

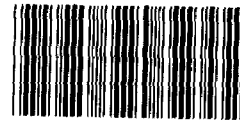
GAO

Report to the Chairman, Committee on  
Armed Services, House of Representatives

November 1988

# NATO AIR DEFENSES

## Higher Funding Priorities Delay Some Initiatives for U.S. Bases in Europe



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National Security and  
International Affairs Division

B-229407

November 18, 1988

The Honorable Les Aspin  
Chairman, Committee on  
Armed Services  
House of Representatives

Dear Mr. Chairman:

On February 26, 1987, you requested that we evaluate the Department of Defense's efforts to identify and correct deficiencies in the defense and survivability of its air bases in Europe. In a subsequent meeting with your staff, we also agreed to review the Department's March 1987 Theater Air Defense Master Plan. We briefed Congressman Richard Ray, a member of the Committee, and your staff in September 1987 on the status of the Air Force's air base operability program (ABO) at U.S. main operating bases<sup>1</sup> in Europe. ABO is a program to identify and correct air base defense, survivability, and recovery problems. In June 1988 we reported<sup>2</sup> that the Department's master plan did not adequately address a number of critical air defense issues, including some related to the vulnerability of the air bases.

This report addresses the status of the ABO program at collocated operating bases in Europe. Collocated bases are active allied military airfields from which U.S. aircraft will also operate during wartime. They vary in peacetime activity from fully active fighter aircraft bases to joint civilian and military aircraft installations with limited activity. Generally, the facilities and support available to U.S. forces at these bases are considerably less than those available at the main operating bases.

## Results in Brief

According to U.S. Air Forces in Europe (USAFE) officials, collocated operating bases are essential to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization's (NATO's) warfighting effort, since over 60 percent of all U.S. aircraft scheduled to deploy to Europe would deploy to those bases. The clear need for an ABO program was established by the "Salty Demo" exercise,

<sup>1</sup>A main operating base is a U.S. air base that is located in a host country and has permanently stationed aircraft, personnel, and equipment.

<sup>2</sup>NATO Air Defenses: DOD's Master Plan Does Not Adequately Address Critical Issues (GAO/C-NSIAD-88-16, June 10, 1988).

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which was conducted in 1985 to demonstrate the Air Force's capability to generate aircraft sorties<sup>3</sup> from air bases that are attacked. The goal of the ABO program is to provide base commanders with the capability to destroy attacking enemy air and ground forces, limit damage to air bases, and survive, recover, and continue to operate while under attack or post-attack conditions.

We found that USAFE has programs that have begun to identify and, to a lesser extent, correct ABO problems at both its main and collocated operating bases. However, the effectiveness of the programs is questionable due to the reallocation of funds from the ABO program to other, higher priority USAFE programs.

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## Importance of Collocated Operating Bases in Europe

In the early 1960s, the United States decided to lessen its reliance on massive nuclear retaliation to a Soviet attack in Europe and increase its capability to fight a large-scale conventional war. As part of this "flexible response" strategy, the Air Force would reinforce aircraft stationed in Europe with more aircraft from the United States. To avoid overcrowding the main operating bases with reinforcements and improve aircraft survivability through dispersal, the concept of collocated operating bases was developed.

The United States and its NATO allies have identified about 70 airfields in 9 countries that could be used as collocated bases by U.S. forces. Agreements between the United States and the host countries on the use of these airfields have been finalized for 63 collocated bases; agreements for the other 7 bases are in various stages of completion.

Almost two-thirds of the collocated bases would receive tactical fighter aircraft, and the remainder would receive search and rescue, tactical airlift, and refueling aircraft. Within the first 30 days of a mobilization, the collocated bases would receive over 60 percent of all U.S. reinforcement aircraft. As a result, according to USAFE officials, the Air Force considers collocated bases essential to NATO's overall warfighting plans and, in particular, to the objective of attaining and maintaining air superiority over the Warsaw Pact.

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<sup>3</sup>A sortie is the combat flight of a single aircraft from takeoff to the end of its flight.

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## Importance of the ABO Program to U.S. Bases

Salty Demo was the Air Force's first extensive demonstration of the capabilities of its main operating bases to sustain high wartime sorties during and after enemy air and ground attacks. The Air Force conducted the demonstration in the spring of 1985 at Spangdahlem Air Base in West Germany, utilizing capabilities that were in place at Spangdahlem, new systems that were not available at most air bases, and systems that were in development and not available to active forces.

The detailed results of the exercise are classified and, as a result, are not discussed here, but they served as a point of departure for a subsequent study<sup>4</sup> by the Air Force's Scientific Advisory Board.<sup>5</sup> The Board was asked to undertake a study to analyze how air bases can continue to support the projection of air power in the future. The rationale for the study was the need for a long-term investment strategy to guide evolution of future basing systems and to integrate basing considerations with weapons systems and their support from the concept stage forward.

After an extensive study, the Board concluded that "...there is a serious and growing threat to the capability of air bases around the world to support the projection of air power in the future. Over the last 40 years, the Air Force has become increasingly dependent on a decreasing number of large, fixed bases....Further, these bases are becoming increasingly vulnerable to new weapons capabilities, and it appears that vulnerability will continue to increase in the coming decades." The Board also concluded, "The increasing vulnerability of the present basing posture could cause the U.S. Air Force to lose a war. No matter what the number and quality of aircraft, extent of preparations, sufficiency of logistics, brilliance of commanders, or skill and courage of its people, if the Air Force cannot mount sufficient mission-capable sorties, it cannot fulfill its responsibilities in war."

Air Force Regulation 360-1, issued in December 1986, provides guidance to air base and theater commanders and others for planning and implementing the ABO program. The regulation states that the ABO program's primary objective is to integrate active defense, passive defense, and base recovery requirements and procedures to provide an improved

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<sup>4</sup>Report of the Ad Hoc Committee on Air Base Performance, November 1987.

<sup>5</sup>The Board is an independent advisory group to the Chief of Staff and the Secretary of the Air Force.

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capability to survive and operate under attack and in post-attack conditions. Active defense includes point air defense,<sup>6</sup> anti-tactical missile defenses, and ground defense measures. Passive defense includes hardening of facilities; alert and warning of impending attack; dispersal of aircraft; camouflage, concealment, and deception; nuclear, biological, and chemical protection; and other conventional defense measures. Base recovery includes damage assessment, decontamination, explosive ordnance disposal, rapid runway repair, building and utility repair, and fire and crash rescue.

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## USAFE's ABO Initiatives

USAFE's Directorate of ABO, established in 1986, is primarily responsible for coordinating ABO initiatives for U.S. main and collocated operating bases in Europe. The Directorate is identifying ABO initiatives for input to Air Force-wide ABO efforts such as the Base Operability Annual Analysis, which will identify worldwide ABO requirements and capabilities on hand. The Directorate also plans to contribute to a subsequent effort, the Base Capability Acquisition Plan, which will be a prioritized plan to address ABO investment strategy.

USAFE has also started to address ABO deficiencies at collocated bases in Joint Support Plans, which are the wartime activation plans for the bases. The plans are written by a site survey team of representatives from USAFE and the U.S. Air Force unit scheduled to deploy to the base. The U.S. team and a host nation team negotiate the resources each nation will provide to the deploying unit. According to USAFE officials, the surveys will identify such items as ABO requirements, capabilities, and shortfalls as they exist at the collocated bases. Until recently, USAFE did not require the plans to have specific sections for addressing ABO issues; however, it has revised the guidance to stipulate that the plans should include an annex specifically addressing ABO issues along with new air base ground defense and air defense appendixes. Some plans have been drafted to include the new ABO annex and appendixes, but none has been finalized.

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<sup>6</sup>These are short-range anti-aircraft gun or missile systems.

## USAFE's Funding for Its ABO Program Is Sharply Reduced

ABO efforts at USAFE's main and collocated operating bases are funded through various sources, including the NATO Infrastructure Program, Air Force centralized procurements, and USAFE's operations and maintenance accounts. For example, funding for alternate launch and recovery surfaces (military construction funds), hardened aircraft shelters (military construction funds), and survivable collective protection systems (procurement funds) are all controlled either by NATO or Air Force organizations within the United States. Although these important programs make up the bulk of the estimated \$822 million spent worldwide by the Air Force on ABO-related initiatives in fiscal year 1988, the availability of operations and maintenance funding under the direct control of USAFE permits its ABO planners to tailor individual projects to the air bases' specific threat requirements. For example, these projects could involve the hardening of air base storage and maintenance facilities, the provision of dispersed aircraft parking areas, and the implementation of various camouflage, concealment, and deception techniques.

According to USAFE officials, the Directorate of ABO initially concentrated its efforts and operations and maintenance funding on ABO problems at the main operating bases, although some ABO initiatives for the collocated bases were funded in fiscal years 1986 and 1987. The Directorate developed an initial ABO program specifically for the collocated bases in the spring of 1988. However, USAFE decided to reallocate most of the fiscal year 1988 and planned fiscal year 1989 operations and maintenance funds for ABO to other, higher priority programs. We have not evaluated USAFE's other program needs.

Air Force Regulation 172-1 provides the USAFE Commander with authority to reprogram funds within major force programs. These programs are general budget categories—such as Operations and Maintenance—for which the Congress authorizes and appropriates funds. The President's budget backup documents for fiscal years 1988 and 1989 contained operations and maintenance funds for USAFE's ABO initiatives. The Congress authorized and appropriated operations and maintenance funds based on each fiscal year's budget justification. However, the USAFE Commander subsequently decided to reprogram some of those funds to other programs left uncovered by deficit budget reductions.

The President's fiscal year 1988 budget contained \$24.4 million in operations and maintenance funding for USAFE's ABO initiatives, of which \$7.15 million was for the collocated bases. After overall operations and maintenance budgetary reductions, USAFE decided to reduce its total operations and maintenance funding for ABO to \$5.3 million, of which

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\$11,300 was for collocated bases. USAFE officials involved with the ABO program for the collocated bases stated that although each program could expect to receive its fair share of funding reductions in the current budgetary climate, a reduction of this magnitude was unusually severe.

The President's operations and maintenance budget for fiscal year 1989 contained \$27.5 million for USAFE's ABO initiatives, of which \$11.4 million was for collocated bases. However, in anticipation of overall budget reductions, USAFE reduced its planned funding for all ABO initiatives to \$1.2 million and eliminated its planned ABO funding for collocated bases. Subsequently, USAFE increased its planned ABO funding for fiscal year 1989 to \$5.9 million when an additional \$4.7 million was budgeted under an advance contracting program—\$1.2 million for collocated bases and \$3.5 million for main operating bases. Under this program USAFE can request bids in fiscal year 1988 for projects to be constructed in fiscal year 1989. However, project designs must be totally complete to qualify for the funds. Because USAFE withdrew ABO design funds for collocated bases in January 1988, the project designs were not complete and the projects could not qualify for the additional funds. Hence, it appears that there will be no fiscal year 1989 funds for ABO projects at collocated bases.

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## Conclusions and Agency Comments

USAFE had requested funds for ABO projects for fiscal years 1988 and 1989. However, USAFE subsequently chose to reallocate those funds from the ABO program to other programs that it considered higher priority. With reduced funding in fiscal year 1988 and 1989 and tighter budgets for the foreseeable future, USAFE's ABO program and its program for collocated operating bases, in particular, cannot be very effective in addressing USAFE-identified deficiencies in the defense, survivability, and recovery of air bases in Europe.

In its comments on a draft of this report (see app. I), the Department of Defense generally concurred with our findings. However, it stated that USAFE's reallocation of funds does not threaten its ABO initiatives but does affect how soon the deficiencies can be corrected. Moreover, the Department stated that the funds in question apply to only 1 of 23 ABO-related programs and that total worldwide funding for these programs in fiscal year 1988 was \$822 million.

We agree that the reallocation affects only some ABO initiatives and that the funds reallocated by USAFE are relatively small in relation to the Air Force's worldwide funding for ABO. Although we concede that the



impact of the reallocation would be to delay rather than threaten ABO initiatives, the delay could be lengthy in that many of USAFE's planned ABO initiatives are at or near the bottom of its list of unfunded requirements.

## Scope and Methodology

We performed our work principally at USAFE Headquarters, Ramstein Air Force Base, West Germany. We also conducted audit work at the following locations.

- Aalberg Air Station, Aalberg, Denmark; Jever Air Base, Jever, West Germany; Waddington Air Station, Waddington, United Kingdom; and Ghedi Air Base, Ghedi, Italy. These collocated operating bases were selected (1) because of their strategic importance to NATO, based on their high ranking in NATO's Rapid Reinforcement Plan and (2) to obtain information on U.S. ABO efforts in different host nations and NATO regions.
- the 17th Air Force, headquartered in Sembach, West Germany, and the 3rd Air Force, headquartered in Mildenhall, United Kingdom. The audit work was conducted to develop an understanding of the 17th and the 3rd Air Forces' roles and responsibilities regarding collocated operating bases and ABO. These organizations are in the chain of command between USAFE Headquarters and main and collocated operating bases.
- Royal Air Force (RAF) Lakenheath, Lakenheath, United Kingdom; Aviano Air Base, Aviano, Italy; RAF Bentwaters, Bentwaters, United Kingdom; and Bitburg Air Base, Bitburg, West Germany. These main operating bases were selected to obtain an understanding of the roles and responsibilities of the main operating bases in different host nations and NATO regions regarding their ABO efforts at collocated operating bases.
- the 7100th Combat Support Wing, Lindsey Air Station, Wiesbaden, West Germany. This activity was selected because of its primary mission of planning for the wartime activation of all collocated operating bases in NATO's Central Region.

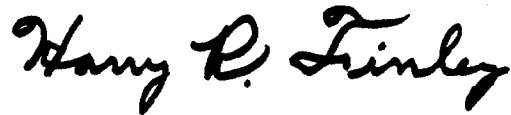
We interviewed USAFE and host nation officials and reviewed documents and files, including program mission statements, budget regulations, U.S. Air Force memoranda on ABO funding, NATO Infrastructure Program status reports, and logistical support plans. We also inspected collocated operating bases to determine how U.S. and host nation forces coordinate their respective ABO efforts, what ABO programs and projects exist, and how ABO deficiencies are being resolved. In addition, we met with officials from the U.S. European Command and the U.S. Army Europe to determine their involvement with ABO efforts and collocated operating

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bases. We conducted our work from February to August 1988 in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards.

As arranged with your Office, unless you publicly announce its contents earlier, we plan no further distribution of this report until 30 days after its issue date. At that time we will send copies to interested congressional committees; the Secretaries of Defense and the Air Force; the Director, Office of Management and Budget; and other interested parties.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Harry R. Finley". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent initial "H".

Harry R. Finley  
Senior Associate Director



# Comments From the Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Policy



INTERNATIONAL  
SECURITY POLICY

OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE  
WASHINGTON, DC 20301-2600

In reply refer to:  
I-08406A/88

Mr. Frank C. Conahan  
Assistant Comptroller General  
National Security and International  
Affairs Division  
U.S. General Accounting Office  
Washington, D.C. 20548

26 OCT 1988

Dear Mr. Conahan:

This is the Department of Defense (DOD) response to the General Accounting Office (GAO) draft report, "Nato Air Defenses: Reallocation of Funds Threaten Initiatives For U.S. Bases In Europe," dated September 15, 1988 (GAO Code 392393/OSD Case 7771). The Department generally concurs with the report findings; but some clarifying information is needed to put the reallocation of funds into perspective.

Although the DOD agrees that reallocation of any funds from the Air Base Operability (ABO) program to other, higher priority programs does impact how soon deficiencies can be corrected, it does not "Threaten Initiatives for U.S. Bases in Europe." The funds referred to in this report amounted to approximately \$4 to \$20 million reallocated from the operations and maintenance funds in the expedient hardening program. However, this program constitutes only one of 23 funding programs that identify funds to support U.S. Air Forces, Europe and other major command (MAJCOM) ABO programs. In FY 1988, total ABO funding was \$822.0 million within the 23 funding programs. For example, other programs within the ABO framework, such as chemical warfare defense, wartime host nation support, and Co-Located Operating Bases (COB) requirements provide a proportionate share of funds to support the COBs.

The overall ABO program funding continues to represent a significant investment despite the reallocation of a portion of one of the 23 funding programs. In addition, this overall program is further supported by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization infrastructure funding provided to support COB requirements. Reprogramming actions allow the (MAJCOM) Commander-in-Chief to meet the program requirements of higher priority programs within imposed, stringent fiscal constraints and is vitally necessary.

Detailed Department of Defense comments on the GAO findings are enclosed. The opportunity to comment on the draft report is appreciated.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Ronald F. Lehman, II".  
Ronald F. Lehman, II

Attachment  
a/s

Appendix I  
Comments From the Assistant Secretary of  
Defense for International Security Policy

GAO DRAFT REPORT - DATED SEPTEMBER 15, 1988  
(GAO CODE 392393) OSD CASE 7771

"NATO AIR DEFENSES: REALLOCATION OF FUNDS THREATEN  
INITIATIVES FOR U.S. BASES IN EUROPE"

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE COMMENTS

**FINDING A: Importance of Collocated Operating Bases In Europe.**

The GAO reported that, as part of the "flexible response" strategy, the Air Force will reinforce aircraft stationed in Europe with more aircraft from the United States. The GAO further reported that, to avoid overcrowding the main operating bases (MOBs) with reinforcements and improve aircraft survivability through dispersal, the concept of collocated operating bases (COBs) was developed. The GAO found that, collocated bases are active allied military airfields, which vary in peacetime activity from fully active fighter aircraft bases to joint civilian and military aircraft installations with limited activity. The GAO observed that, generally, facilities and support available to U.S. Forces at these bases are considerably less than that available at the MOBs. The GAO found further, that the United States and its NATO allies have identified about 70 airfields in 9 countries that could be used as COBs by U.S. Forces. The GAO noted that, according to U.S. Air Force Europe (USAFE) officials, the Air Force considers collocated bases essential to NATO overall warfighting plans since over 60 percent of all U.S. aircraft scheduled to deploy to Europe would deploy to those bases. (pp. 1-3/GAO Draft Report)

**DoD RESPONSE: Concur**

**FINDING B: Importance Of The Air Base Operability Program To U.S. Bases.**

The GAO noted that it had earlier reported<sup>1/</sup> that the DoD Theater Air Defense Master Plan did not adequately address a number of critical air defense issues, including some related to the vulnerability of air bases. The GAO found that the 1985 "Salty Demo" exercise was the first extensive Air Force demonstration of the capabilities of its MOBs to sustain high wartime sorties during and after enemy air and ground attacks. The GAO noted that the results of the exercise served as a point of departure for a subsequent study by the Air Force's Scientific Advisory Board. The GAO further noted the Board concluded that "...there is a serious and growing threat to the capability of air bases around the world to support the projection of air power in the future.... Further, these bases are becoming increasingly vulnerable to new weapons capabilities, and it appears that vulnerability will continue to increase in the coming decades."

<sup>1/</sup>"NATO AIR DEFENSES: DoD's Master Plan Does Not Adequately Address Critical Issues, " June 10, 1988 (OSD Case 7546)

Now on pp. 1-2.

Appendix I  
Comments From the Assistant Secretary of  
Defense for International Security Policy

Now on pp. 1-4.

The GAO also noted that, in addition, the Advisory Board concluded that the increasing vulnerability of the present basing posture could cause the U.S. Air Force to lose a war. The GAO observed that Air Force regulation 360-1, issued in December 1986, provides guidance to air base and theater commanders and others for planning and implementing the Air Base Operability (ABO) program--a program to identify and correct defense, survivability, and recovery problems. (p. 1, pp. 3-5/GAO Draft Report)

**DoD RESPONSE:** Concur

**FINDING C: U.S. Air Force Europe Air Base Operability Initiatives.** The GAO reported that the U.S. Air Force Europe (USAFE) Directorate of ABO, established in 1986, is primarily responsible for coordinating ABO initiatives for U.S. main and collocated operating bases in Europe. The GAO found that it is currently identifying initiatives, such as the Base Operability Annual Assessment, and will contribute to the Base Capability Acquisition Plan. The GAO also found that, recently, the USAFE required Joint Support plans for COBs to have a specific section for addressing ABO issues and to have air base ground defense and air defense appendices. The GAO reported that, in the spring of 1988, the Directorate of ABO developed an initial ABO program specifically for the COBs. (pp. 5-6/GAO Draft Report)

Now on p. 4.

**DoD RESPONSE:** Concur

**FINDING D: USAFE Funding For Its ABO Program Is Sharply Reduced.** The GAO reported that ABO efforts at USAFE's main and collocated operating bases are funded through various sources, including the NATO Infrastructure program, Air Force centralized procurements, and USAFE operations and maintenance accounts. The GAO found that the availability of operations and maintenance funding under the direct control of USAFE permits its ABO planners to tailor projects to the air bases' specific threat requirements. The GAO noted that, according to USAFE officials, the Directorate of ABO initially concentrated its efforts and operations and maintenance funding on ABO problems at the MOBs, although some ABO initiatives for the COBs were funded in FY 1986 and FY 1987. The GAO further found that the President's maintenance funding for USAFE ABO initiatives, of which \$7.15 million was for the collocated bases; however, after overall budgetary reductions, the USAFE decided to reduce its total ABO funding to \$5.3 million (of which only \$11,300 was for collocated bases). The GAO found, also, that the President's operations and maintenance budget for FY 1989 contains \$27.5 million for USAFE ABO initiatives, of which \$11.4 million is for collocated bases. The GAO reported that this was, however, reduced to a total of \$1.2 million (all for MOBs) in anticipation of overall budget reductions, with an additional \$4.7 million (\$1.2 million for COBs and \$3.5 million for MOBs) budgeted under the advance contracting program. The GAO further report that, because the USAFE had withdrawn the

**Appendix I  
Comments From the Assistant Secretary of  
Defense for International Security Policy**

Now on pp. 2, 5-7.

advance planning funding for COBs in FY 1988, the project designs were not complete and, therefore, the projects could not qualify for the advance contracting funding. The GAO concluded that, while the USAFE has programs that have begun to identify and, to a lesser extent, correct ABO problems at both its main and collocated operating bases, the effectiveness of the programs is questionable due to the reallocation of funds from the ABO program to other, higher priority USAFE programs. The CAO also concluded that, with reduced funding in FY 1988 and FY 1989 and tighter budgets for the foreseeable future, the USAFE ABO program and its program for COBs, in particular, cannot be very effective in addressing USAFE identified deficiencies in the defense, survivability, and recovery of air bases in Europe. (p. 2, pp. 6-8/GAO Draft Report)

**DoD RESPONSE:** **Partially Concur.** The DoD agrees some funds were reallocated. The DoD does not agree that program effectiveness was impacted. The funds were reallocated from the operations and maintenance funding in the expedient hardening program. This program, however, constitutes only one of 23 funding programs that identify funds to support USAFE and other MAJCOM ABO programs. For example, other programs within the ABO framework, such as chemical warfare defense, wartime host nation support, and COB requirements, provide a proportionate share of funds to support the COBs. In FY 1988, total ABO funding was \$822.0 million within the 23 programs that constitute the ABO framework. The overall ABO program funding continues to represent a significant investment despite the reallocation of one portion of the program funding. This overall program is further supported by the NATO infrastructure funding provided to support COB requirements.





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