in their state or district. Yet, many lawmakers with military installations in their states or districts are still concerned that even supporting the initiation of a new BRAC round—let alone voting for the commission’s recommendations—could come with political repercussions.

Another reason policymakers are often hesitant to support a new round of BRAC is the fact that closures and realignments come with upfront implementation costs, which are only recouped over time as annual recurring savings from closures and realignments accumulate.¹³ Those implementation costs were particularly high for the 2005 BRAC round, which was more focused on enhancing the military value of U.S. military installations than cost efficiency.

Troublingly, these concerns have not only stymied efforts to authorize new BRAC rounds—they have also generated efforts to explicitly prohibit them. For example, the FY 2019 National Defense Authorization Act included a provision stating that nothing in the bill should be construed as authorizing an additional BRAC round, while the FY 2019 Defense Appropriations Act included a provision barring the use of funds made available by the act for proposing, planning for, or executing a new BRAC round.¹⁴

While concerns over the potential political consequences, community impacts, and upfront costs associated with base closures and realignments are real, they are not insurmountable. Backed by a strong track record of savings and relatively manageable impacts on most communities facing base closures, lawmakers can and should feel confident making the case to their states and districts that a new and improved BRAC process is necessary for the national security and fiscal health of the nation, and that the government will support local communities with the resources they need to address the short-term economic impacts of closures and realignments.

As for overseas installations, geopolitical and ideological arguments against what is often mischaracterized as a retreat from America's role in the world pose some of the greatest challenges to reining in excess military infrastructure abroad. The problem with some of these arguments is that they treat the projection of military power abroad as the primary—if not the only—mechanism for supporting U.S. interests. In turn, they often marginalize other effective means of advancing U.S. interests, from diplomatic engagement to humanitarian aid to international trade. Determining which overseas military installations are not essential to national security should be done thoughtfully, in consultation with our partners and allies. But refusing to entertain that conversation on the premise that any reduction in infrastructure represents a retreat from the U.S. role in the world is wrong-headed.

Costs and Savings of Previous BRAC Rounds

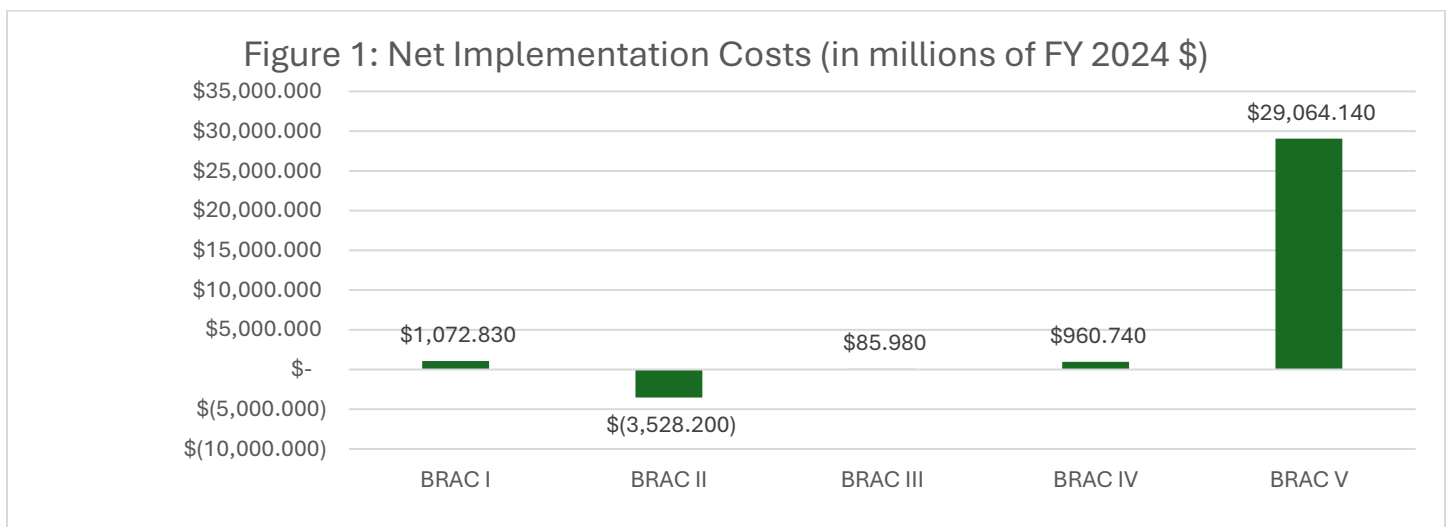
Following the end of the Cold War, the United States recognized that its military posture was no longer aligned with its strategic objectives. To correct this, policymakers worked to close a large number of military bases deemed unnecessary in the post-Cold War era. Recognizing that lawmakers representing states or districts with military installations could potentially block such closures, Congress created a process for an independent commission to make recommendations for closures, which lawmakers would then vote on as a single package.

Congress initiated the first of these processes with the passage of the Base Closure and Realignment Act of 1988 which created the first Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) Commission.¹⁵ Two years later, it passed the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Act of 1990, laying out updated procedures for three additional BRAC rounds slated to begin in 1991, 1993, and 1995.¹⁶ In 2001, Congress amended the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Act of 1990 to create updated procedures for an additional round, to begin in 2005.¹⁷ For convenience, this report often refers to these rounds as BRAC I, BRAC II, BRAC III, BRAC IV, and BRAC V, respectively. (See Appendix III for an in-depth look at the varying procedures established by these bills.)

During each of these BRAC processes, the Pentagon estimated the upfront costs and savings of base realignments and closures, as well as their net annual recurring savings.

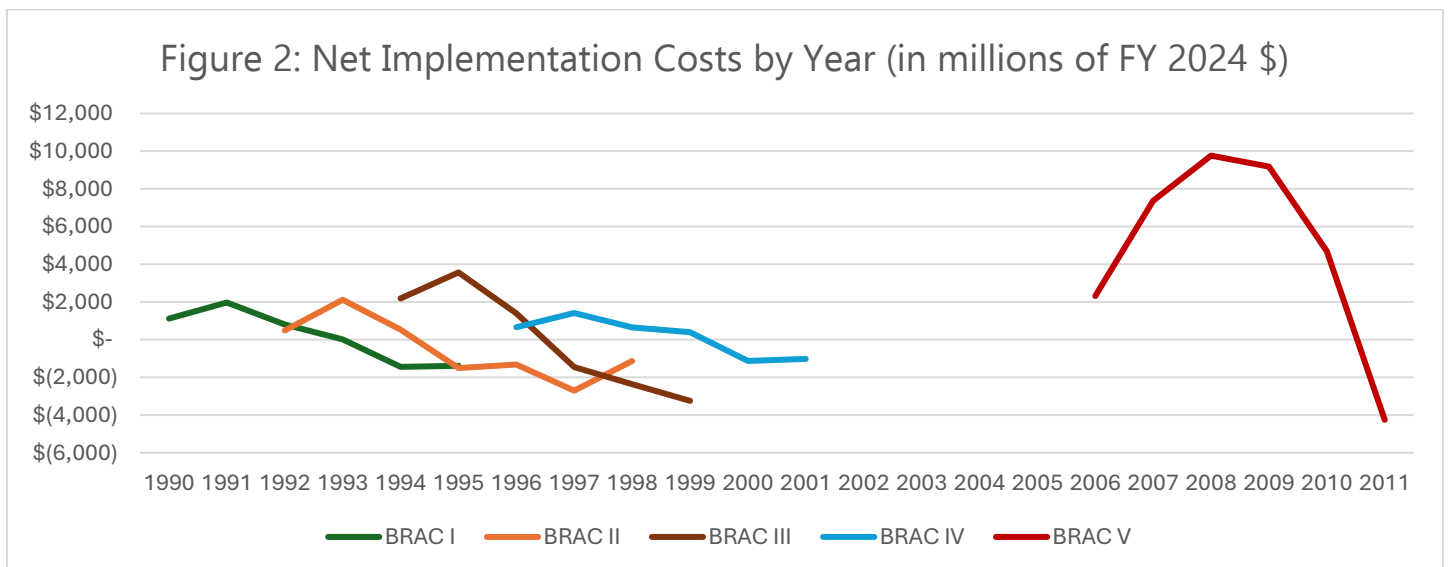
Upfront Costs and Savings in Previous BRAC Rounds

Figure 1 shows data sourced from the Pentagon's budget justification documents.¹⁸ Total implementation costs are calculated using one-time costs, minus estimated land revenue from land leases and sales. One-time costs generally include military construction, family housing construction and operations, environmental costs, Operation & Maintenance, Military Personnel, Homeowners Assistance Program costs, and other costs. Total savings generally include savings on military construction, family housing construction and operations, Operation & Maintenance, Military Personnel, and other areas. Net implementation costs reflect the total one-time implementation costs minus total implementation savings. Negative net implementation costs represent net implementation savings. When comparing costs and savings from specific BRAC rounds, all numbers are adjusted for inflation to FY 2024 dollars unless otherwise specified.¹⁹



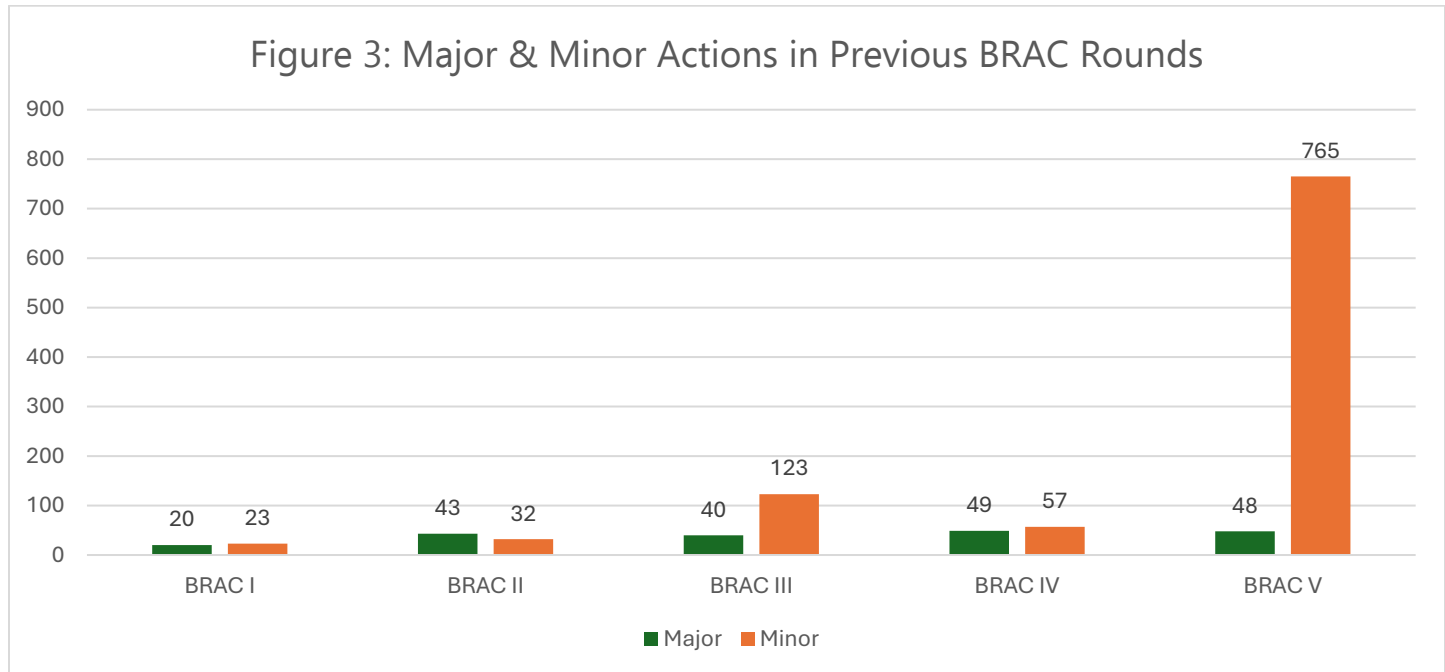
Source: "FY2025 Budget Estimates: DoD Base Realignment and Closure." United States Department of Defense. March 2024.

The net implementation costs in Figure 1 are broken down by year in Figure 2.



Source: "FY2025 Budget Estimates: DoD Base Realignment and Closure." United States Department of Defense. March 2024.

As Figures 1 and 2 illustrate, the Pentagon's estimated net implementation costs were significantly higher during the 2005 BRAC round (BRAC V) compared to the previous four rounds. One reason for this is that BRAC V recommended significantly more actions related to closures and realignments than previous rounds, as shown in Figure 3.²⁰



Source: "Base Closure and Realignment (BRAC): Background and Issues for Congress." Congressional Research Service. April 25, 2019.

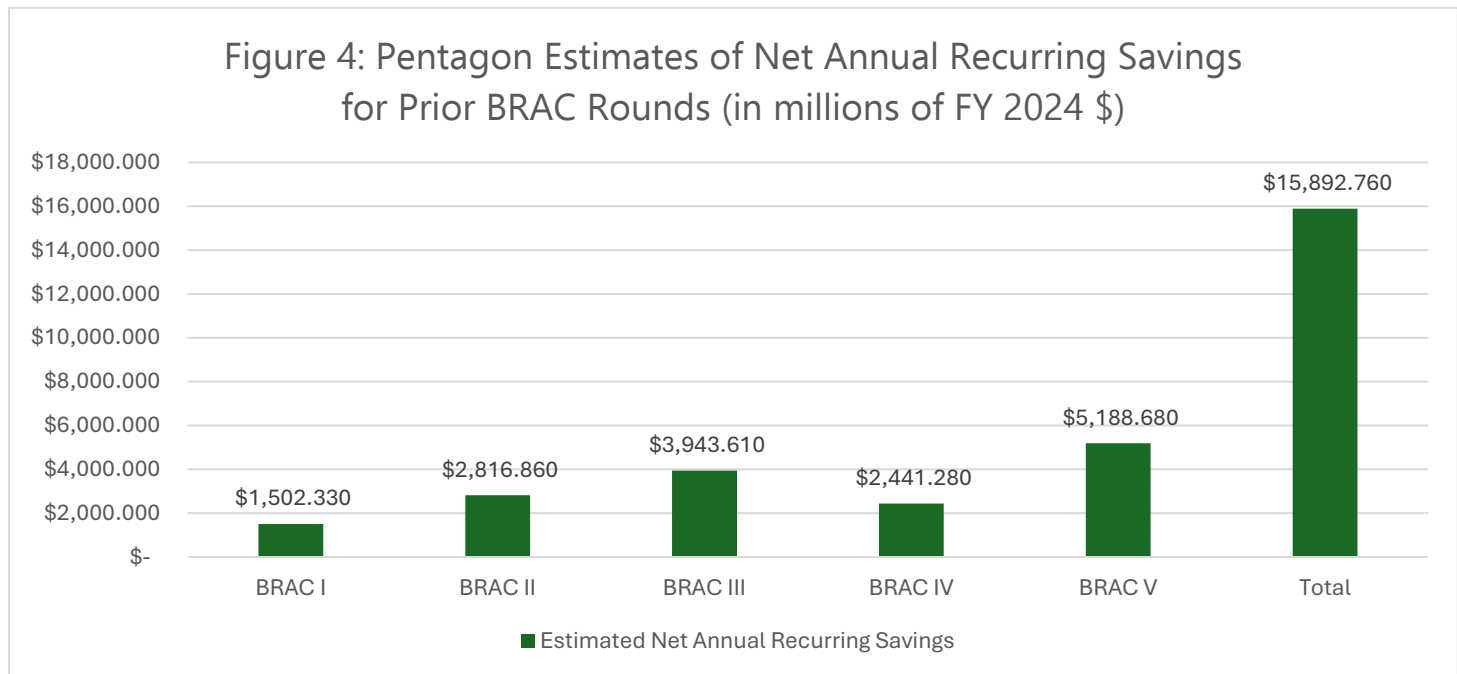
The dramatically higher number of minor actions in BRAC V can be attributed in part to updated selection criteria in the BRAC V legislation that prioritized military value over cost efficiency, as well as the legislation's emphasis on joint basing as a mechanism for realigning military missions.²¹

Net Annual Recurring Savings from Previous BRAC Rounds

Net annual recurring savings are more difficult to accurately estimate than implementation savings because they are realized on an ongoing basis, and because the Pentagon thus far has not adjusted its estimates to account for certain ongoing costs. Furthermore, all BRAC savings estimates—whether during the implementation phase or on a recurring basis—are true estimates, rather than measurements. According to the Congressional Research Service (CRS), "to determine BRAC savings... requires either (1) estimating what the composition of the DOD budget would have been without BRAC, or (2) distinguishing the effects of BRAC from the effects of other myriad factors that affect DOD installations and budgets over more than a decade."²² As the second option is virtually impossible for an organization the size of the Pentagon, the best option available is to estimate savings based on assumptions about avoided costs.

Taking this approach in its FY 1999 budget data, the Pentagon estimated net annual recurring savings from the first four BRAC rounds between \$5.6 billion and \$5.7 billion (in FY 1999 dollars) starting in 2002.²³ According to CRS, these projected savings were generally based on estimated savings during the final year of each round's

implementation.²⁴ In its FY 2011 budget data, the Pentagon estimated net annual recurring savings from BRAC V of \$3.8 billion in projected FY 2012 dollars.²⁵ Drawing from these two data sets, Figure 4 below shows the Pentagon's estimated net annual recurring savings for each of the previous BRAC rounds, adjusted for inflation to FY 2024 dollars.



Sources: "Military Base Closures: Estimates of Costs and Savings." Congressional Research Service. Updated June 7, 2001. P. 8.; "Military Base Realalignments and Closures: Updated Costs and Savings Estimates from BRAC 2005." U.S. Government Accountability Office. June 29, 2012. Pp. 37-40.

In 2017, then-Acting Assistant Secretary of Defense for Energy, Installations and Environment Peter Potochney told Congress that previous BRAC rounds "are collectively saving the Department \$12 billion annually," and estimated that a new BRAC round could save an additional \$2 billion annually.²⁶ Adjusted for inflation to FY 2024 dollars, Potochney's estimate of net annual recurring savings from previous BRAC rounds comes to roughly \$15.3 billion per year, not far off from the inflation adjusted estimate in Figure 4. His estimate of net annual recurring savings for a new BRAC round comes to roughly \$2.6 billion in FY 2024 dollars.

However, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) has questioned the accuracy of the Pentagon's estimates of net annual recurring savings. In a 2022 report, GAO wrote that "DOD's estimated annual recurring savings are outdated," and argued that "when adjusted for inflation, costs have varied since the initial estimate, potentially offsetting the estimated amount of costs avoided."²⁷ According to GAO, "DOD officials stated they could not justify the resources required to attempt to recalculate the annual recurring savings from BRAC rounds."²⁸

Issues with Pentagon Estimates of BRAC Savings

GAO has identified a host of additional problems with the Pentagon's cost and savings data, among the most basic of which was its failure to develop baseline operating costs to more accurately determine the amount of

savings achieved. With respect to BRAC V, GAO also highlighted the Pentagon's bundling of multiple closures; its failure to collect accurate information on costs, savings, and efficiencies achieved from joint basing; and its failure to anticipate information technology and environmental cleanup requirements—all of which impeded a more accurate accounting of recurring costs and savings.²⁹

While costs not accounted for in the Pentagon's estimates certainly offset a portion of the projected savings, they do not appear to have a major impact on net annual recurring savings, given the scale of those estimated savings. Furthermore, while inflation affects recurring costs, it also affects recurring savings—and because recurring costs are dwarfed by estimated recurring savings, accounting for inflation actually increases the estimated value of net annual recurring savings. According to CRS, the Pentagon's estimates of net annual recurring savings for the first four BRAC rounds were based on total savings in the final year of implementation for each round, which seems to support GAO's contention that the Pentagon did not account for certain recurring costs from those rounds in the years following their implementation.³⁰ The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) confirmed this with respect to environmental and caretaker costs in a review of the Pentagon's 1998 BRAC report.

Costs Beyond the Implementation Period. DoD will incur environmental and caretaker costs for some bases after the six-year implementation period is over. In its review, CBO suggests that estimates of BRAC costs and savings would be more accurate if they included those costs.³¹

While accounting for these costs—which averaged about \$447 million per year in then-year dollars from FY 2012 through FY 2023—offers a more accurate estimate of net annual recurring savings, costs related to environmental cleanup and remediation are not a direct result of decisions to close military installations. Rather, they stem from military activities that created environmental hazards in the first place. These costs only manifest as BRAC costs because U.S. law requires the military to clean up its installations before repurposing them for non-military use. Whether military installations are included in BRAC or not, environmental hazards still need to be addressed, resulting in direct financial costs that have little to do with whether a base is closed. In cases where these hazards are not addressed, they still create externalized costs in the form of higher rates of cancer and other maladies among military service members, their families, and surrounding communities.³² Costs from environmental contamination can also increase over time as contaminants seep further into the ground and threaten nearby groundwater supplies, so to the extent that BRAC leads the Pentagon to address environmental hazards more quickly, it may actually reduce environmental remediation costs.³³

A far more significant shortcoming of the Pentagon's estimates of net annual recurring savings is that, in the 2005 round, some of these estimates included projected savings related to personnel costs at military installations recommended for closure or realignment that were never actually realized. In its report to the president, the 2005 BRAC Commission noted the following:

DoD's claimed savings (as opposed to cost avoidance) will be significantly reduced by the extent that military personnel costs are not reduced but are instead shifted to another installation or mission. DoD claimed its proposals would produce \$47.8 billion in savings after investing \$24.6 billion in one-time

implementation costs. However, if personnel savings are not realized, DoD's 2005 BRAC proposal would still incur \$24.6 billion in one-time costs while saving only \$18.6 billion.³⁴

The estimated savings and costs referenced in this passage cover the 20-year period from 2005 to 2025, adjusted for projected inflation over that period.³⁵ Despite identifying this shortcoming in its report, the 2005 BRAC Commission still estimated the 20-year net present value (a measure of the value of future savings minus one-time costs over the 20-year period following BRAC authorization) of the 2005 BRAC round at \$35.6 billion³⁶—rather than identifying a *negative* net present value of -\$6 billion (\$18.6 billion minus \$24.6 billion), as its analysis suggests would have been more accurate.

In its 2011 budget submission, the Pentagon offered a revised estimate of the 20-year net present value of the 2005 BRAC round at \$9.8 billion. Some of the decrease from the BRAC Commission's estimate to the Pentagon's revised estimate can be traced to the increase in one-time implementation costs. The Commission estimated upfront costs of \$21 billion, while the Pentagon's 2011 budget submission estimated upfront costs of \$35.1 billion—or \$32.2 billion in constant 2005 dollars—reflecting an increase in one-time costs of about \$11.2 billion, largely generated by unanticipated construction costs.³⁷ The source of the remainder of the reduction in the estimated 20-year net present value is not clear.

What is clear is that the Pentagon's revised estimate of the 20-year net present value of the 2005 BRAC round did not account for the full \$29.2 billion reduction (\$47.8 billion minus \$18.6 billion) in 20-year savings that the BRAC Commission suggested would correct for the inclusion of misleading military personnel savings. This suggests that the Pentagon's estimate for the 2005 BRAC round still included some savings associated with personnel reductions that may have never occurred.³⁸

Refining Estimates of BRAC Savings

Regarding the Pentagon's 2011 estimate of net annual recurring savings for the 2005 BRAC round of \$3.8 billion, a 2012 GAO report noted that "we and the BRAC Commission believe that DOD's net annual recurring savings estimates are overstated because they include savings from eliminating military personnel positions without corresponding decreases in end-strength. DOD disagrees with our position."³⁹ We were not able to find any details explaining the Pentagon's disagreement.

Notwithstanding the serious methodological flaw of counting reductions in military personnel costs that were in fact just transferred to other installations as savings, the more accurate \$18.6 billion in estimated 20-year savings for the 2005 BRAC round still underscores the potential for long-term savings from future BRAC rounds—so long as upfront implementation costs are kept under control, as they were in the first four BRAC rounds.

One other problem with the Pentagon's estimate with respect to BRAC V specifically was that while the BRAC Commission recommended 22 major closures in the 2005 round, its report to the president noted that one of them, Cannon Air Force Base (AFB), could remain open if the Air Force assigned it a new mission.⁴⁰ As the Air Force did assign it a new mission, the base was never closed. However, according to GAO, "The Air Force BRAC Office said it claimed these savings because the decision to reallocate Air Force resources and mission to

Cannon was made after the BRAC recommendation was approved and was, therefore, a non-BRAC programmatic decision.”⁴¹ While the Air Force BRAC Office may have been technically correct, claiming BRAC savings from a closure that never happened—because of a contingency specified by the BRAC Commission—misleadingly inflates the Pentagon’s estimate of net annual recurring savings achieved by the BRAC process.

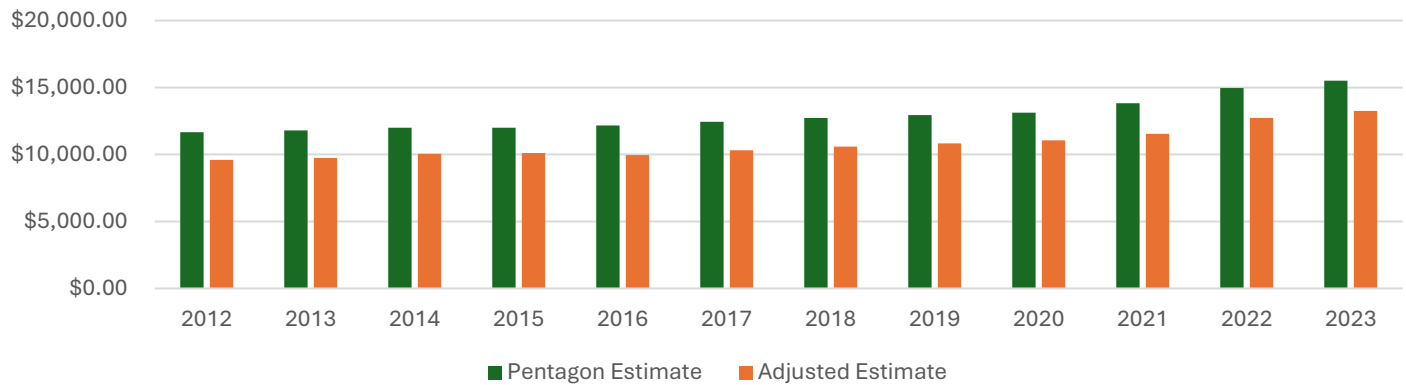
Correcting for this would theoretically require subtracting the \$260 million (in FY 2012 dollars) in net annual recurring savings that Cannon’s closure was projected to achieve from the Pentagon’s total estimate. However, according to the 2005 BRAC Commission, 92 percent of the projected savings from closing Cannon AFB were based on projected savings from personnel reductions.⁴² As we correct for the inclusion of savings from personnel reductions that never occurred below, correcting for Cannon AFB remaining open only requires subtracting 8 percent of the total savings estimate, or \$20.8 million.

Correcting for BRAC V’s inclusion of unrealized savings related to reductions in military personnel that never took place, for the actual environmental and caretaker costs of BRAC in the years following BRAC V’s implementation, and for the inclusion of savings from Cannon Air Force Base should offer a more realistic picture of actual savings relative to the Pentagon’s estimate.

To offer a rough correction for the inclusion of savings related to military personnel reductions that never occurred, we first assume that the Pentagon did not reduce military personnel at all as a result of the 2005 BRAC round, and did not correct for its inclusion of these false savings when it revised its savings estimates in its FY 2011 budget submission. We then assume that the \$29.2 billion of savings in military personnel costs that should not have been included in the Pentagon’s initial estimate of the 20-year net present value of the 2005 BRAC round were evenly distributed over the 20-year period. This allows us to conclude that the Pentagon’s estimated \$3.8 billion of net annual recurring savings for the 2005 BRAC round was overstated by up to \$1.46 billion.

Figure 5 compares the Pentagon’s estimate of net annual recurring savings with an updated estimate that assumes military personnel reductions did not occur as a result of BRAC recommendations, accounts for Cannon Air Force Base remaining open, and accounts for the environmental and caretaker costs of BRAC borne by the Pentagon in the 12 years following BRAC V’s implementation.⁴³ All numbers are adjusted for inflation to then-year dollars, except for the correction for the inclusion of military personnel savings, which reflects the annual average of inflation-adjusted savings over the 20-year period from 2005 to 2025.

Figure 5: Net Annual Recurring Savings From All Prior BRAC Rounds
Adjusted for Ongoing Costs and Methodological Concerns
(in millions of then-year \$)



Sources: "Military Base Closures: Estimates of Costs and Savings." Congressional Research Service. Updated June 7, 2001. P. 8.; "Military Base Realignments and Closures: Updated Costs and Savings Estimates from BRAC 2005." U.S. Government Accountability Office. June 29, 2012. Pp. 37-41.; "Defense Wide Budget Documentation: Base Realignment and Closure." United States Department of Defense. Program Years 2014-2025.

As Figure 5 illustrates, accounting for methodological concerns with BRAC V and for the environmental and caretaker costs associated with previous BRAC rounds in the years following implementation has a significant—but not detrimental—impact on the Pentagon's estimate of net annual recurring savings. While it bears repeating that the Pentagon's methods for estimating net annual recurring savings are limited and imperfect, its estimate, when adjusted for these ongoing costs and methodological concerns, is the best estimate available. Over the 12-year period from FY 2012 through FY 2023, when adjusted for these concerns, costs, and for inflation to FY 2024 dollars, we estimate that net annual recurring savings from previous BRAC rounds averaged about \$13.8 billion, leading to roughly \$166 billion in estimated savings.

If a new BRAC round achieved net annual recurring savings on par with estimated savings from previous rounds, it would save taxpayers an estimated \$2.7 billion per year.

Addressing Cost Drivers

Addressing elements of previous BRAC legislation that led to higher implementation costs—and that may have reduced net annual recurring savings—is critical to improving the success of future BRAC rounds. Cost drivers include the subordination of cost and savings selection criteria to military value selection criteria in the 2005 BRAC round, an emphasis on joint basing in the 2005 BRAC round, and the practice of privatization-in-place in multiple BRAC rounds.

Balancing Military Value and Cost Efficiency

An underlying cause of BRAC V's significantly higher implementation costs was the prioritization of military value in the selection criteria for the Pentagon's recommendations. Specifically, the amended BRAC law

required the Secretary of Defense to “give priority consideration to the military value criteria specified” for closing or realigning military installations.⁴⁴ The section defined selection criteria based on military value as including, at a minimum, the preservation of training areas to ensure military readiness; the preservation of military installations in the United States as staging areas for homeland defense missions; the preservation of installations in different climates and terrain areas for training purposes; the impact on joint warfighting, training, and readiness; and contingency, mobilization, and future total force requirements to support operations and training.⁴⁵

By requiring the Secretary of Defense to give priority consideration to military value over cost efficiency and savings in making recommendations, Congress opened the door for the Pentagon to use the BRAC process to, in many cases, expand rather than reduce military infrastructure. As former Assistant Secretary of Defense for Energy, Installations, and Environment Lucian Niemeyer explained in response to policy questions as the nominee for that position in 2017, the most recent “BRAC legislation effectively limited the ability of Congress to oversee BRAC implementation costs and the Department made deliberate decisions to use BRAC implementation as a recapitalization tool, expanding facility requirements and associated costs.”⁴⁶

“The Department made deliberate decisions to use BRAC implementation as a recapitalization tool, expanding facility requirements and associated costs.”

— Lucian Niemeyer, former Assistant Secretary of Defense for Energy, Installations, and Environment

BRAC V’s significantly higher implementation costs were not just a short-term fiscal problem. They have also had enduring political repercussions. Lawmakers have repeatedly cited these costs in explaining their opposition to additional rounds of BRAC.⁴⁷

In future BRAC rounds, to mitigate implementation costs and the political backlash that has accompanied them, authorizing legislation should include updated requirements for selection criteria to ensure reducing costs and achieving savings are not subordinate to selection criteria related to military value. As GAO put it in an open recommendation to Congress, “If cost savings are to be a goal of any future Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) round, Congress should consider amending the BRAC statute by elevating the priority that the Department of Defense and the BRAC Commission give to potential costs and savings as a selection criterion for making base closure and realignment recommendations.”⁴⁸

Importantly, updating the selection criteria to ensure potential costs and savings are not subordinate to considerations of military value would not mean ignoring military value as a criterion. Rather, updated language could ensure that both military value *and* potential costs and savings are given adequate consideration in the course of making recommendations. In other words, if a potential recommendation does not both protect military value *and* achieve long-term savings with reasonable upfront costs, updated selection criteria could rule out such action.

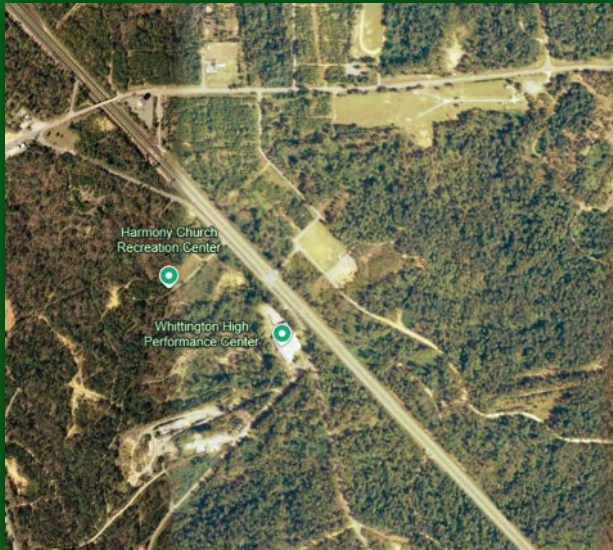
Furthermore, future BRAC legislation should require an independent review of any decisions to expand facility requirements on installations receiving new missions as a result of a realignment or closure, to ensure such actions are truly necessary. As the case study below illustrates, prioritizing military value in making recommendations did not always serve to increase military value—in some cases, it actually undermined military value while increasing costs.

A BRAC Action Officer's Experience

For this report, we interviewed Dan Grazier, a Senior Fellow and Director of the National Security Reform Program at the Stimson Center, and a former BRAC Action Officer for the Marine Corps during the 2005 BRAC round. In 2008, Grazier was a First Lieutenant in the Marine Corps, recently home from Iraq, when his commanding officer named him the Operations Officer for the detachment and tasked him with instructing Marines at an armor school, where Marines learn to operate tanks. As part of this role, he was also tasked with monitoring implementation of a BRAC recommendation to relocate the Armor Center and School at Fort Knox, Kentucky, to Fort Benning, Georgia, and to establish the Maneuver Center of Excellence at Fort Benning. In short, his job was to ensure the Marine Corps would still have everything it needed to train marines to use tanks at Fort Benning after moving the Armor Center and School there from Fort Knox.

Booz Allen Hamilton was awarded a contract to plan and implement the transfer of the Armor Center and School and the creation of the Maneuver Center of Excellence. According to Grazier, Booz Allen sent a survey team to Fort Knox to see what new facilities they could justify recommending at Fort Benning based on what facilities existed at Fort Knox. But when Grazier saw what they were planning, he voiced serious objections. The survey team recommended constructing a new headquarters building for the Marine Corps detachment at the Maneuver Center of Excellence, similar to the headquarters facility for the Armor Center and School at Fort Knox, but according to Grazier, the new facility was about four times as large as it needed to be. The Booz Allen team also recommended investing in simulators for training purposes, even though Marine Corps standards require significant training in the field. As Grazier explained, the consulting team “could not wrap their heads around the fact that marines train differently than Army folks.” One of the simulators they built was a “counseling simulator,” which Grazier described as “a mock-up of an office with a wall-sized screen opposite the desk where a soldier could simulate conversations with subordinates.”

In 2007, an area of Fort Benning called Harmony Church was relatively undeveloped, with a couple of buildings comprising the Whittington High Performance Center. By 2011, dozens of other structures had been built in the surrounding area to accommodate the new Maneuver Center of Excellence, illustrating the significant transformation that some bases, like Fort Benning, experienced as a result of the 2005 BRAC round.



Google Earth satellite image of the Harmony Church area at Fort Benning, Georgia. July 26, 2007.



Google Earth satellite image of the Harmony Church area at Fort Benning, Georgia. February 13, 2011.

In 2005, the BRAC Commission estimated the one-time cost of realigning maneuver training to Fort Benning at \$773.1 million (in FY 2011 dollars). In its FY 2011 budget submission, the Pentagon's revised estimate of one-time costs was \$1.69 billion, an increase of \$915 million, or 118 percent. According to GAO, "about 92 percent of the cost increase—about \$880 million—was due to additional facilities requirements for the Maneuver Center that were identified after the recommendation was approved."

Grazier said he was ultimately able to convince those in charge of approving plans for this BRAC recommendation to make the necessary changes to Booz Allen Hamilton's recommendations in order to meet the Marine Corps' training needs. But he still felt that the realignment was unnecessary and counterproductive, because Fort Knox already had all the facilities the Marine Corps needed for training tank operators, and because the weather and terrain at Fort Benning were far less ideal for training tank operators than they were at Fort Knox. In his words, "Fort Benning was a massive step down for armor training compared to Fort Knox."

As for the prospect of future BRAC rounds, Grazier had this to say:

The military must have the facilities it needs to effectively accomplish the mission. Excess capacity is not only wasteful, but it can serve as a hindrance to effectiveness, so a careful scrub of existing facilities should be done periodically. Unneeded bases should be closed through another BRAC round, but safeguards need to be put in place to ensure the unscrupulous don't leverage the process for their own gain in a way that negatively affects military effectiveness.

Sources: Interview with Dan Grazier; "Performance Work Statement: Maneuver Center of Excellence." U.S. Army Mission and Installation Contracting Command (MICC). September 2010. https://www.taxpayer.net/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/MCoE_DRAFT_RFP_Attachment1_MCOE_PWS.pdf; "Military Base Realignments and Closures: Updated Costs and Savings Estimates from BRAC 2005." United States Government Accountability Office. June 29, 2012. <https://www.gao.gov/assets/gao-12-709r.pdf>

Joint Basing

The legislation authorizing the 2005 BRAC round required the Secretary of Defense to consider “any efficiencies that may be gained from joint tenancy by more than one branch of the Armed Forces at a military installation.”⁴⁹ Notably, “any efficiencies” could include efficiencies related to military value, not just cost efficiencies.

According to a GAO report on the results of BRAC V, the Secretary of Defense at the time laid out three main goals for the 2005 BRAC round: to “transform the military, foster jointness, and reduce excess infrastructure to produce savings.” These goals, along with the selection criteria’s prioritization of military value over cost savings, “led DOD to identify numerous recommendations that were designed to be transformational and enhance jointness, thereby adding to the complexity the Commission and DOD faced in finalizing and implementing the BRAC recommendations.”⁵⁰ Ultimately, the 2005 BRAC Commission concurred with the Pentagon’s recommendations to merge 26 installations into 12 joint bases.⁵¹

One result of the complexity involved in implementing joint basing was that the BRAC Commission was sometimes hesitant to amend or reject Pentagon recommendations. As GAO reported, “While the Commission had the authority to modify a BRAC recommendation, the Commission staff expressed concern that rejecting one action of a recommendation could potentially set off a cascade of effects rippling across several other proposed recommendations because of the interdependency of the individual actions.”⁵² This may have contributed to higher costs that could have been avoided were it not for BRAC V’s emphasis on joint basing.

Another effect of joint basing was the strain it placed on communities near bases that received additional personnel as a result of joint basing. According to GAO, “DOD’s Office of Economic Adjustment and DOD have devoted more resources to communities experiencing significant growth as a result of the consolidation that occurred under BRAC 2005. This is a change from prior BRAC rounds, when Office of Economic Adjustment assistance was more focused on helping communities cope with the closure of an installation than its growth.”⁵³

Troublingly, even those additional resources were sometimes not enough. As GAO explained, “communities experiencing growth were hindered in their ability to effectively plan for off-base support such as adequate roads and schools due to inconsistent information from DOD around the 2007 time frame. Further, DOD has missed opportunities to offer high-level leadership to communities affected by the growth, suggesting the need for more attention to this issue if a future set of BRAC recommendations leads to installation growth rather than closure.”⁵⁴

In addition to the costs of supporting communities experiencing growth, joint basing significantly contributed to unforeseen construction costs that greatly increased BRAC V’s implementation costs compared to initial estimates. The 2005 BRAC Commission estimated one-time implementation costs for the 2005 BRAC round at \$21 billion. By the time the Pentagon submitted its budget for FY 2011, those one-time implementation costs had increased by \$14.1 billion (67 percent) to about \$35.1 billion—or to \$32.2 billion (a 53 percent increase) in constant 2005 dollars.⁵⁵ About \$10 billion of the \$14.1 billion increase was for construction costs.⁵⁶

In April 2011, Dr. Dorothy Robyn, then-Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Installations and Environment, testified before an appropriations subcommittee that the increase in implementation costs for BRAC V was “largely due to deliberate decisions we made to expand the originally envisioned scope of construction and recapitalization either to address deficiencies in our enduring facilities or to expand the capabilities they provide.”⁵⁷ Dr. Robyn also testified that “installation support costs for the Joint Bases have gone up by six percent on average,” before adding that “we expect the savings from consolidation to offset this.”⁵⁸

However, according to GAO, the Pentagon’s FY 2011 budget submission estimated a 20-year net present value (a measure of the present value of future savings less up-front investment costs over a 20-year period) of the recommendation to merge 26 installations into 12 joint bases at about \$249 million, compared to the BRAC Commission’s original estimate of \$2.3 billion.⁵⁹ In other words, anticipated net savings from the joint basing recommendation in the 20 years following the start of the 2005 BRAC round dropped by about \$2.1 billion, or 91 percent, likely reflecting a significant increase in one-time implementation costs.

“We continue to believe that these recommendations are valid and should be implemented.”

— *The U.S. Government Accountability Office, in response to the Pentagon disagreeing with its recommendations to improve savings and efficiency outcomes for joint bases.*

GAO also reported that the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) “did not have a fully developed method for accurately collecting information on costs, savings, and efficiencies achieved specifically from joint basing, and that OSD had not developed a plan to guide joint bases in achieving cost savings and efficiencies.”⁶⁰ GAO recommended that “DOD develop and implement a plan to guide joint bases in achieving anticipated cost savings and efficiencies goals,” but remarkably, the Pentagon disagreed with this recommendation, arguing that it “should continue its approach of being patient with

obtaining savings and efficiencies, [and] maintaining that joint basing was a relatively new initiative and implementation issues were still being resolved.” GAO retorted, “We continue to believe that these recommendations are valid and should be implemented.”⁶¹

In addition to higher-than-anticipated costs, joint basing has also led to unanticipated challenges. According to GAO, joint base officials “reported that at times consolidation of installation-support functions created challenges resulting in unintentional inefficiencies or inequities.”⁶² Specifically, of the 350 respondents surveyed about partially consolidated functions, 224 officials—or 68 percent—reported challenges resulting from consolidation. Officials cited multiple inspections, multiple data requirements, limited promotion opportunities, and limited training opportunities as some of the challenges.⁶³ While frustration over more limited opportunities for promotions is understandable, this is more of a feature than a bug of joint basing—the whole idea is to save taxpayer dollars by consolidating functions, including leadership roles. But the other challenges raised by respondents were not part of the plan, and warrant efforts to address them. GAO found that “neither OSD nor the military services have addressed these consolidation challenges that may have resulted in inefficiencies and inequities.”⁶⁴

In considering authorizing legislation for future BRAC rounds, policymakers should ensure that any future BRAC recommendations in support of joint basing establish clear cost savings and efficiency goals and require the Pentagon to develop a plan to guide joint bases in achieving those goals and addressing potential inefficiencies and inequities that may result from joint basing.

Privatization-in-Place

Privatization-in-place in the BRAC context refers to the practice of shifting operations at military installations to the private sector. This practice can, and has, served as an alternative to the transfer of military operations from one military installation to another. During the first four BRAC rounds, privatization-in-place was implemented at only a handful of installations; the Air Force Aerospace Guidance and Metrology Center in Newark, Ohio; the Naval Surface Warfare Center in Louisville, Kentucky; the Naval Air Warfare Center in Indianapolis, Indiana; and the Air Logistics Centers in Kelly, Texas, and McClellan, California.⁶⁵

The 1995 BRAC Commission report recommended expanding the use of privatization-in-place in future BRAC rounds and recommended that those efforts include “DoD and the local community as active participants in the process.”⁶⁶ Yet, during the 2005 BRAC round, only one of the Commission’s recommendations—“Commodity Management Privatization”—supported privatization-in-place (though the recommendation included actions at multiple military installations).⁶⁷

While that recommendation has been credited with achieving net annual recurring savings, those savings were significantly lower than originally anticipated. The Commission estimated in 2005 that implementing the recommendation would achieve net annual recurring savings of \$43.8 million. However, in its 2011 budget submission, the Pentagon estimated those savings at \$13.5 million—less than a third of the original estimate.⁶⁸ Without comparable estimates of what savings an alternative recommendation forgoing privatization might have achieved, it is difficult to say whether privatization in this case was the most cost-effective option, but the significant drop in estimated net annual recurring savings suggests it may not have been.

The BRAC V Commission considered privatization-in-place proposals made by local communities and Pentagon contractors on a number of other occasions and decided against implementing them. In one instance, in recommending the closure of the Kansas Army Ammunition Plant, the Commission wrote that it “carefully considered the operating contractor’s recommendation of privatization-in-place, but rejected it due to the low utilization of the plant and the need to rationalize munitions production capacity in the U.S. industrial base.”⁶⁹ Ultimately, the former base land was sold and transferred in 2013 to Day & Zimmerman, a company that uses the site to manufacture mortar rounds, so the end result was effectively the privatization of the plant’s original function.⁷⁰

In another instance, the community of Mesa City, Arizona, argued that privatizing the Warfighting Training Laboratory in place at the Air Force Research Laboratory in Mesa City—rather than relocating it to Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio, as the Pentagon recommended—would result in 20-year cost savings of \$76 million, compared to estimated savings for the Pentagon’s plan of \$66 million.⁷¹ But the report also notes that community officials “claimed Arizona State University would invest \$2M per year to enhance the potential of

the Warfighting Laboratory under the community's alternative."⁷² The report did not explain why the Commission ultimately sided with the Pentagon's recommendation, but if the community's savings estimate included Arizona State University's \$2 million per year investment, the Commission might have been hesitant to recommend privatization-in-place on the assumption of the university's continuous investment over a 20-year period.

A number of GAO reports may also help explain why the BRAC Commissions generally shied away from privatization-in-place. In 1996, GAO found that privatizing Army depot maintenance functions without downsizing increases excess capacity and its associated costs.⁷³ Specifically, it noted that because the Army was "not effectively downsizing its remaining depot maintenance infrastructure, privatization initiatives outlined in DOD's March 1996 workload analysis report to Congress will increase excess capacity in Army depots from 42 percent to 46 percent and increase Army depot maintenance costs."⁷⁴ As a result, GAO concluded that "Privatization-in-place does not appear to be cost-effective given the excess capacity in DOD's depot maintenance system and the private sector."⁷⁵

Similarly, in 1997, GAO found that privatization-in-place of Navy depot maintenance activities at the Naval Surface Warfare Center in Louisville, Kentucky, was not cost-effective.⁷⁶ According to GAO, "the Navy's final cost comparison of the proposed privatization-in-place versus the transfer of workloads to other Navy facilities understated the annual savings from transferring the work and overstated the one-time transfer cost."⁷⁷ GAO estimated that "privatizing-in-place the Louisville depot workload will cost about \$48.6 million over the 5-year contract period, rather than save \$63.7 million as the Navy estimated," and that after the initial 5-year contract period, "transferring the workload [rather than privatizing-in-place] would result in additional annual savings of at least \$29.9 million."⁷⁸

While privatization-in-place has been a relatively uncommon feature of prior BRAC rounds, the limited data suggest there are good reasons for that. The legislation authorizing the 2005 BRAC round included a provision that any steps to privatize functions of a military base recommended for closure or realignment be approved by the Commission following the Commission's determination that such privatization is the most cost-effective method of implementing the recommendation.⁷⁹

In considering authorizing legislation for future BRAC rounds, policymakers should retain that language and further strengthen the provision by requiring the Commission to report on the estimated costs and savings of any alternatives it considered. Such a requirement would strengthen the process by allowing policymakers and the public to assess the credibility of estimated costs and savings across various options. It would also ensure that, should future privatization efforts prove less cost-effective than originally anticipated (as was the case in multiple privatization efforts in the past), observers can compare the revised estimates to the original estimates for alternative approaches to determine, in hindsight, whether privatization was in fact the most cost-effective approach.

Supporting Communities

The most recent BRAC round, like those before it, had a variety of economic impacts on the communities living near military installations that were recommended for closure or realignment. Looking specifically at major closures, some communities fared remarkably well in the aftermath, repurposing land and structures in ways that improved economic outcomes for their residents. Others faced economic hardship in the wake of closures.

The reasons why communities experiencing major base closures fare better or worse economically are complex, but examining case studies can shed some light on the practices and circumstances that lead to one economic outcome or another. Appendix I of this report highlights four case studies—two detailing the experiences of communities whose economies improved in the wake of major base closures, and two detailing the experiences of communities that faced economic hardship. In case studies with positive outcomes, effective planning, robust federal support, and geographic circumstances were often determining factors. In case studies with negative outcomes, the lack of effective redevelopment planning, federal resources, and economic diversity were the primary impediments to economic recovery.

Ensuring sufficient federal support—both logistical and financial—for communities in the wake of base closures is essential to improving outcomes in the future. While some communities will always fare better than others, in future BRAC rounds, the federal government can strengthen its efforts to ensure that less well-positioned communities have the resources they need to weather the economic challenges closures can pose. The costs of stepping up support for impacted communities pale in comparison to the costs of failing to authorize a new round of BRAC—a failure that is far more likely without increased support for affected communities written into authorizing legislation.

While there were a wide range of experiences during the 2005 BRAC round, on average, economic data on unemployment and per capita personal income show that counties with major closures fared nearly as well—if not better—than the national average in the years following those closures.

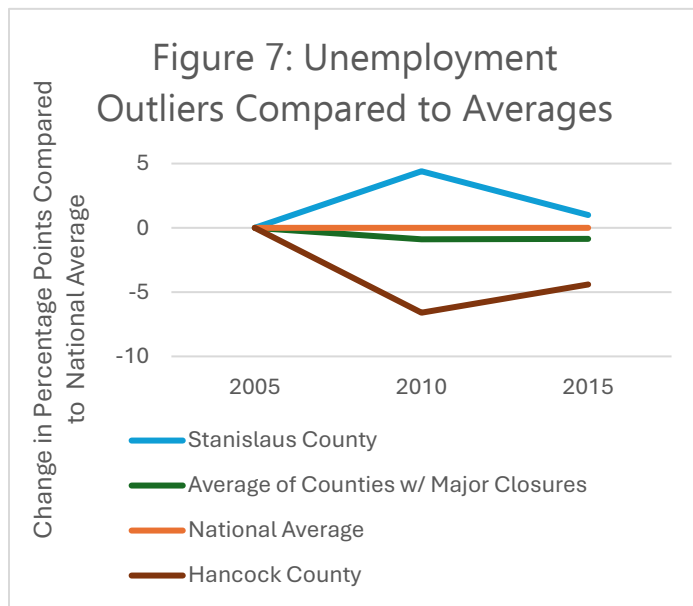
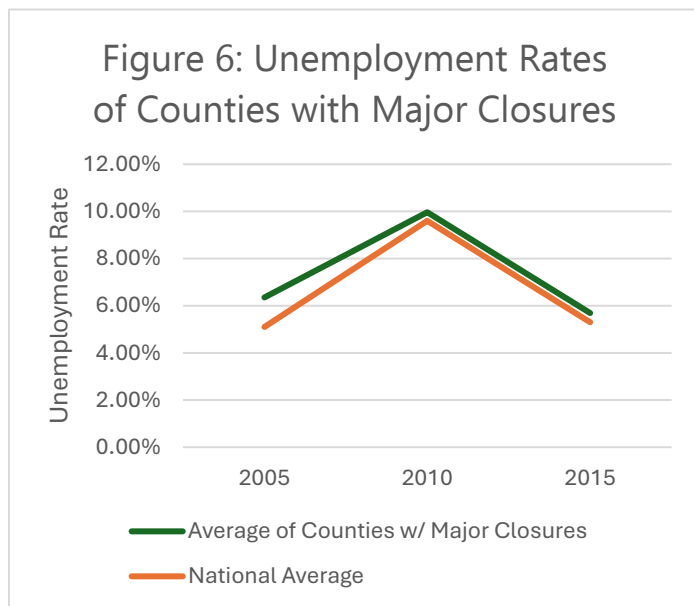


The former Griffiss Air Force Base restoration project team was named one of the Environmental Protection Agency's 2021 National Federal Facility Excellence in Site Reuse award winners. Now designated the Griffiss Business and Technology Park, the award recognizes the hard work, innovative thinking and cooperation among the Air Force Civil Engineer Center BRAC program, EPA and state and local redevelopment agencies. Griffiss AFB was on the list of bases in 1993 slated for realignment and/or closure under BRAC. June 3, 2021. Courtesy photo by Armando Perez.

Community Economic Data

Historical economic data on the communities located near major base closures in the 2005 BRAC round tells a clear story about the economic impacts of those closures on nearby communities. Data tables on the 20 counties that experienced major closures as a result of the 2005 BRAC round can be found in Appendix II.⁸⁰ Comparing the change in unemployment and per capita personal income at the county level relative to the change in the national unemployment rate helps correct for broader economic factors unrelated to BRAC closures (such as the Great Recession), offering a clearer picture of the specific impacts of BRAC on these counties.⁸¹

The data show that in the five years following the announcement of major closures, these counties on average saw their unemployment rates drop by about 0.89 percentage points relative to the change in the national unemployment rate over the same period. In the ten years following the announcements, the average unemployment rate in these counties dropped by 0.86 percentage points compared to the change in the national average. As Figure 6 illustrates, while unemployment in these counties rose sharply from 2005 to 2010, so did unemployment nationally—a trend largely attributable to the Great Recession. By 2015, although the average unemployment rate in these counties remained higher than the national average, the gap had narrowed, and the average unemployment rate in these counties was lower than it had been when the closures were announced in 2005.



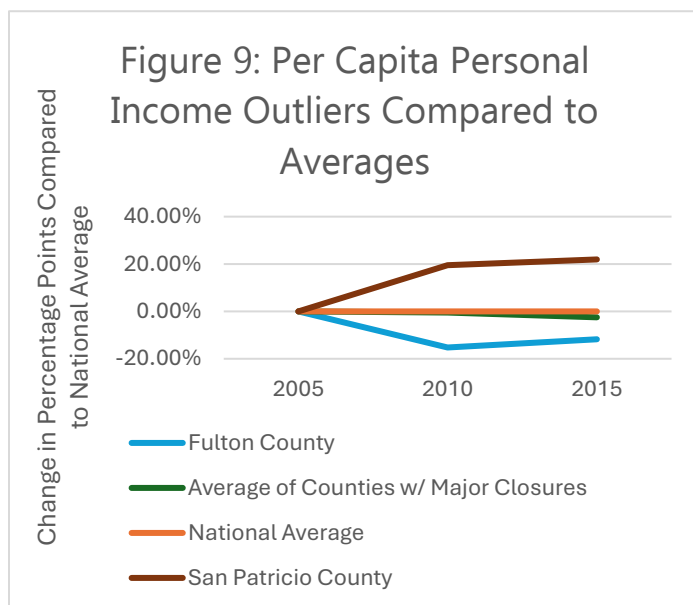
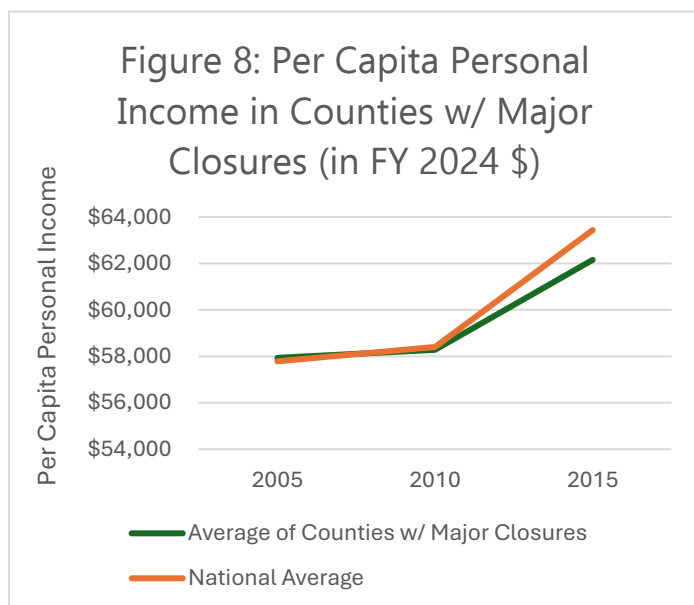
Source: "Local Area Unemployment Statistics." U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Accessed on March 5, 2025.

While helpful for making broad observations, these averages obscure the fact that individual counties had widely varying experiences. At the positive extreme, in Hancock County, Mississippi—where the Mississippi Army Ammunition Plant was closed—unemployment dropped relative to the change in the national average by 6.6 percentage points by 2010 and 4.4 percentage points by 2015. On the negative end, in Stanislaus County, California—where the Riverbank Army Ammunition Plant was closed—the unemployment rate rose relative to

the change in the national average by 4.4 percentage points by 2010, though by 2015 the relative increase had narrowed to just 1 percentage point.

While these outliers highlight the range of experiences, overall the data show that most counties experienced relative reductions in unemployment following the 2005 BRAC round. By 2010, 14 of the 20 counties with major closures saw their unemployment rate drop relative to the national trend, while six saw it rise. By 2015, 16 of 20 counties saw relative decreases in unemployment, while four saw relative increases.

Another measure of the economic impact of major closures on local communities is the change in per capita personal income in affected counties compared to the change in the national per capita personal income.



Source: "Regional GDP & Personal Income." U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis. Accessed March 5, 2025.

Figure 8 shows that, on average and adjusted for inflation to FY 2024 dollars, from 2005 to 2010, counties with major closures saw their per capita personal incomes grow by \$274 less than the national average. From 2005 to 2015, these counties saw their per capita personal incomes grow by \$1,435 less than the national average. Put another way, incomes in affected communities rose in the ten years following the closure announcements by an average of \$4,220 in real terms—compared to \$5,655 nationally.

Figure 9 presents these changes in percentage terms, relative to the change in the national average. From 2005 to 2010, counties with major closures saw their per capita personal income drop by 0.48 percentage points relative to the national change. From 2005 to 2015, the relative decline grew to 2.5 percentage points. The figure also highlights the two most extreme outliers.

At the positive extreme, in San Patricio County, Texas—where Naval Station Ingleside was closed—per capita personal income rose relative to the change in the national average by 19.48 percentage points by 2010 and by 21.93 percentage points by 2015. On the negative end, in Fulton County, Georgia—where Fort McPherson was closed—per capita personal income dropped relative to the change in the national average by 15.23

percentage points by 2010 and by 11.8 percentage points by 2015. These outliers again underscore the significant and varied economic impacts that BRAC closures can have on local communities.

Notably, setting aside changes in the national average, 13 of the 20 counties saw real increases in per capita personal income by 2010, and 16 of 20 saw real increases by 2015. While some of those increases were driven largely by macroeconomic factors, this data still underscores the relatively benign impact of BRAC closures on per capita personal income in most counties that experienced major closures.

Collectively, the data show that while BRAC closures can have significant economic impacts on local communities, even in the worst cases, they have not led to economic ruin. On the contrary, the data indicate that in many instances, communities were better off economically in the aftermath of major closures than they were before them.

Still, efforts to mitigate harmful impacts and maximize positive outcomes of BRAC closures are critical. Exploring case studies of major closures, the economic impacts they had on surrounding communities, and the practices and circumstances that contributed to one outcome or another is essential to improving results for communities in future BRAC rounds. Appendix I includes four such case studies.

Overseas Base Realignments and Closures

The U.S. military currently maintains a presence at about 750 military base sites in roughly 80 foreign countries, as well as in U.S. colonies and territories.⁸² No other country comes close to this number of foreign military installations. The total cost of building and maintaining overseas military installations is approximately \$55 billion per year—not including military personnel costs.⁸³ In other words, even a 10 percent reduction in costs through closures and realignments could save taxpayers \$5.5 billion annually, more than the estimated net annual recurring savings from any prior BRAC round. Stationing U.S. troops abroad also costs significantly more than stationing them domestically.⁸⁴ Returning U.S. military personnel to the U.S. through the closure of unnecessary overseas installations would reduce personnel costs and benefit the U.S. economy, as those forces would spend money at home rather than abroad.

The Pentagon has a long history of closing and realigning military installations abroad. In 1993, following President Bill Clinton's approval of the 1993 BRAC Commission's recommendations, the Pentagon announced plans to close or realign 92 overseas bases.⁸⁵ President George W. Bush also closed military installations abroad. By some estimates, the U.S. closed more than 1,000 overseas bases in Europe and Asia under Presidents George H. W. Bush, Bill Clinton, and George W. Bush.⁸⁶

More recently, in 2017, Peter Potochney, then-Acting Assistant Secretary of Defense for Energy, Installations, and the Environment, testified before a Senate Appropriations subcommittee that the Pentagon had "looked at overseas installations... and successfully completed an efficiency-like BRAC in Europe that will save \$500M a year..."⁸⁷

Overseas base realignments and closures have proceeded more readily in recent years than their domestic counterparts, in part because the executive branch has the authority to close and realign overseas military

installations without congressional approval. In fact, previous BRAC legislation has explicitly encouraged the executive branch to exercise this authority. Section 2921 of the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Act of 1990 expressed the sense of Congress that “the termination of military operations by the United States at military installations outside the United States should be accomplished at the discretion of the Secretary of Defense at the earliest opportunity.”⁸⁸

Of course, efforts to rein in the Pentagon’s sprawling network of overseas bases should take into account the strategic and geopolitical implications of potential closures and realignments. But those considerations should include the potential benefits as well as the risks of closing overseas bases. For instance, the enduring presence of U.S. forces in countries contending with violent extremist groups and adversarial militias poses a clear risk to U.S. troops and increases the likelihood of costly military escalations.⁸⁹ Reducing excess infrastructure in such regions could help mitigate these risks. As for peer-level adversaries, the positioning of U.S. forces in Europe and the Pacific are frequently cited by Russia and China as points of tension.⁹⁰ Beyond generating savings that could be redirected to real priorities, addressing excess capacity in these regions by closing unnecessary bases could also help tamp down tensions and reduce the risk of direct confrontation.

Given the significant cost of overseas military installations, the Pentagon’s assessment of excess infrastructure capacity, the broad authority afforded to the executive branch to close overseas installations, and the potential strategic benefits of downsizing U.S. military infrastructure abroad, the administration should move quickly to assess which overseas installations are excess to need—and then work to close them as expeditiously as possible.

Conclusion

Closing and realigning military installations is a challenging, complex process—but it is an absolutely necessary one that the nation cannot afford to forgo. Prior rounds of domestic base realignments and closures are saving taxpayers an estimated \$13.8 billion annually, and the closure of overseas bases has saved taxpayers billions more.

Despite the overall success of prior BRAC rounds, Congress has not authorized a new BRAC process in 20 years. As a result, the Pentagon estimated that, as of 2017, it had between 19 and 22 percent excess capacity—excess that has likely continued to grow since then.⁹¹ Pentagon officials have also said that addressing excess capacity is likely necessary to reduce the department’s \$137 billion backlog of deferred maintenance costs, which pose a “significant and growing risk to the department’s ability to support its missions.”⁹²

Higher-than-anticipated upfront costs associated with the 2005 BRAC round have been an impediment to authorizing a new BRAC round. However, by addressing cost drivers such as the subordination of cost and savings selection criteria to military value selection criteria, joint basing, and privatization-in-place, policymakers can ensure that future BRAC rounds minimize upfront costs while maximizing savings and retaining military value.

Concerns about the economic impacts of base closures and realignments on local communities have also hindered the authorization of a new BRAC round. However, economic data and case studies on the counties that experienced major closures as a result of the 2005 BRAC round show that, while closures can have harmful local economic effects, on average, communities facing major closures fared nearly as well as—if not better than—the national average in the years following closures with respect to unemployment rates and per capita personal income.

Furthermore, in the absence of a formal BRAC process, communities may continue to be affected by what some refer to as a “stealth BRAC,” in which the Pentagon realigns missions away from military installations without formally closing them—a process that can be more disruptive than a formal BRAC closure might otherwise be.

Future BRAC rounds can do more to mitigate the potentially harmful economic impacts of BRAC recommendations by requiring the Pentagon to produce and implement a more comprehensive plan to ensure impacted communities have access to robust logistical and financial support. Congress can also increase appropriations for economic adjustment assistance to help communities facing significant hardship as a result of BRAC decisions.

Lastly, U.S. military installations abroad can increase the risk of costly military escalations and exacerbate regional tensions. By addressing excess infrastructure capacity overseas, the administration can mitigate these risks, secure taxpayer savings, and advance a more efficient and strategic military posture.

Authorizing a new round of BRAC and addressing excess military infrastructure overseas would save taxpayers billions of dollars per year, support local communities, and strengthen U.S. national security. Conversely, failing to authorize a new BRAC round and address excess abroad will cost taxpayers billions, threaten local communities that may face de facto closures without the accompanying support of a formal process, and undermine national security by expending resources where they are not needed. The following recommendations, while not comprehensive, offer important areas of focus for policymakers pursuing future base realignments and closures.

Recommendations for Congress

- Congress should **authorize a new round of Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC)** as soon as possible.
- Congress should **require the Pentagon to assess its excess infrastructure capacity** and release an unclassified version of its findings to the public. These assessments should be required biennially and include stipulations related to methodology to ensure consistency and accuracy.
- Congress should **increase economic adjustment assistance where necessary** for communities facing significant economic hardship as a result of BRAC recommendations.

- Authorizing language for a new round of BRAC should instruct the Pentagon and the BRAC Commission to **develop improved methods for estimating upfront and recurring costs and savings** associated with BRAC recommendations. Improved methods should:
 - Assess baseline operating costs at installations targeted by BRAC recommendations to improve savings estimates based on avoided costs.
 - Account for estimated recurring environmental and caretaker costs.
 - Account for recurring Military Personnel and Operations and Maintenance costs at new or existing facilities that missions are realigned to as a result of BRAC recommendations.
 - Require the Pentagon to identify recommendations that are not implemented and subtract projected savings from those recommendations in updated estimates of net annual recurring savings.
- Authorizing language for a new round of BRAC should **address cost drivers** identified in previous BRAC rounds. Improved language should:
 - Ensure that selection criteria related to cost efficiency and savings are not subordinate to selection criteria related to military value. BRAC recommendations should be required to meet specific cost and savings standards in addition to meeting any standards related to military value.
 - Establish a mechanism for independent review and approval of any unforeseen requirements relating to military installations that military missions are realigned to as a result of BRAC recommendations.
 - Establish clear cost, savings, and efficiency goals for any joint basing recommendations, and require the Pentagon to develop a plan to guide joint bases in achieving those goals and addressing potential inefficiencies and inequities that may result from joint basing.
 - Establish clear cost, savings, and efficiency goals for any recommendations to privatize-in-place, and require the Commission to report on the estimated costs and savings of any alternatives it considered in the course of recommending privatization-in-place.
- Authorizing language for a new round of BRAC should **strengthen existing mechanisms for addressing the economic impacts** of BRAC recommendations on local communities. Improved language should:
 - Require the Pentagon to establish a plan to support communities impacted by BRAC recommendations, notwithstanding more specific planning related to each recommendation that will necessarily include coordination with impacted communities. It should also require the Pentagon to estimate the cost of effectively implementing such a plan.
 - Require the BRAC Commission to assess and, if necessary, amend the Pentagon's plan for supporting communities impacted by BRAC recommendations.
 - Ensure that such a plan is responsive to the severity of the economic impact of BRAC recommendations on local communities.

Recommendations for Communities

- Communities near military installations facing closures or realignments as a result of BRAC recommendations should **begin planning for redevelopment early**. Fighting closures is usually ineffective and can distract from efforts to improve community outcomes through redevelopment.
- Local redevelopment authorities should **solicit broad community input** on an ongoing basis to ensure redevelopment plans support community needs and address concerns.
- Communities and redevelopment authorities should **consider diversifying redevelopment plans** to reduce the risk of a single developer delaying or abandoning redevelopment plans.

Recommendations for the Administration

- The administration should **call on Congress to authorize a new round of Base Realignment and Closure**.
- The administration should **direct the Pentagon to assess its excess infrastructure capacity**, both domestically and overseas, and release an unclassified version of its findings to the public. These assessments should be required biennially.
- The administration should work to **close overseas military installations that are excess to need** as expeditiously as possible.

Appendix I: Community Case Studies

Fort McPherson (Fulton County, Georgia)

The 2005 BRAC process shuttered dozens of installations across the country—but few closures hit local communities harder than that of Fort McPherson in southwest Atlanta. A fixture in the local economy for over a century, Fort McPherson’s 2011 closure triggered acute economic disruptions, underscoring the risks of closing military bases without a robust transition strategy—or in the case Fort McPherson, conflicting and ultimately self-defeating strategies.

Fulton County experienced an 11.8 percentage point drop in per capita personal income relative to the national average within ten years of the closure announcement—one of the steeper declines among counties that faced major closures as a result of the 2005 BRAC round. The direct loss of 2,260 military jobs and 1,881 civilian jobs—along with an estimated 2,705 indirect job losses—dealt a severe blow to local households and businesses, particularly in a city contending with the Great Recession and long-standing income disparities.⁹³ For decades, the base had served as an economic anchor for southwest Atlanta, supporting a constellation of contractors, civilian workers, and retail businesses.⁹⁴ While unemployment rates dropped slightly relative to the change in the national average in the ten years following the closure announcement, the new jobs that replaced those lost paid less on average than their predecessors when adjusting for inflation.

Conflicting Visions for Redevelopment

In 2007, the Local Redevelopment Authority (LRA) approved a redevelopment plan that would have welcomed a new bio-science research center to the former base, with the goal of attracting other public-private partnerships on the surrounding land.⁹⁵ In 2011, graduate students at the Georgia Institute of Technology, sponsored by the Ford Foundation and Georgia Stand-Up, a community-based advocacy group, offered an alternative action plan for the redevelopment of Fort McPherson, complete with recommendations relating to transportation, housing, education, public health and safety, and more.⁹⁶ Their report criticized the LRA for failing to live up to its vision to “economically uplift surrounding communities,” claiming that “their actual work has ignored community needs, priorities, and aspirations. Their sole focus has been how to maximize the redevelopment of the base, an inward directed effort that perpetuates the base property as an island, whose relevance is city or region wide, not support for the community in whose midst it resides.”⁹⁷

Ultimately, the LRA dropped plans to use the base for the bio-science center, but not for the sake of supporting the alternatives outlined by Georgia Tech students. Instead, the LRA sold 330 acres of the base’s 488 acres to Tyler Perry Studios in 2015 for \$30 million—well below market value.⁹⁸ According to local journalist Maria Saporta, the sale to Tyler Perry Studios was “ramrodded by Mayor Kasim Reed, who seems to be working on behalf of a friend rather than the people who elected him.”⁹⁹

In 2017, the LRA signed an agreement with developer Stephen Macauley, who planned to develop housing, office space, retail shops, and restaurants. That deal ended in 2019 with the LRA buying out the developer for

\$3.5 million following concerns over the developer's ability to finance the project, among other points of tension between the LRA and the developer.¹⁰⁰

In 2021, T.D. Jakes Enterprises acquired 94 acres of the former base and Tyler Perry Studios acquired another 37 acres as part of an agreement between the two to develop affordable housing, hotels, restaurants, grocery stores, and more. However, conflicting visions for redevelopment delayed the process, and the estimated completion date for the first phase of the project is now 2028.¹⁰¹

Impediments to Economic Recovery

Fort McPherson's closure is a cautionary tale: land-use politics, speculative development, and fragmented planning can obstruct economic recovery in the wake of base closures. The sale of most of the base land to Tyler Perry Studios limited the practical uses of the former base for most of the surrounding community. Broader redevelopment that could have supported economic recovery in the wake of the closure was delayed by the impacts of the Great Recession, the failure of the Macaulay partnership, and competing visions for the latest redevelopment plans. While those plans may yet deliver benefits for the local community, this case study underscores the importance of coalescing around a clear, achievable, and community-centered redevelopment plan early on.

Key Lessons:

1. Redevelopment plans should prioritize community needs for economic opportunities, transportation, housing, and public health and safety.
2. Selling large portions of a former base to a single business interest for purposes with limited public benefit should be avoided.

Naval Station Ingleside (San Patricio County, Texas)

When Naval Station Ingleside closed its gates for the final time under the 2005 BRAC round, it marked the end of a short but consequential chapter in the economic life of San Patricio County, Texas. But in this case, the closing of one door opened another—ushering in a new era of growth fueled by redevelopment, regional strengths, and federal support.

Naval Station Ingleside was commissioned in 1992 and selected for closure in 2005, barely a decade into full operations. An estimated 3,200 direct jobs were lost, alongside nearly 3,700 indirect jobs that depended on the base.¹⁰² In a region where military activity had become a significant economic engine, the sudden vacuum was deeply felt.¹⁰³

Keys to Success

Transferring the site to the Port of Corpus Christi, which moved quickly to put the land to work, ultimately yielded positive economic results for the county. Flint Hills Resources acquired the pier facilities for \$8.5 million, while Occidental Petroleum purchased inland parcels for more than \$89 million combined.¹⁰⁴ These sales laid the groundwork for a reimagined economic future centered on global logistics and energy infrastructure.

With support from the Ingleside Local Redevelopment Authority (ILRA), local leaders mapped out a plan to transition the base's deepwater port facilities into a commercial and industrial center. The region's prime location along the Corpus Christi ship channel became its new strategic asset. The ILRA, supported by federal grants, led efforts to diversify the local economy and redevelop the base's 155-acre Electromagnetic Reduction (EMR) facility. The Port of Corpus Christi acquired 922 acres of the property, enabling large-scale industrial and maritime operations.¹⁰⁵

At the same time, the Coastal Bend region experienced rapid growth in the oil and gas sector. Energy firms flooded into the area, bringing new jobs, new infrastructure, and a tax base that helped local governments recover lost revenues. The Coastal Bend region experienced rapid growth in oil and gas, driven by fracking and the Eagle Ford Shale boom. Energy firms established facilities such as Cheniere Energy's \$20 billion LNG terminal and ExxonMobil/SABIC's \$7 billion petrochemical complex, creating thousands of jobs and boosting local tax revenues.¹⁰⁶

By 2010, five years after the closure announcement, San Patricio County's unemployment rate had grown, but not by as much as the national average. By 2015, San Patricio County's unemployment rate had dropped below what it was at the time of the closure announcement. The county's per capita personal income also improved in the years following the closure announcement. By 2010, per capita personal income had grown more than 19 percentage points more than the growth in the national average, and by 2015, it had grown nearly 22 percentage points relative to growth in the national average. A region once reliant on the naval station had become a major node in the global energy economy.

The story of Naval Station Ingleside reveals how a base closure—while disruptive in the short term—can catalyze economic transformation if the conditions and responses are right.

Key Lessons:

1. Redevelopment authority matters. The ILRA helped organize redevelopment around a coherent, investment-ready strategy.¹⁰⁷
2. Private industry can bring new economic life to communities. Sales to energy firms brought in capital and jobs quickly.
3. Regional economic trends matter. The rise of the oil and gas sector was a tailwind no local planner could have engineered—but the community was able to capitalize on it.
4. Federal support plays a critical enabling role. Infrastructure funding and adjustment assistance were essential in bridging the gap between military closure and civilian redevelopment.

As with all BRAC stories, Ingleside's is partly a story of luck—but it is also one of leadership, effective planning, and robust federal support.

Riverbank Army Ammunition Plant (Stanislaus County, California)

In Stanislaus County, California, the 2005 BRAC round left a distinct economic scar. The shuttering of the Riverbank Army Ammunition Plant (RBAAP), officially deactivated on March 31, 2010, offers a cautionary tale of

what can happen when a base closure collides with broader economic vulnerabilities and environmental complications.

Built in 1942 as an aluminum reduction plant and converted in 1951 to manufacture metal parts for ammunition, RBAAP employed nearly 2,000 people at its peak during the Vietnam War.¹⁰⁸ For decades, the facility was a linchpin in the local economy, representing one of the few sources of stable, well-paying industrial jobs in the region. When the 2005 BRAC Commission recommended RBAAP for closure, it was a blow to a community already on shaky economic footing.

Despite these challenges, in the ten years following the closure announcement, Stanislaus County's unemployment rate only rose 1 percentage point more than the rise in the national average. Around the time of the closure, the county was already hemorrhaging manufacturing employment. Canneries and food processing plants—once the bedrock of the local economy—were also disappearing. The 2008 financial crisis hit Stanislaus County hard, and the loss of RBAAP compounded an already deteriorating situation. The county's economic foundation—based heavily on agriculture and low-wage manufacturing—offered little buffer.¹⁰⁹

Impediments to Economic Recovery

With few alternative industries, the loss of RBAAP left a void that local employers could not fill. Environmental cleanup at RBAAP, which included addressing groundwater contamination from chromium and cyanide, also delayed redevelopment of the former base land.¹¹⁰

The Riverbank case illustrates the outsize risk borne by communities that lack diverse economies, as well as the risk of environmental remediation delaying redevelopment.

Key Lessons:

1. Diversified local economies are more resilient. Riverbank's overreliance on a handful of industrial employers left it exposed.¹¹¹
2. Environmental remediation must be tackled early. The delays at RBAAP significantly slowed redevelopment and added to public costs.¹¹²
3. Closure decisions made during broader downturns can have outsized effects. The overlap with the Great Recession made job recovery especially hard.¹¹³

While some communities have turned base closures into engines of economic renewal, Riverbank serves as a reminder that some communities need more federal support than others to weather the challenges and seize the opportunities presented by base closures. Ensuring impacted communities get the support they need should be a point of focus in efforts to craft new authorizing language for a new round of BRAC.

Mississippi Army Ammunition Plant (Hancock County, Mississippi)

The closure of the Mississippi Army Ammunition Plant (MSAAP) in Hancock County during the 2005 BRAC round was different from most other closures in that it merely formalized the closure of the base on which the ammunition plant resided. The plant itself ended production earlier in 1990, making this case an outlier.¹¹⁴ The

facility was repurposed under the Armament Retooling and Manufacturing Support (ARMS) program beginning in 1992, which allowed the former defense infrastructure to be converted for civilian industrial use.¹¹⁵

The base on which the plant resided was not deactivated until 2009.¹¹⁶ This coincided with broader economic instability in the wake of the 2008 financial crisis. Yet, in the ten years following the closure announcement, Hancock County's unemployment rate dropped significantly from 10.8 percent in 2005 to 6.6 percent in 2015. By comparison, the national unemployment rate grew from 5.1 percent in 2005 to 5.3 percent in 2015.

Keys to Success

Hancock County's geography proved to be one of its greatest assets. The site of the former MSAAP lies within the John C. Stennis Space Center—a federal city of sorts, home to dozens of government agencies and contractors focused on aerospace, oceanography, and advanced manufacturing.¹¹⁷

Officials made a strategic decision to integrate the former ammunition plant into the broader ecosystem of Stennis, opening the door to further economic revitalization. In 2011, the Army transferred the land on which the plant had operated to NASA.¹¹⁸ As NASA's Deputy Administrator Lori Garver put it at the time, "With the transfer of 1.6 million square feet of facility space, Stennis has set the stage for years of expansion."¹¹⁹ The property transfer expanded the space center's property space by about 33 percent.¹²⁰

According to a NASA press release, at the time of the land transfer, a dozen tenants were already making use of the space, "including Pratt & Whitney Rocketdyne, the Government Printing Office, the Department of Energy, Boe-Tel, the Qinetiq North America Inc. Technology Solutions Group and the National Center for Critical Information Processing and Storage."¹²¹ It did not take long for that list to grow.

In 2012, Jacobs Engineering Group Inc. announced that it received a \$15 million contract modification to add to its contract "facility operating services for the former Mississippi Army Ammunition Plant (MSAAP)... now referred to as Area 9."¹²² These services included "engineering services; institutional services; facilities maintenance and operations; safety and mission assurance; environmental services; occupational health; logistics and maintenance; and administrative services for the MSAAP."¹²³

More recently, in 2023, Evolution Space, a solid propulsion and launch provider, opened the Evolution Space Propulsion Center on the former site of the MSAAP.¹²⁴

At its peak in 1989, the Mississippi Army Ammunition Plant employed 1,831 people.¹²⁵ While it is difficult to pinpoint the number of new jobs made possible by the closure, the fact that the Stennis Space Center now employs over 5,200 people suggests the opportunities created by the closure may have played a role in the county's relative success in contending with the closure.

Key Lessons:

Several factors converged to help Hancock County take advantage of the opportunities presented by the base closure:

1. Transportation improvements—funded in part by federal and state sources—enhanced access and appeal for new industries.
2. Local initiatives retrained former MSAAP employees for new jobs in aerospace, energy, and high-tech sectors, ensuring that the existing workforce didn't get left behind.
3. Environmental remediation began early and moved swiftly, avoiding the kind of long delays that have plagued redevelopment elsewhere.
4. The ARMS program provided legal and financial frameworks to effectively repurpose the site prior to its official closure—laying the groundwork for rapid expansion following its official closure.

Appendix II: Community Economic Data Tables

Figure 10: Unemployment Rates in Counties with Major Closures in the 2005 BRAC Round

Military Installation	County	State	2005	2010	2015	5-Year Unemployment Rate Increase Relative to National Average	10-year Unemployment Rate Increase Relative to National Average
Riverbank Army Ammunition Plant	Stanislaus	CA	8.4	17.3	9.6	4.4	1
Fort Gillem	Clayton	GA	7.3	13.7	7.8	1.9	0.3
Fort McPherson	Fulton	GA	6.2	10.6	6.1	-0.1	-0.3
Newport Chemical Depot	Vermillion	IN	7.3	12.6	7.1	0.8	-0.4
Kansas Army Ammunition Plant	Labette	KS	6.5	9.4	5.7	-1.6	-1
Selfridge Army Activity	Macomb	MI	6.7	13.4	5.7	2.2	-1.2
Mississippi Army Ammunition Plant	Hancock	MS	10.8	8.7	6.6	-6.6	-4.4
Fort Monmouth	Monmouth	NJ	4.1	8.9	5.1	0.3	0.8
Umatilla Chemical Depot	Umatilla	OR	7.9	10.4	6.2	-2	-1.9
Lone Star Army Ammunition Plant	Bowie	TX	5.5	8.5	4.8	-1.5	-0.9
Deseret Chemical Depot	Tooele	UT	4.3	8.5	4.1	-0.3	-0.4
Naval Air Station Atlanta	Cobb	GA	5.2	9.4	5.2	-0.3	-0.2
Naval Station Pascagoula	Jackson	MS	10	9.2	7.1	-5.3	-3.1
Naval Air Station Willow Grove	Montgomery	PA	3.9	6.7	4.2	-1.7	0.1
Naval Station Ingleside	San Patricio	TX	6.9	10.6	6.6	-0.8	-0.5
Naval Air Station Brunswick	Cumberland	ME	4.2	6.8	3.4	-1.9	-1
Kulis Air Guard Station	Anchorage Municipality	AK	5.5	6.8	4.9	-3.2	-0.8
Onizuka Air Force Station	Santa Clara	CA	5.3	10.7	4.2	0.9	-1.3
Brooks City Base	Bexar	TX	5.2	7.3	3.8	-2.4	-1.6
General Mitchell ARS	Milwaukee	WI	5.8	9.8	5.6	-0.5	-0.4
Average			6.35	9.97	5.69	-0.89	-0.86

Figure 11: Per Capita Personal Income (in FY24 \$) in Counties with Major Closures in the 2005 BRAC Round

Military Installation	County	State	2005	2010	2015	5-Year PCPI Percentage Point Increase Relative to National Average	10-Year PCPI Percentage Point Increase Relative to National Average
Riverbank Army Ammunition Plant	Stanislaus	CA	\$ 45,961	\$ 45,948	\$ 51,481	-1.10	2.22
Fort Gillem	Clayton	GA	\$ 38,109	\$ 35,580	\$ 33,997	-7.71	-20.58
Fort McPherson	Fulton	GA	\$ 99,701	\$ 85,588	\$ 97,695	-15.23	-11.80
Newport Chemical Depot	Vermillion	IN	\$ 43,784	\$ 46,007	\$ 45,095	4.01	-6.79
Kansas Army Ammunition Plant	Labette	KS	\$ 44,667	\$ 48,010	\$ 49,419	6.41	0.85
Selfridge Army Activity	Macomb	MI	\$ 56,000	\$ 50,119	\$ 55,716	-11.57	-10.29
Mississippi Army Ammunition Plant	Hancock	MS	\$ 43,450	\$ 48,527	\$ 43,470	10.61	-9.74
Fort Monmouth	Monmouth	NJ	\$ 84,007	\$ 82,994	\$ 90,403	-2.28	-2.17
Umatilla Chemical Depot	Umatilla	OR	\$ 40,168	\$ 43,438	\$ 45,943	7.07	4.59
Lone Star Army Ammunition Plant	Bowie	TX	\$ 46,855	\$ 49,461	\$ 49,360	4.49	-4.44
Deseret Chemical Depot	Tooele	UT	\$ 40,077	\$ 41,633	\$ 43,726	2.81	-0.68
Naval Air Station Atlanta	Cobb	GA	\$ 69,498	\$ 60,468	\$ 66,018	-14.06	-14.79
Naval Station Pascagoula	Jackson	MS	\$ 46,413	\$ 49,530	\$ 46,481	5.65	-9.64
Naval Air Station Willow Grove	Montgomery	PA	\$ 90,372	\$ 86,322	\$ 93,430	-5.55	-6.40
Naval Station Ingleside	San Patricio	TX	\$ 41,921	\$ 50,537	\$ 55,217	19.48	21.93
Naval Air Station Brunswick	Cumberland	ME	\$ 64,939	\$ 66,411	\$ 69,915	1.20	-2.12
Kulis Air Guard Station	Anchorage Municipality	AK	\$ 72,249	\$ 81,369	\$ 82,726	11.55	4.71
Onizuka Air Force Station	Santa Clara	CA	\$ 85,672	\$ 87,640	\$ 110,561	1.23	19.26
Brooks City Base	Bexar	TX	\$ 51,416	\$ 51,948	\$ 56,229	-0.03	-0.42
General Mitchell ARS	Milwaukee	WI	\$ 53,439	\$ 54,056	\$ 56,215	0.08	-4.59
Average			\$ 57,935	\$ 58,279	\$ 62,155	-0.48	-2.50

Appendix III: Legal Authority and Precedent Regarding Base Realignments and Closures

Understanding the current legal authority and recent legal precedents relating to base realignments and closures requires an examination of several laws that established restrictions on and mechanisms for their consideration.

The Military Construction Authorization Act of 1978

Modern law dictating procedures for the closure and realignment of military installations dates back to the passage of the Military Construction Authorization Act of 1978. Specifically, section 612(a) amended Chapter 159 of Title 10, United States Code, to add “§ 2687. Base closures and realignments,” which explains the circumstances under which the Secretary of Defense can close or realign U.S. military installations within the United States or its territories.¹²⁶

It stipulates that no action may be taken to effect or implement the closure or realignment of military installations within the United States or its territories¹²⁷ of a certain size¹²⁸ unless and until the Secretary of Defense submits to the appropriate congressional committees a notification of the proposed closures or realignments, along with “an evaluation of the fiscal, local economic, budgetary, environmental, strategic, and operational consequences of such closure or realignment,” using specific criteria specified in the act. It also stipulates that no action may be taken to close or realign military installations until the expiration of 30 legislative days or 60 calendar days (whichever is longer) following the Secretary’s notification, allowing Congress time to review the proposals, after which point the Secretary may use funds which would otherwise be available to affect the closure or realignment of such installations for such purpose.

The law also includes an exception, stating that the prohibition on the closure or realignment of military installations “shall not apply... if the President certifies to the Congress that such closure or realignment must be implemented for reasons of national security or a military emergency.”¹²⁹

Through these provisions, the Military Construction Authorization Act of 1978 effectively created a congressional review period for any proposed closures or realignments of military installations within the U.S. or its territories, during which time Congress could prohibit the use of funds for such purposes so long as the President does not certify that the closures or realignments are essential for reasons of national security or a military emergency.

The Base Closure and Realignment Act of 1988

Enshrined in Title II of Public Law 100-526 on October 24, 1988, the Base Closure and Realignment Act of 1988 established a new process for congressional consideration of proposed closures and realignments of military installations.¹³⁰ As lawmakers representing states and districts with bases often oppose the closure or realignment of installations in their states and districts, the Base Closure and Realignment Act was designed to depoliticize the decision making process by creating an independent commission, and by requiring any

resolution of disapproval of the commission's recommendations to consider the entirety of the recommendations without amendment in a single up or down vote.

The Commission

The Base Closure and Realignment Act of 1988 established the first Commission on Base Realignment and Closure. It stated that the Commission "shall consist of 12 members appointed by the Secretary of Defense." It required the Commission to submit a report to the Secretary of Defense and the appropriate congressional committees no later than December 31, 1988, with recommendations for closures and realignments of U.S. military installations, and with a description of the Commission's recommendations with respect to the installations to which the functions of installations recommended for closure or realignment will be transferred. The Commission was also required to certify that it reached its recommendations by reviewing all military installations inside the United States, including those under construction or planned for construction. Lastly, the act stipulated that no more than half of the Commission's staff can be individuals employed by the Department of Defense during calendar year 1988 (other than as an employee of the Commission).¹³¹

Secretary of Defense's Role

Section 201 required that the Secretary of Defense close and realign all military installations recommended for closure and realignment by the Commission on Base Realignment and Closure. It also laid out a very specific timeline, stipulating that the Secretary of Defense must "initiate all such closures and realignments no later than September 30, 1991, and complete all such closures and realignments no later than September 30, 1995, except that no such closure or realignment may be initiated before January 1, 1990."¹³²

Section 202 laid out further conditions, prohibiting closures and realignments unless the Secretary of Defense submits to the House and Senate Armed Services Committees, no later than January 16, 1989, a report stating that the Secretary has approved all of the Commission's recommendations, and that the Department of Defense will implement them. It also prohibited closures and realignments unless the commission submits its recommendations to the appropriate congressional committees, and unless the Secretary of Defense has submitted to the Commission a study of overseas U.S. military installations "to determine if efficiencies can be realized through closure or realignment of the overseas base structure of the United States."¹³³

Perhaps most importantly, it specified that the Secretary of Defense may not close or realign any military installations under this law if Congress enacted a joint resolution disapproving the Commission's recommendations within a 45-day period beginning on March 1, 1989.¹³⁴

Congress' Role

Section 208 laid out procedures for congressional consideration of a joint resolution of disapproval of the Commission's recommendations. It specified that the joint resolution must be introduced before March 15, 1989, that the resolution be referred to the Armed Services Committee of whichever chamber in which it is introduced, and that if the committee has not reported the resolution to its full chamber before March 15, 1989, the resolution be discharged from committee and placed on the appropriate legislative calendar.¹³⁵ On or

after the third day following the committee reporting or discharging the joint resolution, any member of the respective chamber could move to proceed to consideration of the joint resolution.¹³⁶

To ensure swift consideration, all points of order against the joint resolution were waived—the motion to consider the joint resolution was privileged and not subject to amendment, a motion to postpone, a motion to proceed to other business, or a motion to reconsider the vote by which the motion is agreed to or disagreed to. These same waivers applied to the vote on the resolution itself, in addition to the motion to consider it. Furthermore, if a motion to proceed to consideration of the joint resolution was agreed to, the respective chamber had to immediately proceed to consideration of the joint resolution without any intervening motion. The section also limited debate on the joint resolution to ten hours, with time split evenly between those in favor and those against.¹³⁷ In effect, these provisions ensured that any lawmaker could quickly force an up or down vote on a joint resolution of disapproval of the Commission's recommendations, while also ensuring that the Commission's recommendations would not be subject to amendment.

Funding

Section 207 established the "Department of Defense Base Closure Account," a single account administered by the Secretary of Defense. The Account could consist of funds authorized for and appropriated to the Account with respect to Fiscal Year 1990 and Fiscal Years beginning thereafter, funds transferred to the Account from other DoD accounts subject to approval in an appropriations act, and proceeds relating to property transfers from installations to be closed or realigned.¹³⁸

Implementation

Section 204 explains how the Secretary is expected to implement the Commission's recommendations, in the event that Congress does not enact a joint resolution of disapproval. Regarding the Secretary of Defense's funding authority, it stated that the Secretary may carry out actions necessary to implement closures and realignments "subject to the availability of funds authorized for and appropriated to the Department of Defense for use in planning and design, minor construction, or operation and maintenance and the availability of funds in the Account" established by the act.

Section 204 also took special care to empower the Secretary of Defense to support communities impacted by base closures and realignments, and to conduct environmental restoration at bases to be closed or realigned. Specifically, it instructed the Secretary, subject to the availability of funds authorized and appropriated for these purposes or funds in the Department of Defense Base Closure Account, to provide "(A) economic adjustment assistance to any community located near a military installation being closed or realigned; and (B) community planning assistance to any community located near a military installation to which functions will be transferred as a result of such closure or realignment," if the Secretary determines that the resources otherwise available to the community for such purposes are inadequate.¹³⁹ To ensure impacted communities had an opportunity to weigh in on the use of surplus property following a realignment or closure, Section 204 stipulated that "before any action may be taken with respect to the disposal of any surplus real property or facility located at any military installation to be closed or realigned under this title, the Secretary shall consult

with the Governor of the State and the heads of the local governments concerned for the purpose of considering any plan for the use of such property by the local community concerned.”¹⁴⁰

Section 204 also allowed the Secretary, subject to the availability of funds for this purpose or in the Department of Defense Base Closure Account, to “carry out activities for the purpose of environmental restoration, including reducing, removing, and recycling hazardous wastes and removing unsafe buildings and debris.”¹⁴¹

Waiver

Critically, to preempt congressional interference in the implementation of closures and realignments, and to supersede certain restrictions in other laws that would otherwise apply to the Secretary’s authority under this title, Section 205 established a waiver allowing the Secretary of Defense to “carry out actions under this title without regard to—(1) any provision of law restricting the use of funds for closing or realigning military installations included in any appropriation or authorization Act; and (2) the procedures set forth in sections 2662 and 2687 of title 10, United States Code.”¹⁴²

The Defense Base Closure and Realignment Act of 1990

Enshrined in Title XXIX of Public Law 101-510 on November 5, 1990, the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Act of 1990 established a second BRAC process “to provide a fair process that will result in the timely closure and realignment of military installations inside the United States.”¹⁴³ While similar in intent to the Base Realignment and Closure Act of 1988, the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Act of 1990 did include extensive procedural adjustments compared to its legislative predecessor, and notably created the architecture for three rounds of BRAC—in 1991, 1993, and 1995—rather than one.

The Commission

Section 2902 established a BRAC commission with eight members, rather than a 12-member commission as in the first BRAC round. It also delegated authority to the President, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate, to nominate the eight members, rather than delegating the authority to appoint members to the Secretary of Defense as in the first BRAC round.¹⁴⁴ It stated that in nominating members for appointments to the Commission, “the President should consult with” congressional leaders on six of the nominations—consulting with the Speaker of the House of Representatives and the Senate Majority Leader on two appointments each, and with the House Minority Leader and the Senate Minority Leader on one appointment each.¹⁴⁵ It also stated that the President shall designate one of their nominees for appointment to the Commission to serve as Chairman of the Commission.¹⁴⁶

Importantly, Section 2902 included several provisions meant to strengthen accountability and avoid undue bias in the Commission’s recommendations. It required that the Commission’s meetings be open to the public, other than meetings in which classified information was to be discussed, and that the proceedings, information, and deliberations of the Commission be open upon request to relevant congressional committee leaders.¹⁴⁷ It also required that Commission appoint a Director of Staff “who has not served on active duty in the Armed Forces or as a civilian employee of the Department of Defense during the one-year period preceding the date of such

appointment," and that no more than one-third of the Commission's staff or detail "may be on detail from the Department of Defense."¹⁴⁸

Procedures for Making Recommendations

Section 2903 laid out specific procedures for making recommendations that differentiate themselves from the procedures laid out in the Base Closure and Realignment Act of 1988 mainly by expanding the role of the Secretary of Defense and the President in the recommendation process and by weighing in on the criteria for considering which military installations to close or realign.

The procedure began with the Pentagon's force-structure plan, which Section 2903 required the Secretary of Defense to submit to the Commission and include in the Pentagon's budget justification documents for Fiscal Years 1992, 1994, and 1996. The section called for the plan to be based on the Secretary's assessment of "probable threats to the national security" during a six-year period beginning at the start of the next fiscal year.¹⁴⁹ It also calls for the plan to include, without any reference to military installations inside the United States that might be closed or realigned under the plan, a description of the threat assessment, a description of the anticipated force structure for each department during the six-year period, and a description of and justification for the units that will need to be forward based over the same period.¹⁵⁰

Regarding selection criteria, Section 2903 required the Secretary of Defense to publish proposed criteria for the Pentagon to consider in making recommendations for closures and realignments of military installations inside the United States no later than December 31, 1990, and to include in the same document a notice of opportunity for public comment on the proposed criteria for a period of at least 30 days.¹⁵¹ Then by no later than February 15, 1991, it required the Secretary to publish final criteria to be used,¹⁵² along with the force-structure plan, in making such recommendations.¹⁵³

As for the recommendations themselves, Section 2903 allowed (but did not require) the Secretary of Defense, by no later than April 15, 1991, April 15, 1993, and April 15, 1995, to publish and transmit to the appropriate congressional committees and the Commission recommendations for closures and realignments of military installations inside the United States based on the force-structure plan and the final criteria.¹⁵⁴ If recommendations were submitted, they had to include a summary of the selection process and a justification for each recommendation.¹⁵⁵ They also had to be made without regard to whether the installations at hand have been previously considered or recommended for closures or realignments.¹⁵⁶ Section 2903 was later amended to require that such recommendations also be made without taking into account any advance conversion planning, including community adjustment and economic diversification planning, undertaken by communities in anticipation of closures or realignments.¹⁵⁷

If and when the Commission received recommendations from the Secretary of Defense, the Commission was required to conduct public hearings on those recommendations and, by no later than July 1 of any year in which the Commission received those recommendations, "transmit to the President a report containing the Commission's findings and conclusions based on a review of and analysis of the recommendations made by the Secretary, together with the Commission's recommendations for closures and realignments of military

installations inside the United States.”¹⁵⁸ The Commission was empowered to change any of the recommendations made by the Secretary of Defense if it determined that the Secretary “deviated substantially from the force-structure plan and final criteria,” so long as it included in its report to the President an explanation and justification of any changes.¹⁵⁹ The original bill was later amended to expand on the circumstances under which the Commission was empowered to make changes to the Secretary’s recommendations to ensure that such changes were consistent with the Secretary’s force-structure plan and final selection criteria, to require public hearings on any proposed changes, and to preclude the Commission from taking into account any advance conversion planning by impacted communities.¹⁶⁰

Lastly, the President’s role under Section 2903 was to, by no later than July 15 of any year in which the Commission transmitted recommendations to the President, transmit to the Commission and Congress a report containing the President’s approval or disapproval of the Commission’s recommendations.¹⁶¹ If the President disapproved of the Commission’s recommendations, the President was required to transmit to the Commission and Congress the reasons for that disapproval, at which point the Commission, by no later than August 15 of the year concerned, was required to send the President a revised list of recommendations.¹⁶² If the President did not approve the original or revised recommendations of the Commission by September 1 of the year concerned, the BRAC process for that year would end.¹⁶³

Congress’ Role

Under Section 2904, the Secretary of Defense had to initiate closures and realignments of military installations included in the President’s report no later than two years after its transmission to Congress, and complete all closures and realignments no later than six years after, unless Congress enacted a joint resolution disapproving of such recommendations either before the end of a 45-day period starting on the date that the President transmits the report, or before the end of the congressional session during which the report was transmitted, whichever occurs first.¹⁶⁴

Section 2908 laid out procedures for consideration of a joint resolution of disapproval that were largely similar to the procedures laid out in the Base Closure and Realignment Act of 1988, with some notable differences.

Under the 1988 law, the Commission had to submit recommendations to Congress December 31, 1988, and then lawmakers had until March 15, 1989, to introduce a joint resolution of disapproval.¹⁶⁵ Under the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Act of 1990, lawmakers only had 10 days to introduce a joint resolution of disapproval starting on the day that the President transmitted a recommendations report to Congress.¹⁶⁶ In effect, the 1990 law shortened the window during which Congress could introduce a joint resolution of disapproval from two-and-a-half months to 10 days.

Similarly, while the 1988 law required that a joint resolution of disapproval be either reported or discharged from the appropriate committee by March 15, 1989,¹⁶⁷ the 1990 law required that a joint resolution of disapproval be reported or discharged by the committee concerned by the end of the 20-day period beginning on the date of the President’s transmittal of the recommendations report.¹⁶⁸

The 1990 law retained most if not all of the 1988 law's provisions to ensure swift consideration of a joint resolution of disapproval, though it arguably went further in this regard by limiting debate on the joint resolution to two hours rather than 10.¹⁶⁹ It also retained the same waiver allowing the Secretary of Defense to carry out closures and realignments without regard for provisions in authorization or appropriations Acts restricting the use of funds for such activities, and without regard to certain restrictions in other laws.¹⁷⁰

Restriction on Other Base Closure Authority

Unlike its predecessor, the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Act of 1990 included a section restricting other base closure authorities. Specifically, Section 2909 stated that from the enactment of the Act through December 31, 1995, the Act would be "the exclusive authority" for selecting installations for closure or realignment, and for carrying out closures or realignments, of military installations inside the United States.¹⁷¹ However, it also listed exceptions, including closures and realignments under the Base Closure and Realignment Act of 1988, and closures and realignments to which Section 2687 of Title 10, United States Code (described above), is not applicable.¹⁷² In effect, this section ensured that during the covered period, base closures and realignments inside the United States (other than those exempted) could only take place pursuant to the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Act of 1990.

Funding

Section 2906 established a new account called the "Department of Defense Base Closure Account 1990," to consist of funds authorized for and appropriated to the Account, proceeds from the transfer or disposal of any property at a military installation closed or realigned under this Act, and, subject to congressional approval, any funds the Secretary of Defense transfers into the Account from other funds appropriated to the Department of Defense for any purpose.¹⁷³ It also stated that unobligated funds in the Account following the termination of the Commission would remain in the account until transferred by Congress.¹⁷⁴

Implementation

Section 2905 retained similar provisions to those of the Base Closure and Realignment Act of 1988 allowing the Secretary of Defense to use funds from the Account or otherwise appropriated for economic adjustment assistance to communities located near military installations being closed or realigned, and for community planning assistance for communities located near military installations to which functions will be transferred as a result of closures or realignments.¹⁷⁵ It also retained a provision requiring consultation with Governors and the heads of local governments prior to disposing of surplus property resulting from closures and realignments.¹⁷⁶ However, it also added a new provision allowing the Secretary to "provide outplacement assistance to civilian employees employed by the Department of Defense at military installations being closed or realigned."¹⁷⁷

Regarding environmental concerns, Section 2905 also added provisions to allow the Secretary of Defense to conduct environmental mitigation activities as well as restoration activities, and instructing the Secretary, in the course of closures and realignments, to "ensure that environmental restoration of any property made excess to

the needs of the Department of Defense as a result of such closure or realignment be carried out as soon as possible with funds available for such purpose.”¹⁷⁸

National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2002

Title XXX of the FY 2002 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) established a process for the 2005 BRAC round by amending the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Act of 1990. The result was a process that, while similar in many ways to previous rounds, set a higher bar for closures and realignments by adding steps to the process and by establishing alternatives to closure and realignment.

Force Structure Plan and Infrastructure Inventory

Section 3001 amended the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Act of 1990 by adding Section 2912.¹⁷⁹ Section 2912 required the Secretary of Defense, in submitting the Pentagon’s budget request for FY 2005, to include a force-structure plan and a comprehensive inventory of U.S. military installations world-wide.¹⁸⁰ In slating these requirements for FY 2005, the FY 2002 NDAA effectively set up a longer lead-time compared to previous BRAC rounds from the establishment of the process to its initiation. It also broadened the scope of the force-structure plan. Under previous BRAC rounds, force-structure plans were required to cover a six-year period, however Section 2912 required it to cover a 20-year period.¹⁸¹ The comprehensive inventory of military installations on the other hand was a new feature of the 2005 BRAC round.

In addition to the force-structure plan and the comprehensive inventory, Section 2912 required the Secretary of Defense to include a description of the necessary infrastructure to support the force-structure plan, a discussion of the categories of excess infrastructure and infrastructure capacity, and an economic analysis of the effect of closing or realigning military installations to reduce excess infrastructure.¹⁸² Section 2912 also included special considerations for distinguishing between necessary and excess infrastructure, requiring the Secretary of Defense to consider “the anticipated continuing need for and availability of military installations outside the United States...” as well as “any efficiencies that may be gained from joint tenancy by more than one branch of the Armed Forces at a military installation.”¹⁸³

Secretary of Defense Certifications

In order for the 2005 BRAC process to progress beyond the reporting requirements above, Section 2912 required the Secretary of Defense to include in its submission of the force structure plan and infrastructure inventory a certification that additional closures and realignments are necessary, and a certification that new closures and realignments would lead to annual net savings for each military department by the start of Fiscal Year 2011.¹⁸⁴

Comptroller Evaluation

Following these certifications from the Secretary of Defense, Section 2912 required the Comptroller General to evaluate the need for closures or realignments, as well as the accuracy and analytical sufficiency of the force-structure plan, the infrastructure inventory, and the final selection criteria, within 60 days of the submission of the plan, inventory, and criteria.¹⁸⁵

Authorization for Additional Round and Commission

Once the Secretary of Defense has made the necessary certifications, the President could then initiate a new BRAC round by submitting nominations for appointment to the commission.¹⁸⁶ While this largely mirrored the process established in the 1990 BRAC law, Section 2912 raised the number of members to sit on the Commission from eight to nine.¹⁸⁷

Selection Criteria

One of the significant differences in the 2005 BRAC round was established by Section 3002 of the FY 2002 NDAA, which added Section 2913 to the 1990 BRAC law. Section 2913 required the Secretary to make military value a primary consideration of the selection criteria for closing or realigning military installations. The section defined selection criteria based on military value as including, at a minimum, the preservation of training areas to ensure military readiness; the preservation of military installations in the United States as staging areas for homeland defense missions; the preservation of installations in different climates and terrain areas for training purposes; the impact on joint warfighting, training, and readiness; and contingency, mobilization, and future total force requirements to support operations and training.¹⁸⁸

Section 2913 also required the selection criteria to address the extent and timing of potential costs and savings including the number of years it would take for savings to exceed costs; the economic impact on communities located near military installations to be closed or realigned; the ability of potential receiving communities' infrastructure to support forces, missions, and personnel; and the costs of environmental restoration, waste management, and environmental compliance.¹⁸⁹

Lastly, Section 2913 ensured the selection criteria process it laid out would supersede the selection criteria established under previous BRAC rounds.¹⁹⁰

Special Procedures for Making Recommendations

Section 3003 of the FY 2002 NDAA added Section 2914 to the 1990 BRAC law. While largely adhering to the procedures established by the 1990 BRAC law, Section 2914 added several requirements and options for the Secretary of Defense in making recommendations to the Commission. It required the Secretary to consider any notice received from local governments expressing approval of closures or realignments of military installations in their vicinity.¹⁹¹ It also allowed the Secretary to recommend that military installations be retained in inactive status if the Secretary determined that a given installation may be useful in the future.¹⁹²

Limits to Additional Recommendations

Section 2914 established further limits on the Commission's authority to add recommendations for additional closures or realignments beyond those that the Secretary of Defense recommended for closure or realignment. Specifically, it required that the Commission allow the Secretary of Defense at least 15 days to submit explanations for why the military installations in question were not included in the Secretary's recommendations.¹⁹³ It also required that at least seven members of the nine-member commission approve of any additions to the list of recommendations.¹⁹⁴

Limits on Privatization in Place

Section 3004 of the FY 2002 NDAA added a paragraph to Section 2904 of the 1990 BRAC law requiring that any steps to privatize functions of a military base recommended for closure or realignment be approved by the Commission following the Commission's determination that such privatization is the most cost-effective method of implementing the recommendation.¹⁹⁵

Funding

Section 3005 of the FY 2002 NDAA added Section 2906A to the 1990 BRAC law. Section 2906A established the "Department of Defense Base Closure Account 2005," and stipulated that the account should include funds authorized and appropriated for the Account, funds the Secretary of Defense is authorized to transfer to the Account, and funds received from the lease, transfer, or disposal of any property at a military installation to be closed or realigned under the 2005 BRAC round.¹⁹⁶

Implementation

Broadly speaking, the 2005 BRAC round authorized in the FY 2002 NDAA adheres to the same implementation procedures as the 1990 BRAC round. Some minor differences established by Section 3006 of the FY 2002 NDAA are enshrined in Sections 2905(b) and 2905(e) of the 1990 BRAC law.¹⁹⁷

Authorities Governing Overseas Base Closures and Realignments

The Defense Base Closure and Realignment Act of 1988

Section 201 of the Defense Base Closure Realignment Act of 1988 instructed the Secretary of Defense to close or realign all military installations recommended for closure or realignment by the Commission, which could include recommendations for military installations overseas. Section 202 also prohibited closures and realignments unless the Secretary of Defense had submitted to the Commission a study of overseas U.S. military installations "to determine if efficiencies can be realized through closure or realignment of the overseas base structure of the United States," and required the Commission to "consider the Secretary's study" in the course of developing its recommendations.¹⁹⁸ However, Section 203 required the Commission to certify that in making its recommendations, it reviewed "all military installations inside the United States..."¹⁹⁹ indicating that, while the Commission was required to review the Secretary of Defense's study on overseas military bases, it was not necessarily required to review *all* overseas military bases in the course of preparing its recommendations.²⁰⁰

The Defense Base Closure and Realignment Act of 1990

The Defense Base Closure and Realignment Act of 1990 included a specific section dedicated to the question of foreign military installations. Section 2921 expressed the sense of Congress that "the termination of military operations by the United States at military installations outside the United States should be accomplished at the discretion of the Secretary of Defense at the earliest opportunity."²⁰¹

The section also established a separate account known as the Department of Defense Overseas Military Facility Investment Recovery Account, and stated that “any amounts paid to the United States, pursuant to any treaty, status of forces agreement, or other international agreement to which the United States is a party, for the residual value of real property or improvements to real property used by civilian or military personnel of the Department of Defense shall be deposited into such account.”²⁰² It also specified that funds from the account can be used for “costs incurred by the Department of Defense in connection with facility maintenance and repair and environmental restoration at military installations in the United States.”²⁰³

In practice, this section afforded the Secretary of Defense congressional support for closing overseas military installations at their discretion while ensuring that proceeds resulting directly from the closure of military installations outside of the United States would be reserved for maintenance and environmental cleanup purposes at military installations inside the United States.

10 U.S.C. §2687a

Section 2822(a)(1) of Title XXXVIII in the FY 2010 NDAA amended Chapter 159 of Title 10, United States Code, to add “§ 2687a. Overseas base closures and realignments and basing master plans.”²⁰⁴ § 2687a was later amended through other legislation passed between 2001 and 2021.²⁰⁵

In essence, § 2687a required the Secretary of Defense to submit annual reports to Congress alongside each budget submission detailing the status of overseas military installations, including the status of any closures or realignments of overseas military installations. It also created the Department of Defense Overseas Military Facility Investment Recovery Account—a fund that can be used for military construction, facility maintenance and repair, and environmental restoration at installations within the United States as well as overseas installations. Sec. 1061 of the FY 2017 NDAA stipulated that this reporting requirement end on December 31, 2021.²⁰⁶

10 U.S.C. §2675

10 U.S.C. §2675 authorizes the Secretary of Defense to lease structures and real property in foreign countries for up to ten years, or 15 years if the lease is in Korea.²⁰⁷

10 U.S.C. §2350k

10 U.S.C. §2350k authorizes the Secretary of Defense to accept contributions from nations hosting U.S. military installations “because of or in support of the relocation of elements of the armed forces from or to any location within that nation.” Funds can only be used to pay costs related to the relocation for which the payment was made.²⁰⁸

10 U.S.C. §2721

10 U.S.C. §2721 requires the Secretary of Defense to keep quantitative and monetary records of the Pentagon’s fixed property and installations.²⁰⁹

In-State BRAC

Section 2702 of the FY 2019 NDAA established a novel procedure for base closures, authorizing the Secretary of Defense to close or realign military installations in a given state if the Governor of that state first submits a notice to the Secretary of Defense that includes:

(1) A specific description of the military installation, or a specific description of the relevant real and personal property.

(2) Statements of support for the realignment or closure from units of local government in which the installation is located.

(3) A detailed plan for the reuse or redevelopment of the real and personal property of the installation, together with a description of the local redevelopment authority which will be responsible for the implementation of the plan.²¹⁰

The section stipulates that the cost of carrying out such a realignment or closure must not exceed \$2 billion, and that the authority ends at the end of Fiscal Year 2029.²¹¹

A 2019 Congressional Research Service report noted that “to date, DOD has received no state requests under this authority.”²¹²

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of BRAC. Another one of the major closures, Fort Monroe, was located in the independent city of Hampton, which does not belong to a county, making it difficult to locate comparable data over the time period covered.

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¹²⁷ Sec. 2687(e)(1) of U.S.C. Title 10 defines the term "military installation" as "a base, camp, post, station, yard, center, homeport facility for any ship, or other activity under the jurisdiction of the Department of Defense, including any leased facility, which is located within any of the several States, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, American Samoa, the Virgin Islands, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, or Guam. Such term does not include any facility used primarily for civil works, rivers and harbors projects, or flood control projects."

¹²⁸ Unless certain conditions are met, Sec. 2687(a)(1) prohibits "the closure of any military installation at which at least 300 civilian personnel are authorized to be employed," and Sec. 2687(a)(2) prohibits "any realignment with respect to any military installation referred to in paragraph (1) involving a reduction by more than 1,000, or by more than 50 percent, in the number of civilian personnel authorized to be employed at such military installation..."

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¹³⁴ See Sec. 202(b) of Title II, Public Law 100-526.

¹³⁵ See Sec. 208(a), 208(b), and 208(c) of Title II, Public Law 100-526.

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¹⁵⁰ See Sec. 2903(a)(2)(A) and Sec. 2903(a)(2)(B) of Title XXIX, Public Law 101-510.

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²⁰⁰ See Sec. 203(b)(2)(B) of Title II, Public Law 100-526.

²⁰¹ See Sec. 2921(a)(1) of Title XXIX, Public Law 101-510.

²⁰² See Sec. 2921(c)(1) of Title XXIX, Public Law 101-510.

²⁰³ See Sec. 2921(c)(2) of Title XXIX, Public Law 101-510.

²⁰⁴ "Military Construction General Provisions." Title XXVIII, Public Law 111-84. Oct. 28, 2009. Pp. 477-478.

<https://www.congress.gov/111/plaws/publ84/PLAW-111publ84.pdf>

²⁰⁵ "Sec. 2687a. Overseas base closures and realignments and status of United States overseas military locations." United States Code, 2018 Edition, Supplement 5, Title 10 - ARMED FORCES. Jan. 3, 2024.

<https://uscode.house.gov/view.xhtml?hl=false&edition=2023&req=granuleid%3AUSC-prelim-title10-section2687a&num=0>

²⁰⁶ "Termination of Reporting Requirements." Sec. 2687a, United States Code, 2018 Edition, Supplement 5, Title 10 - ARMED FORCES. Jan. 3, 2024. <https://uscode.house.gov/view.xhtml?hl=false&edition=2023&req=granuleid%3AUSC-2010-title10-section2687a&num=0>

²⁰⁷ "Sec. 2675. Leases: foreign countries." United States Code, 2018 Edition, Supplement 5, Title 10 - ARMED FORCES. Jan. 3, 2024. <https://uscode.house.gov/view.xhtml?hl=false&edition=2023&req=granuleid%3AUSC-prelim-title10-section2675&num=0>

²⁰⁸ "Sec. 2350k. Relocation within host nation of elements of armed forces overseas." United States Code, 2018 Edition, Supplement 5, Title 10 - ARMED FORCES. Jan. 3, 2024.

<https://uscode.house.gov/view.xhtml?hl=false&edition=2023&req=granuleid%3AUSC-prelim-title10-section2350k&num=0>

²⁰⁹ "Sec. 2721. Property records: maintenance on quantitative and monetary basis." United States Code, 2018 Edition, Supplement 5, Title 10 - ARMED FORCES. Jan. 3, 2024.

<https://uscode.house.gov/view.xhtml?hl=false&edition=2023&req=granuleid%3AUSC-prelim-title10-section2721&num=0>

²¹⁰ "Sec. 2702. Additional Authority to Realign or Close Certain Military Installations." Public Law 115-232. Aug. 13, 2018. Pp. 622-624. <https://www.congress.gov/115/statute/STATUTE-132/STATUTE-132-Pg1636.pdf>

²¹¹ Ibid.

²¹² "Base Closure and Realignment (BRAC): Background and Issues for Congress." *Congressional Research Service*. April 25, 2019. P. 15. <https://www.congress.gov/crs-product/R45705>

