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The Honorable Ike Skelton
Chairman
The Honorable Duncan L. Hunter
Ranking Member
Committee on Armed Services
House of Representatives

Subject: Military Base Realignments and Closures: Army Is Developing Plans to Transfer Functions from Fort Monmouth, New Jersey, to Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland, but Challenges Remain

In September 2005, the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission recommended that the Department of Defense (DOD) close Fort Monmouth, New Jersey, and realign most of its technical functions to Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland, as one of 182 recommendations in the 2005 base realignment and closure (BRAC) round. DOD must complete the closure and realignment actions specified in the recommendation within the statutory 6-year implementation period ending September 15, 2011.¹ Representatives from communities surrounding Fort Monmouth, as well as elected officials, raised concerns during hearings before the BRAC Commission that a number of current employees would not move to Aberdeen Proving Ground, leading to a loss of expertise that could negatively affect ongoing support for military operations, including the Global War on Terrorism. The Secretary of the Army pledged that the Army would not allow the transfer of functions to Aberdeen Proving Ground to affect this ongoing support. Although some of the BRAC commissioners shared the concern about the potential loss of expertise, the commission concluded in its report that DOD could mitigate the adverse effects of moving existing programs over the implementation period. However, to ensure that future leaders understood this concern, the commission report included language recommending that the Secretary of Defense submit a report to Congress that the movement of functions from Fort Monmouth to Aberdeen Proving Ground would be accomplished without disruption to their support to the Global War on Terrorism or other critical contingency operations. DOD issued its report in December 2007, which concluded that the department could accomplish the move without disruption to ongoing support efforts.²

Fort Monmouth currently hosts organizations that perform research, development, and acquisition of the Army's command, control, communications, computers, intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (C4ISR) systems. These organizations include the Logistics and Readiness Center; the Communications-Electronics Acquisition Center; the Software Engineering Center; the Program Executive Office for Command, Control, and

¹Pub. L. No. 101-510, Title XXIX, as amended by Pub. L. No. 107-107, Title XXX (2001).

²Department of Defense, *Report to Congress, 2005 Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission Report, Fort Monmouth, New Jersey, Recommendation #5* (Washington, D.C.: December 2007).

Communications Tactical; the Program Executive Office for Intelligence, Electronic Warfare, and Sensors; the Communications-Electronics Research, Development, and Engineering Center; and the headquarters element of the Communications and Electronics Command. The C4ISR functions performed by these organizations are the primary mission activity at Fort Monmouth³ and currently involve about 4,400 federal government civilian positions and about 200 military positions. Almost all of the authorized C4ISR positions are transferring to Aberdeen Proving Ground as part of the BRAC recommendation.⁴ About one-third of the current C4ISR workforce consists of scientists and engineers, the largest single group, with logistics, contracting, and business occupations constituting most of the remaining federal government civilian workforce. Clerks and administrative assistant positions constitute about 5 percent of the workforce. This workforce is further supplemented by about 1,600 embedded contractor employees and more than 1,000 contractor employees located off the installation.

This review is one in a series of reviews that we have undertaken on the implementation of the 2005 BRAC round recommendations. As with most of our BRAC-related work, we prepared this report under the Comptroller General's authority to conduct evaluations on his own initiative⁵ because of broad-based congressional interest and are reporting the results to facilitate congressional oversight of DOD's infrastructure and the BRAC program. This report discusses the status of the Army's planning efforts to transfer C4ISR functions to Aberdeen Proving Ground, implementation challenges associated with the transfer, and strategies in place to mitigate mission-disruption risks.

Scope and Methodology

To determine the status of the Army's planning efforts and the challenges and associated mitigation strategies, we reviewed and analyzed documentation and interviewed officials representing the following offices and organizations:

- DOD Office of General Counsel, Arlington, Virginia;
- Office of the Deputy Under Secretary of Defense (Installations and Environment), BRAC office, Arlington, Virginia;
- Army Office of the Assistant Chief of Staff for Installation Management, Arlington, Virginia;
- Army BRAC Division, Arlington, Virginia;
- Army Materiel Command BRAC office, Fort Belvoir, Virginia;
- Army Corps of Engineers Headquarters, Washington, D.C.;
- BRAC office, Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland;
- BRAC Relocation Task Force, Fort Monmouth, New Jersey; and
- the C4ISR organizations, Fort Monmouth, New Jersey;
 - Communications-Electronics Acquisition Center,
 - Logistics and Readiness Center,
 - Software Engineering Center,
 - Communications-Electronics Research, Development and Engineering Center,

³Other Army tenants on the installation include the United States Military Academy Preparatory School and Patterson Army Health Clinic.

⁴A small number of the C4ISR positions—a total of about 300 civilian positions and 50 military positions—are transferring to Fort Belvoir, Virginia, and the Defense Supply Center, Columbus, Ohio. The Army does not plan to eliminate any of the C4ISR positions by implementing this BRAC recommendation.

⁵31 U.S.C. § 717.

- Program Executive Office for Command, Control, and Communications Tactical, and
- Program Executive Office for Intelligence, Electronic Warfare, and Sensors.

We reviewed the BRAC Commission's September 2005 report to determine the commission's intent for DOD's report to Congress. We reviewed DOD's December 2007 report, which represented a point-in-time assessment of the funding and authorities that Fort Monmouth command officials determined were needed to successfully transfer the C4ISR functions to Aberdeen Proving Ground. We assessed the information included in the report to determine whether the content included was consistent with our understanding of what was recommended by the BRAC Commission. We met with officials from Fort Monmouth's BRAC relocation task force to determine how they developed DOD's December 2007 report. Additionally, we met with officials from various Army headquarters-level offices, as well as DOD's BRAC office, and reviewed draft versions of DOD's report to determine these organizations' roles in developing the report.

Because plans continue to evolve as more information becomes available, we subsequently reviewed Fort Monmouth's overarching plan and documents related to organization-specific approaches to completing the transfer. We spoke with Fort Monmouth and Aberdeen Proving Ground officials to determine the processes used to develop and revise the plans and the status of these efforts. We met with officials representing DOD's BRAC office, the Army's Office of the Assistant Chief of Staff for Installation Management and BRAC office, the Army Corps of Engineers, the Army Materiel Command, Fort Monmouth, and Aberdeen Proving Ground to obtain and analyze additional information on the Army's planning efforts. Additionally, we reviewed the minutes from the Army's senior oversight group meetings from February 2008 through April 2008; minutes for the May 2008 meeting were not available as of July 2008.

Through our review of the Army's plans and related documents and interviews, we identified some challenges that the Army faces in implementing this BRAC recommendation, along with associated mitigation strategies. We discussed these challenges and mitigation strategies with officials representing DOD's BRAC office, the Army's Office of the Assistant Chief of Staff for Installation Management and BRAC office, the Army Corps of Engineers, the Army Materiel Command, Fort Monmouth, and Aberdeen Proving Ground. We analyzed data provided by Fort Monmouth officials related to their hiring projections. We assessed the reliability of these projections by reviewing the assumptions used in developing the projections and discussing the projections with the officials who developed them. We found these projections to be reasonable for planning purposes. We reviewed the Army's business plan for implementing this recommendation and the Army's BRAC budget request for fiscal years 2008 and 2009 to determine the Army's facility construction and relocation schedules and current cost estimates. We also reviewed our prior work to determine the extent to which the challenges that the Army is facing are challenges for the implementation of other BRAC recommendations.⁶

Additionally, because detailed planning efforts and the transfer of C4ISR functions were ongoing at the time of our review, we focused on the best data available at the time, which represent a point in time and are based on a series of assumptions that are subject to change as plans are updated and implementation proceeds. Also, our review included only those aspects of the BRAC Commission's Fort Monmouth closure recommendation that pertained to transferring C4ISR functions to Aberdeen Proving Ground because these functions were

⁶A list of our prior reports on the implementation of the 2005 BRAC round is included at the end of this report.

the primary focus of the recommendation and were addressed in DOD's December 2007 report.

We conducted this performance audit from January 2008 to August 2008 in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives.

Summary

The Army is in the process of developing and implementing plans to transfer C4ISR functions from Fort Monmouth to Aberdeen Proving Ground. The Army faces some significant challenges and has started to identify mitigation strategies that, if implemented as intended, may lessen the mission-disruption risks associated with the transfer. With about 3 years remaining before the planned closure of Fort Monmouth, the Army has developed high-level plans that are outlined in DOD's December 2007 report to Congress, which identified approaches to completing the transfer and general risk-mitigation strategies. However, DOD's December 2007 report did not include detailed plans for how the Army intends to complete the transfer. As planning efforts have evolved, the C4ISR organizations have started to develop detailed plans to manage the transfer and continue support for ongoing DOD missions. By its very nature, the BRAC process is complex. As such, the Army faces several significant challenges in completing the transfer, which officials have recognized, and the Army is developing strategies designed to lessen the associated risks. First, the Army is facing human capital challenges in hiring a projected 3,700 federal government civilian employees to fully reconstitute its expected workforce authorization of about 5,100 civilians at Aberdeen Proving Ground in 2011, which includes a large number of scientists and engineers with technical expertise. The Army expects that about 2,200 of these new employees will not be hired until after the slated closure of Fort Monmouth and transfer of functions to Aberdeen Proving Ground in 2011. Officials project that the workforce will be fully reconstituted in 2016. Fort Monmouth officials project that direct hire authority would expedite the hiring process and would allow them to reconstitute the C4ISR workforce at Aberdeen Proving Ground in 2014, 2 years sooner than current projections. At the time of our review, the Army's request for direct hire authority was under review within DOD, but had not yet been submitted to the Office of Personnel Management, which grants the authority. To help mitigate the effects of the potentially smaller and less experienced workforce at Aberdeen Proving Ground, the Army has identified strategies, including focusing on the highest-priority workload and deferring some portions of the C4ISR workload, temporarily transferring some of the workload to other DOD organizations, or hiring additional contractors. While many of the expected vacancies can be attributed to the BRAC recommendation, the Army expected to hire a number of employees in the next few years regardless of whether Fort Monmouth closed because of increases in the authorized personnel levels and an anticipated surge in retirements as about one-half of the current C4ISR workforce becomes eligible to retire by 2011. Second, the Army faces challenges in obtaining personnel security clearances for nearly all of its newly hired employees in a timely manner. Third, the Army faces infrastructure challenges in completing the construction of facilities to accommodate C4ISR personnel and relocation of personnel and equipment to Aberdeen Proving Ground by the end of the BRAC implementation period. Finally, the Army faces challenges in funding the increasing costs of the transfer. These challenges are significant but are not unique to the closure of Fort Monmouth, as we have previously reported on similar challenges as they relate to the implementation of other BRAC

recommendations.⁷ While the Army has begun to identify and implement mitigation strategies designed to lessen the risks associated with each of the challenges, it is too early to determine the effectiveness of these strategies in ensuring continued support to military missions. Plans in and of themselves cannot ensure a successful transition due to inherent uncertainties that may arise over time, the need to revise plans as circumstances change, and the need to effectively execute the plans. Therefore, it is critical that the Army continue to monitor the execution of its transfer plans and take corrective actions to lessen the risk of operational disruptions. DOD plans to continue ongoing oversight of the implementation of this BRAC recommendation at the installation level, Army headquarters, and DOD, and to revise plans, as appropriate, which may also lessen potential mission-disruption risks. Because DOD has oversight mechanisms in place to continue its implementation monitoring efforts, we are not making recommendations at this time.

In commenting on a draft of this report, the Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Installations and Environment stated that DOD agrees that the challenges of implementing the BRAC recommendation to close Fort Monmouth are not unique and that the department has strategies in place to mitigate these challenges. DOD's written comments are reprinted in enclosure I. Additionally, DOD provided technical comments on a draft of this report, which we incorporated as appropriate.

Background

DOD has undergone four BRAC rounds since 1988 and is currently implementing its fifth round—the 2005 round.⁸ In May 2005, the Secretary of Defense made public his recommendations for the 2005 BRAC round. These recommendations were forwarded to the BRAC Commission, which was established by law as an independent entity to evaluate DOD's recommendations.⁹ The commission subsequently presented its findings and recommendations to the President on September 8, 2005. The President approved the commission's recommendations in their entirety and forwarded them to Congress on September 15, 2005. The recommendations became effective on November 9, 2005, and DOD has until September 15, 2011, to complete the implementation of all of the BRAC recommendations.

The 2005 BRAC round is different from previous BRAC rounds in several respects. We have previously reported that the 2005 BRAC round is the biggest, most complex, and costliest BRAC round ever, in part because, unlike prior rounds, the Secretary of Defense viewed the 2005 round as an opportunity to not only achieve savings, but also assist in transforming the department.¹⁰ DOD plans to execute more than 800 closure and realignment actions as part of the 182 recommendations from the 2005 BRAC round, which is more than twice the number of actions completed in the four prior rounds combined. Additionally, unlike prior BRAC rounds, which were implemented in times of declining defense budgets, DOD is implementing the 2005 BRAC round during a time of conflict when many military capabilities are surging and DOD is implementing other worldwide transformation initiatives.

⁷A list of our prior reports on the implementation of the 2005 BRAC round is included at the end of this report.

⁸The four prior rounds took place in 1988, 1991, 1993, and 1995.

⁹Pub. L. No. 101-510, Title XXIX (1990); 10 U.S.C. § 2687 note.

¹⁰GAO, *Military Base Realignments and Closures: Cost Estimates Have Increased and Are Likely to Continue to Evolve*, [GAO-08-159](#) (Washington, D.C.: Dec. 11, 2007).

Transferring the C4ISR organizations to Aberdeen Proving Ground is the largest portion of the recommendation to close Fort Monmouth. In recommending the closure of Fort Monmouth and transfer of C4ISR functions to Aberdeen Proving Ground, DOD intended to consolidate research, development and acquisition, and test and evaluation functions onto fewer installations and hoped to achieve efficiencies and synergy at a lower cost than would be required at multiple sites. In addition to the C4ISR functions transferring from Fort Monmouth to Aberdeen Proving Ground, this recommendation also provides for the relocation of some C4ISR functions from Fort Belvoir, Virginia, and Redstone Arsenal, Alabama, to Aberdeen Proving Ground; a portion of the Army Research Institute from Fort Knox, Kentucky, to Aberdeen Proving Ground; some C4ISR functions from Fort Monmouth to Fort Belvoir and Defense Supply Center, Columbus, Ohio; and the U.S. Military Academy Preparatory School from Fort Monmouth to West Point, New York.

Army Is Developing and Implementing Plans to Transfer Functions, but Several Significant Challenges Remain

The Army is in the process of developing and implementing plans to transfer C4ISR functions from Fort Monmouth to Aberdeen Proving Ground, and while several significant challenges remain, the Army has started to identify mitigation strategies that, if implemented as intended, may lessen the mission-disruption risks associated with the transfer. With about 3 years remaining before the planned closure of Fort Monmouth, the Army has developed high-level plans, and the C4ISR organizations are developing detailed organization-level plans. The Army faces challenges related to (1) recruiting and hiring a significant number of employees to reconstitute the workforce at Aberdeen Proving Ground, (2) obtaining security clearances for new employees in a timely manner, (3) completing the construction of C4ISR facilities at Aberdeen Proving Ground and relocation of personnel and equipment before the end of the BRAC implementation period, and (4) fully funding the increasing costs of the transfer. While the Army has begun developing and implementing strategies intended to lessen the risks associated with these challenges, it is too early to determine the effectiveness of these strategies. Additionally, DOD intends to continue its ongoing oversight efforts related to the implementation of this BRAC recommendation, which may also lessen potential mission-disruption risks.

Army Has Developed High-Level Plans and Is Developing Detailed Organization-Level Plans

With about 3 years remaining before the planned closure of Fort Monmouth, the Army has developed high-level plans for the transfer of C4ISR functions to Aberdeen Proving Ground and is in the process of developing detailed organization-level plans. Fort Monmouth officials began their planning efforts shortly after the closure of Fort Monmouth was announced in 2005 when a group of Fort Monmouth officials representing each of the C4ISR organizations and key staff offices met to develop a general approach to transferring the C4ISR functions to Aberdeen Proving Ground. The general approach evolved into two high-level plans—DOD's December 2007 report to Congress and an overarching plan to guide the transfer—which describe the Army's overall approach to transferring C4ISR functions from Fort Monmouth to Aberdeen Proving Ground and general strategies to mitigate the risks associated with the transfer.

The high-level plans focus on four critical risk areas—human capital, information technology, facilities, and relocation phasing—that Fort Monmouth officials determined they would need to address when developing plans to transfer the C4ISR functions. The high-level plans were based on other ongoing planning efforts and data.

- In the human capital risk area, the officials relied, in part, on ongoing efforts to address an expected surge in future retirements to develop BRAC plans and mitigation strategies. More than one-half of current employees at Fort Monmouth will be eligible to retire, including those eligible for early retirement, by 2011. Officials have been aware of and planning to address this potential loss of expertise since 2000 and used some of the strategies previously designed to address this issue in developing their BRAC plans. For example, in 2000, officials developed a commandwide workforce plan that identified potential skill or experience gaps in the workforce due to retirements and strategies to fill these gaps. Since the BRAC decision was announced in 2005, Fort Monmouth officials have included information on projected skill or experience gaps that may occur due to employees choosing not to relocate to Aberdeen Proving Ground and strategies to address these gaps in the annual updates to the workforce plan. The human capital risk-mitigation strategies identified in DOD's December 2007 report focus on obtaining the funding and authorities needed to address hiring needs by allowing C4ISR organizations to hire more employees, as well as hiring employees more quickly.
- In the information technology critical risk area, Fort Monmouth officials determined overall information technology requirements for the C4ISR functions through a room-by-room inventory of the current equipment and capabilities. Officials compared those requirements to the current capacity at Aberdeen Proving Ground to determine the necessary infrastructure upgrades. Fort Monmouth officials identified obtaining sufficient funding as the key strategy to mitigate risks related to the information technology critical risk area in DOD's December 2007 report to Congress.
- In the facilities critical risk area, Fort Monmouth officials determined requirements for the size and configuration of needed facilities at Aberdeen Proving Ground to accommodate the C4ISR personnel. Officials intentionally placed many of the functions that have complex laboratory or equipment requirements in the facilities that are scheduled to be completed first to allow more time to relocate, test, and calibrate the necessary equipment before Fort Monmouth closes. Strategies to mitigate risks related to the facilities critical risk area in DOD's December 2007 report to Congress focused on obtaining sufficient funding.
- In the relocation phasing critical risk area, Fort Monmouth officials identified three general approaches for how organizations would transfer specific functions: creating redundant (or duplicate) capabilities at Aberdeen Proving Ground and fully transferring the function before closing facilities at Fort Monmouth, splitting the workload between the two sites until the entire function is completely transferred, and temporarily outsourcing work to other organizations until the full workload can be performed at Aberdeen Proving Ground. Fort Monmouth officials identified obtaining sufficient funding as the key strategy to mitigate risks related to the relocation phasing critical risk area in DOD's December 2007 report to Congress.

While DOD's December 2007 report to Congress identified critical risk areas and general risk-mitigation strategies, our analysis showed that the report did not fully provide details for how the Army would complete the transfer without disrupting ongoing support to military missions. For example, the report identifies general relocation phasing strategies that could be used to transfer C4ISR functions, but does not provide details regarding equipment and personnel transfer plans. Additionally, the December 2007 report does not explain how key conclusions were drawn, particularly that the transfer could be completed without affecting their support to the Global War on Terrorism or other critical contingency operations. Fort Monmouth officials said that identifying specific support to the Global War on Terrorism for DOD's December 2007 report was a challenge. For example, the officials said that each C4ISR

organization contributes to operations in support of the Global War on Terrorism, but not all of the organizations can separate out which personnel are critical to these operations because employees who perform work related to the Global War on Terrorism also perform work related to other operations that are nonetheless critical to other DOD missions. Additionally, officials told us that while they have general plans that estimate future programs and projects, it is difficult to precisely determine their future workload, particularly what portion may support the Global War on Terrorism, due to the evolving nature of the work. Thus, officials told us that their planning efforts are focused on the entire C4ISR mission and not just those functions related to the Global War on Terrorism.

In addition to DOD's report to Congress, in December 2007, Fort Monmouth officials developed an overarching plan to guide the transfer that included strategic goals, subordinate objectives, and specific initiatives that detail actions needed to complete the transfer. The goals identified in the plan align with the four critical risk areas discussed in DOD's December 2007 report. As in that report, much of the plan focuses on human capital issues, particularly as they relate to ensuring mission continuity. The plan provides some detail lacking in DOD's report in that it provides information about how the Army intends to implement the mitigation strategies. According to Fort Monmouth officials, the plan is a "living document" that will continue to be revised and updated as implementation of the transfer continues.

While high-level plans have been completed, the C4ISR organizations are in the process of developing detailed, organization-specific transfer plans. According to Fort Monmouth officials, much of the detail related to how specific functions, including personnel and equipment, will be transferred are going to be included in organization-specific plans and, at the time of our review, each of the C4ISR organizations was developing such plans. These plans focus largely on the human capital and relocation phasing critical risk areas. Each of the C4ISR organizations has collected data on its workforce to inform its plans. Since DOD issued its December 2007 report to Congress, each C4ISR organization has completed a human capital assessment to obtain individual-level data on which personnel plan to relocate to Aberdeen Proving Ground. To complete the assessment, leaders from each C4ISR organization spoke with each employee to identify person-by-person who is planning to relocate to Aberdeen Proving Ground. Officials plan to update these assessments periodically. These assessments are in addition to commandwide workforce surveys, in which officials have collected data across the C4ISR organizations every 6 months since the closure was announced to help refine their estimates across the command as to the number of current employees planning to relocate to Aberdeen Proving Ground.

Since DOD's December 2007 report, each C4ISR organization has also reviewed its specific functions and determined the appropriate relocation strategies required to transfer the functions for each facility or laboratory without affecting ongoing support to military missions as part of the organization-level plans. Most organizations are using a combination of the identified approaches (redundant capabilities, split-based operations, and outsourcing work to other locations) to transfer personnel and equipment. Fort Monmouth officials said that the next step is for the C4ISR organizations to add additional detail to plans and determine how individual pieces of equipment will be relocated. These efforts were under way at the time of our review.

Army Faces Several Significant Challenges, but Mitigation Strategies and Continued Oversight May Lessen Risk

The Army is facing several significant challenges in transferring C4ISR functions to Aberdeen Proving Ground, and officials have begun to identify mitigation strategies that, if implemented as intended, may lessen the risks associated with the transfer. Key challenges

remain in (1) recruiting and hiring a significant number of employees to reconstitute the workforce at Aberdeen Proving Ground, (2) obtaining security clearances for new employees in a timely manner, (3) completing the construction of C4ISR facilities at Aberdeen Proving Ground and relocation of personnel and equipment before the end of the BRAC implementation period, and (4) fully funding the increasing costs of the transfer. These challenges are significant but are not unique to the closure of Fort Monmouth, as we have previously reported on similar challenges as they relate to the implementation of other BRAC recommendations.¹¹ The Army has begun to develop and implement mitigation strategies to address these challenges; however, it is too early to determine the effectiveness of these strategies. Additionally, officials at several levels, including the installation level, the Army, and DOD, intend to continue their ongoing oversight of the transfer, which may lessen potential mission-disruption risks.

Army Faces Human Capital Challenges, but Has Begun to Identify and Implement Mitigation Strategies

Recruiting and hiring a significant number of employees to reconstitute the C4ISR workforce at Aberdeen Proving Ground will likely be the most challenging aspect of transferring the C4ISR functions to Aberdeen Proving Ground, and the Army has begun to identify and implement strategies intended to lessen the risks associated with this challenge. While there are about 4,400 government civilian employees currently performing the C4ISR workload at Fort Monmouth, the number of authorized positions is expected to increase to about 5,100 by 2011 due to an increase in the C4ISR workload. Fort Monmouth officials project that about 30 to 40 percent of the current federal government civilian workforce will relocate to Aberdeen Proving Ground and the Army will need to hire about 3,700 employees to fully reconstitute the workforce at Aberdeen Proving Ground, which officials project will occur in 2016. Officials plan to hire about 1,500 employees prior to the closure of Fort Monmouth in 2011, leaving about 2,200 positions vacant at that time. These vacancies are expected across all occupations and experience levels in each of the C4ISR organizations.

While many of the expected vacancies can be attributed to the BRAC recommendation, the Army expected to hire a number of employees in the next few years regardless of whether Fort Monmouth closed. First, the C4ISR workload currently performed at Fort Monmouth is expected to increase over the next few years, leading to an increase of about 700 positions from the current level of 4,400 to about 5,100 positions. Additionally, as previously discussed, more than one-half of the current federal government civilian employees in the C4ISR workforce would be eligible to retire by 2011, leading to a potential loss of expertise even in the absence of a decision to close Fort Monmouth. Fort Monmouth officials expected that there would be a surge in retirements between 2015 and 2018 in the absence of BRAC, but these officials anticipate that the closure will accelerate the time frame during which eligible employees choose to retire, leading to vacancies that will need to be filled earlier than originally anticipated. Although these positions would need to be filled regardless of whether Fort Monmouth closed, Fort Monmouth officials count the hiring required to meet increases in authorized levels and expected retirements in their BRAC vacancy projections because the positions need to be filled at the same time the C4ISR functions are transferring to Aberdeen Proving Ground.

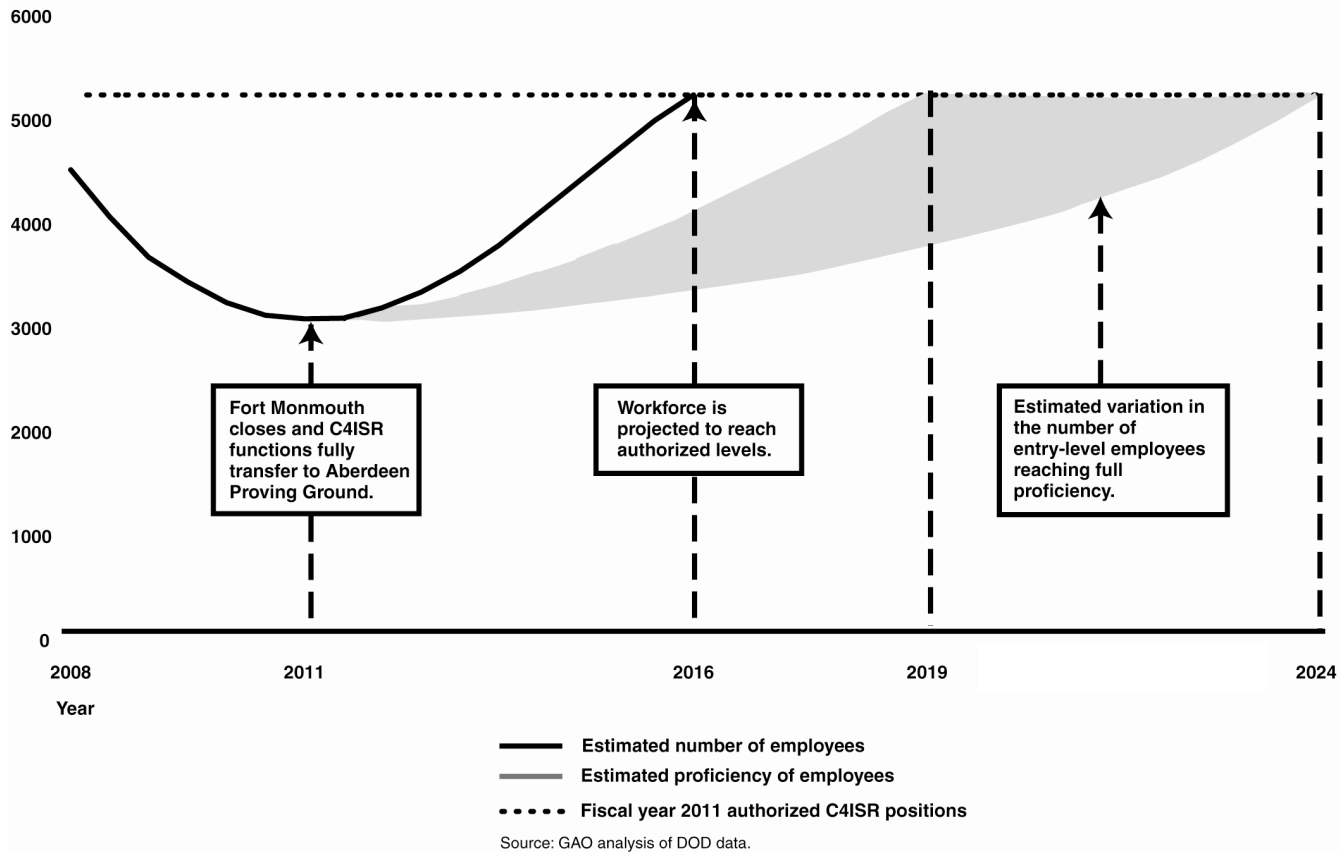
Fort Monmouth officials project that as the closure of the installation nears, the size of the C4ISR workforce will gradually decrease from the fiscal year 2008 authorized level of about 4,400 positions as employees who choose not to relocate to Aberdeen Proving Ground find other jobs or choose to retire, leaving some positions unfilled. The officials expect the size of

¹¹A list of our prior reports on the implementation of the 2005 BRAC round is included at the end of this report.

the workforce will reach its lowest level in 2011 when Fort Monmouth closes and the C4ISR functions are fully transferred to Aberdeen Proving Ground, leaving approximately 2,200 positions unfilled. As new employees are hired, the officials expect that the size of the workforce will gradually increase after 2011 until it reaches authorized levels of about 5,100—to include the 700 additional authorized positions—which officials project will occur in 2016. Fort Monmouth officials project that they could reconstitute the C4ISR workforce at Aberdeen Proving Ground in 2014—2 years sooner—if the C4ISR organizations were given direct hire authority.¹² At the time of our review, the Army’s request for direct hire authority was under review within DOD, but it had not yet been submitted to the Office of Personnel Management. When fully reconstituted, the workforce may be less experienced than the current workforce at Fort Monmouth due to experienced employees at Fort Monmouth choosing not to relocate to Aberdeen Proving Ground and the likelihood that a portion of newly hired employees will be less experienced than the current workforce. Army officials estimate that it could take 3 to 8 years, depending on the occupation and an individual’s experience, for a newly hired entry-level employee to reach full proficiency in a position. These officials told us that they expect to hire more-experienced employees, to the extent they are available, and fill the remaining positions with entry-level employees. Figure 1 illustrates notionally, based on Fort Monmouth officials’ projections, the gradual decrease and reconstitution of the C4ISR workforce in terms of filling positions and the potential time required for entry-level employees to reach full proficiency in those positions. It is important to note that, to the extent that the Army is successful in hiring a greater number of experienced employees, the number of employees that are fully proficient could be higher than depicted in figure 1 because the graphic illustrates the time required for entry-level employees to reach full proficiency in a position and assumes that all of the employees hired are entry-level employees. According to Fort Monmouth officials, it would take less time for a more-experienced employee to reach full proficiency in a position than an entry-level employee.

¹²The Office of Personnel Management can give federal agencies direct hire authority to fill vacancies when a critical hiring need or severe shortage of candidates exists. The use of direct hire authority allows an agency to hire any qualified applicant after public notice is given. According to the Office of Personnel Management, direct hire authority expedites hiring by eliminating some hiring requirements, including competitive rating and ranking and veteran’s preference.

Figure 1: Notional Illustration of the Potential Staffing Level and Estimated Time Required for Entry-Level Federal Government Civilian Employees in the C4ISR Workforce to Reach Full Proficiency Based on DOD Projections



Notes: This figure is intended to illustrate generally the staffing level of the C4ISR workforce and the time required for newly hired entry-level employees to reach full proficiency based on projections by Fort Monmouth officials. The estimated number of employees in the workforce is based on the number of employees currently in the workforce, the year that officials project the workforce will reach its lowest level and the size of that workforce, and the year that officials project that the number of employees in the workforce will reach authorized levels. Similarly, the shaded area represents the variation in time that may be required for a newly hired entry-level employee to reach full proficiency in the positions based on Fort Monmouth officials' estimate that it takes about 3 to 8 years, depending on the occupation and an individual's experience, for a newly hired entry-level employee to reach full proficiency in a position. However, officials said that they expect to hire more-experienced employees, to the extent that they are available, and fill the remaining positions with entry-level employees, which may lessen the overall time required for employees to reach full proficiency to the extent the Army is successful in hiring relatively more-experienced employees. Finally, while the number of authorized C4ISR positions varies from year to year, this figure represents authorized C4ISR positions as a steady number using fiscal year 2011 data because that is the year that Fort Monmouth is scheduled to close and the C4ISR mission is scheduled to be fully transferred to Aberdeen Proving Ground.

Current hiring plans and projections are based on a number of planning assumptions that, according to Fort Monmouth officials, were based on the best information available at the time. However, if the assumptions do not prove to be accurate, then the number of vacancies may be different than projected. Two key assumptions that could affect the projected vacancies are the number of current employees who will relocate and the number of employees who can be hired before Fort Monmouth closes. Fort Monmouth officials assume that about 30 to 40 percent of the current workforce will relocate to Aberdeen Proving Ground based on employee responses to workforce surveys and human capital assessments, as well as anecdotal estimates of the percentage of employees that relocated in previous

BRAC rounds. If the number of employees who choose to relocate is lower than is assumed in the plans, then there will be more vacancies than projected; conversely, if more people move than is assumed in the plans, then the number of vacancies will be lower than projected. Additionally, the projection of 2,200 vacancies at Aberdeen Proving Ground after Fort Monmouth closes is based on the assumption that the Army will be able to hire almost 1,500 employees before the closure. Fort Monmouth officials recognize that hiring this many employees before the installation closes is ambitious and may not be feasible, in part because the number of employees that can be hired at Aberdeen Proving Ground is limited by the availability of facilities leading up to 2011. If the Army is unable to meet its hiring goals before Fort Monmouth closes, then the number of vacancies at Aberdeen Proving Ground after the closure would be greater than the 2,200 projected vacancies. Conversely, if the Army exceeds its hiring goals, then there would be fewer than the 2,200 projected vacancies.

As in the case of the government workforce, the Army may also face a loss of experience in its contractor workforce, which constitutes a substantial portion of the workforce for some C4ISR organizations. Fort Monmouth officials said that contractor companies currently are not required to develop relocation plans, but plans that detail how the company will continue to support the C4ISR functions before, during, and after the transfer will be required when contracts are renewed or new contracts are awarded. According to Fort Monmouth officials, almost all of the current support contracts will expire before Fort Monmouth closes. Contractors are required to continue to provide the services included in the contract; however, that support is not required to be provided by the personnel currently providing the service, according to Fort Monmouth officials. Therefore the Army could experience a loss of experienced contractor personnel if a large number of current contractor personnel choose not to relocate to Aberdeen Proving Ground. Fort Monmouth officials are aware of and are starting to develop and implement strategies to address this challenge. Specifically, Fort Monmouth officials are initiating discussions with contractor companies at periodic performance meetings to determine the companies' plans to continue support after the C4ISR functions relocate, which provide officials in the C4ISR organizations near-term insight into the contractors' approaches to providing continued support after the transfer.

Based on Fort Monmouth officials' plans and projections, the workforce at Aberdeen Proving Ground is likely to be smaller and less experienced than the current C4ISR workforce for several years after the closure of Fort Monmouth. Fort Monmouth officials recognize this potential risk and have started developing and implementing mitigation strategies that focus on two general areas: (1) retaining or hiring the necessary personnel to fully reconstitute the workforce at Aberdeen Proving Ground and (2) managing the functions by identifying and focusing on the highest-priority workload and deferring some portions of the C4ISR workload, temporarily transferring some of the workload to other DOD organizations, or hiring additional contractors.

Officials have started developing and implementing risk-mitigation strategies related to retaining existing employees and hiring new employees to reconstitute the federal government civilian workforce. First, the C4ISR organizations are developing or plan to develop targeted training programs and hiring strategies so that the organization will have the right mix of skills when the workforce is reconstituted at Aberdeen Proving Ground. For example, officials from some of the C4ISR organizations have identified the critical skills or positions in their organizations and used the results of their human capital assessment to determine whether employees who possess the critical skills or currently occupy the critical positions plan to relocate to Aberdeen Proving Ground. For those skills or positions in which incumbents do not intend to relocate, officials identified a number of employees currently in the organization that could, through training and additional experience, assume these critical roles and are working to provide the needed training and experience to such employees. As a result, organizations may be able to fill some critical positions with current employees,

allowing organizations to hire and fill less-critical positions with entry-level applicants, who may be easier to recruit and hire and thus may lessen the risk to critical missions. Additionally, some C4ISR organizations have begun outreach efforts with colleges and universities near Aberdeen Proving Ground, advertising available positions with professional organizations, and participating in job fairs to attract candidates. For example, in June 2008, a C4ISR job fair at Aberdeen Proving Ground attracted over 1,500 potential applicants, many of whom were experienced candidates, according to Fort Monmouth officials. Officials are just beginning to implement targeted training and hiring plans and the results of these efforts remain to be seen.

Army officials also have started to identify strategies to manage the C4ISR workload with a potentially smaller and less-experienced workforce, including prioritizing the workload, temporarily outsourcing some work to other DOD locations, or hiring additional contractors. First, officials from each of the C4ISR organizations said that prioritizing the workload will be a key strategy in completing the most-critical work after the C4ISR functions transfer to Aberdeen Proving Ground and, in some cases, the officials expect that some less-critical work will have to be deferred in order to complete the most-critical work in a timely manner. These officials noted that they currently have to prioritize their workload and that this prioritization would become even more essential with a smaller workforce. Second, some organizations may be able to temporarily outsource some of their workload to other DOD locations until the workforce is reconstituted at Aberdeen Proving Ground. For example, officials from the Communications-Electronics Acquisition Center expect that some work could temporarily be performed by another acquisition center until the workforce is reconstituted if the workforce at Aberdeen Proving Ground cannot initially complete all of the work. Finally, officials from some organizations said that they may hire additional contractors to help continue the work until the workforce is reconstituted. Fort Monmouth officials said that they generally know about future programs and projects, but the planned C4ISR workload for 2011 and beyond may change over time, making it difficult to develop specific strategies now to complete the workload with a smaller workforce. Officials plan to continue to develop, monitor, revise, and refine plans and strategies to mitigate the risk of a smaller and less-experienced workforce on the ability to complete the C4ISR workload as more information is known about the workload and the workforce capability after the transfer. It is too early to determine the extent to which these strategies will be effective; however, these mitigation strategies, if implemented as intended, should lessen the risks associated with human capital challenges.

Additionally, Army officials are monitoring progress in implementing human capital plans and strategies and revising plans as needed. For example, based on some early difficulties in hiring new employees, Fort Monmouth officials recently revised their hiring projections to decrease the number of employees hired before the transfer and increase the number hired after the transfer, thus increasing the projected number of unfilled positions immediately after the transfer. Along with the revised projections, Fort Monmouth officials are in the process of determining how, if at all, hiring plans and strategies need to be revised.

Although these human capital challenges may be difficult to address, they are not unique to the C4ISR functions transferring to Aberdeen Proving Ground. We first raised potential human capital challenges related to the 2005 BRAC round in our July 2005 testimony before the BRAC Commission, in which we broadly stated that DOD could face challenges in planning to address the loss of human capital skills to provide for uninterrupted operations as BRAC recommendations are implemented, particularly for those skills requiring extensive education, training, and experience.¹³ More specifically, we reported in March 2008 that DOD

¹³GAO, *Military Bases: Observations on DOD's 2005 Base Realignment and Closure Selection Process and Recommendations*, GAO-05-905 (Washington, D.C.: July 18, 2005).

was facing a challenge in managing human capital issues for two supply-related recommendations.¹⁴ As in the case of the transfer of C4ISR functions to Aberdeen Proving Ground, military service officials involved in implementing two supply-related recommendations expressed doubts at that time about the willingness of current experienced personnel to transfer to the Defense Logistics Agency. We also identified workforce challenges in our June 2007 report on the BRAC recommendation to establish fleet readiness centers in the Navy.¹⁵

Army Faces Challenges in Obtaining Security Clearances in a Timely Manner, but Has Begun to Identify and Implement Mitigation Strategies

The Army also faces challenges in obtaining the necessary security clearances for the large number of newly hired employees in a timely manner, and officials have begun to identify and implement strategies intended to mitigate the risk associated with this challenge. Fort Monmouth officials report that almost all of its C4ISR positions require at least a secret clearance and about 20 percent of the current federal civilian government C4ISR employees and military personnel who have a clearance have a top secret clearance. DOD's December 2007 report identified the need to obtain security clearances quickly as a factor in its ability to successfully transfer the C4ISR functions to Aberdeen Proving Ground without affecting ongoing support to Army missions.

Because the number of clearances to be processed for new C4ISR employees is relatively small compared to the large number of clearances that the Office of Personnel Management and DOD currently process and the fact that the employees will be added over a number of years, processing clearances for the new C4ISR employees will not likely place a significant strain on the overall clearance program.¹⁶ Long-standing delays and backlogs in determining clearance eligibility and other clearance challenges led us to designate DOD's personnel security clearance program as a high-risk area since January 2005.¹⁷ We identified this as a high-risk area because problems in the clearance program can negatively affect national security. The Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004 established specific timeliness standards to be phased in over 5 years for completing the end-to-end adjudication

¹⁴GAO, *Military Base Realignment and Closures: Higher Costs and Lower Savings Projected for Implementing Two Key Supply-Related BRAC Recommendations*, [GAO-08-315](#) (Washington, D.C.: Mar. 5, 2008).

¹⁵GAO, *Military Base Closures: Projected Savings from Fleet Readiness Centers Likely Overstated and Actions Needed to Track Actual Savings and Overcome Certain Challenges*, [GAO-07-304](#) (Washington, D.C.: June 29, 2007).

¹⁶The Office of Management and Budget reported that in the first quarter of fiscal year 2008, the Office of Personnel Management completed more than 100,000 initial investigations and DOD adjudicated more than 85,000 clearances for DOD military and civilian personnel. See Office of Management and Budget, *Report of the Security Clearance Oversight Group Consistent With Title III of the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004* (Washington, D.C.: February 2008). The Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence has responsibility for determining eligibility for clearances for servicemembers, DOD civilian employees, industry personnel performing work at DOD and 23 other federal agencies, and employees in the federal legislative branch. That responsibility includes obtaining background investigations, primarily through the Office of Personnel Management. DOD is responsible for adjudicating clearances for servicemembers, DOD civilian employees, and industry personnel.

¹⁷GAO, *High-Risk Series: An Update*, [GAO-07-310](#) (Washington, D.C.: January 2007), and *High-Risk Series: An Update*, [GAO-05-207](#) (Washington, D.C.: January 2005). The areas on our high-risk list receive their designation because they are major problems and operations that need urgent attention and transformation in order to ensure that our national government functions in the most economical, efficient, and effective manner possible.

of security clearances. The act states that, in the initial period that ends in 2009, authorized adjudicative agencies are to make a determination on at least 80 percent of all applications for a security clearance within an average of 120 days after the receipt of the application by an authorized investigative agency, with no longer than 90 days allotted for the investigation and 30 days allotted for the adjudication.¹⁸ We are currently reviewing DOD's progress in meeting these requirements across its personnel security clearance program.

While the number of clearances that may be required for new C4ISR employees is relatively small compared to the total number of clearances that DOD and the Office of Personnel Management process, the proportion of employees who need clearances within an organization at a given time could be significant. Irrespective of whether DOD can meet its timeliness goals for processing clearances, the time required to grant clearances could affect C4ISR employees' ability to fully perform their jobs, particularly considering the large number of employees who may require clearances. If the Army cannot obtain the necessary clearances in a timely manner, then employees may be unable to fully perform their jobs until they obtain clearances.

To help mitigate this risk, Army officials plan to seek interim secret security clearances for qualified personnel, as needed. Interim secret security clearances can be obtained much more quickly than secret security clearances because a full investigation is not required. By obtaining interim secret security clearances, employees could begin to perform work that requires such a clearance, limiting downtime for the employee and increasing the number of employees available to perform the required work. However, by granting an interim secret clearance, the Army assumes additional risk because the employee has not undergone a full background investigation. If the background investigation subsequently turns up disqualifying evidence, then the individual would be denied a permanent clearance after having had access to classified information. According to Army officials, nearly 25 percent of Fort Monmouth's C4ISR employees with a secret clearance currently have an interim secret clearance. Army officials also plan to expedite processing security clearances for the new C4ISR personnel by participating in an ongoing pilot program at Aberdeen Proving Ground. According to Army officials, the early results of the pilot program are promising in terms of expediting the time required to obtain a security clearance. It is too early to determine the effectiveness of these strategies; however, these mitigation strategies, if implemented as intended, should lessen the risks associated with security clearance challenges.

Issues related to obtaining security clearances in a timely manner are not unique to the transfer of C4ISR functions to Aberdeen Proving Ground. In May 2007, we reported that some Air National Guard officials expressed concerns that the lengthy process to obtain security clearances for about 3,000 individuals converting to new missions could delay when personnel were able to perform their missions.¹⁹

Army Faces Challenges in Completing Needed Facilities and Relocations and Has Begun to Identify and Implement Mitigation Strategies

The Army also faces challenges in completing the construction of some of the facilities at Aberdeen Proving Ground and completing the relocations before the end of the 6-year statutory implementation period, and officials have begun to identify and implement strategies to mitigate the risks associated with these challenges. DOD's December 2007

¹⁸Pub. L. No. 108-458.

¹⁹GAO, *Military Base Closures: Management Strategy Needed to Mitigate Challenges and Improve Communication to Help Ensure Timely Implementation of Air National Guard Recommendations*, [GAO-07-641](#) (Washington, D.C.: May 16, 2007).

report identified the need to have facilities available in sufficient time to allow for an orderly, phased move as a factor in its ability to successfully transfer the C4ISR functions to Aberdeen Proving Ground. Currently, the Army expects that facility construction for the first C4ISR buildings, which will accommodate the majority of C4ISR positions, will be completed in the fall of 2010 and construction for the rest of the C4ISR buildings will be completed in March 2011. This would allow about a year for organizations that are moving into the first set of buildings to relocate and about 5 months for organizations that are moving into the later facilities. During relocation, organizations will have to disassemble, relocate, reassemble, and calibrate equipment in the new facilities as well as transfer personnel to Aberdeen Proving Ground. However, delays in construction could place at risk the Army's ability to complete this relocation by September 15, 2011.

While the Army Corps of Engineers is responsible for managing facility construction, Fort Monmouth officials said that they are monitoring progress in this area because timely completion of facilities is critical to the successful transfer of the C4ISR mission. Fort Monmouth officials plan to mitigate risk in the facilities area by continuing to monitor construction progress and raise issues as necessary. Similarly, Army Corps of Engineers officials said that they are aware of the tight time frames to complete BRAC construction projects and plan to continue monitoring and working with officials from the Office of the Assistant Chief of Staff for Installation Management, the Army Materiel Command, Aberdeen Proving Ground, and Fort Monmouth to determine courses of action as issues arise. For example, Army officials originally planned to renovate some facilities occupied by the Ordnance Center and School at Aberdeen Proving Ground for some C4ISR employees. The Ordnance Center and School is scheduled to move to Fort Lee, Virginia, through another BRAC action; however, Army Corps of Engineers officials said that they would be unable to complete the new facilities at Fort Lee on time, which in turn would delay the renovation of the facilities for the incoming C4ISR employees. Army Corps of Engineers officials worked with officials from the Office of the Assistant Chief of Staff for Installation Management, Aberdeen Proving Ground, and Fort Monmouth to identify a solution. According to officials, the Army has decided to incur additional BRAC construction costs of about \$17 million and build a new facility for the C4ISR employees at Aberdeen Proving Ground, rather than take the risk that the facility renovations could not be completed in time for the C4ISR functions to relocate into the renovated facility. Army officials said that the buildings vacated by the Ordnance Center and School may be renovated and used by other Aberdeen Proving Ground tenants outside of the BRAC process.

Additionally, officials expect that the early transfer of about 1,400 positions—about 900 employees relocating from Fort Monmouth and about 500 hired at Aberdeen Proving Ground—and the necessary equipment to Aberdeen Proving Ground through the advance teams may ease the transition and mitigate potential mission-disruption risks. Moreover, officials expect that the relocation phasing approaches that each organization has developed—redundant capabilities, split-based operations, and outsourcing work to other locations—will be critical in mitigating mission-disruption risks, particularly for functions that will be located in the last facilities to be completed.

Infrastructure challenges are not unique to this BRAC recommendation. We have previously raised similar infrastructure challenges in implementing the 2005 BRAC recommendations. Specifically, in December 2007 we reported on challenges related to completing facilities in time to move people and equipment into the facilities and on recommendations being dependent on the completion of other recommendations.²⁰

²⁰GAO-08-159.

Army Faces Challenges in Funding Increasing Costs of the Transfer, but Has Begun to Identify and Implement Mitigation Strategies

The Army also faces challenges in funding the increasing costs to transfer C4ISR functions from Fort Monmouth to Aberdeen Proving Ground, and officials have begun to identify and implement mitigation strategies. In December 2007, we reported that the recommendation to close Fort Monmouth was one of the costliest recommendations from the 2005 BRAC round.²¹ Based on the Army's fiscal year 2009 budget estimates, the estimated onetime cost to implement the recommendation has increased to about \$1.6 billion, which is more than double the BRAC Commission's estimate in 2005.²²

Since the Army submitted its fiscal year 2009 BRAC budget request to Congress, officials identified additional costs for the transfer, largely for implementing the mitigation strategies identified in DOD's December 2007 report, including renovating facilities at Aberdeen Proving Ground for the advance team and obtaining redundant capabilities for some critical functions. According to Army officials, funding for these additional costs has been obtained or programmed outside of the BRAC account. For example, an Aberdeen Proving Ground official estimated that the Army spent about \$3.8 million, which includes about \$3.2 million in sustainment funding for the renovations and about \$600,000 in base operating support funding for information technology needs, to renovate facilities at Aberdeen Proving Ground to temporarily accommodate the advance team arriving there in fiscal year 2008. At the time of our review, Army officials had not yet determined which facilities at Aberdeen Proving Ground would be used to temporarily accommodate the advance team scheduled to arrive in 2009, which would likely require additional funding to renovate existing facilities or to lease temporary facilities off of the installation. Furthermore, the Army has programmed funding outside of the BRAC account to obtain redundant capabilities for some laboratories or functions that officials determined must remain operational throughout the transfer to Aberdeen Proving Ground, such as some of the equipment used by the Joint Satellite Communications Engineering Center. Army officials estimate that the cost of redundant capabilities will total about \$75 million, based on current plans.

Additionally, Army Corps of Engineers officials expect that construction costs for some of the C4ISR facilities, for which a construction contract has not yet been awarded, are likely to increase. The Army Corps of Engineers plans to award the contract for the second phase of construction projects for the C4ISR functions in early 2009. Army officials currently estimate that the second phase of projects will cost about \$325 million. According to Army Corps of Engineers officials, construction costs are likely to increase due to the increased cost of fuel, as well as the increased demand for construction workers, subcontractors, and supplies from the large number of military construction projects currently planned or under way in the region. However, these potential cost increases are not included in current construction estimates and Army Corps of Engineers officials said that they cannot fully estimate the cost of the second phase of facilities until the construction contract is awarded.

DOD's December 2007 report indicates that the Army's ability to successfully transfer the C4ISR functions from Fort Monmouth to Aberdeen Proving Ground is contingent upon receiving the funding necessary to implement the mitigation strategies identified in the report. As we have previously reported, the Army has many priorities—including other infrastructure requirements; force structure changes, such as increasing the end strength of the Army's active and reserve forces; and ongoing military missions—competing for limited funding. If the Army cannot fully fund the increasing costs associated with the transfer, to

²¹[GAO-08-159](#).

²²Cost projections include all actions in the recommendation and not only those actions to transfer the C4ISR functions from Fort Monmouth to Aberdeen Proving Ground.

include costs funded outside of the BRAC budget request, then there is an increased risk that the Army may be unable to complete the transfer without affecting ongoing support to its military missions.

To address this challenge, the Army has monitored and plans to continue monitoring the implementation of this BRAC recommendation. The Army established a senior oversight group at the headquarters level, made up of representatives from the key staff offices, including personnel and logistics; the Army Materiel Command; the Office of the Assistant Chief of Staff for Installation Management; and the Office of the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Acquisition, Logistics and Technology. The group met from February 2008 through May 2008 to determine whether and how to provide the authority and funding identified in DOD's December 2007 report. According to an Army official involved with the oversight group, the group determined which office would be responsible for handling policy and funding decisions related to the mitigation strategies identified in DOD's report. While the group does not currently plan to continue meeting, an official involved with the group said that the oversight group could meet if there were future issues that the group needed to address. In the meantime, officials said that the BRAC offices at Army Headquarters and Army Materiel Command, as well as DOD's BRAC office, plan to continue monitoring the cost increases and potential funding shortfalls for this recommendation, as the offices do for all BRAC recommendations with relevance to these organizations. For example, officials from DOD's BRAC office said that they review whether the implementation of the recommendation is fully funded as part of their program review, which occurs twice each year.

Cost increases are not unique to the transfer of C4ISR functions to Aberdeen Proving Ground. For example, in December 2007, we reported that the estimated onetime costs for about 20 percent of the 2005 BRAC recommendations had each increased by at least \$50 million, based on DOD's fiscal year 2008 budget documents.²³ We have also reported that the cost estimates for two supply-related recommendations, a recommendation to establish fleet readiness centers, and several reserve and National Guard component recommendations had increased over the BRAC Commission's estimates in 2005.²⁴ We are currently reviewing DOD's fiscal year 2009 BRAC budget request and plan to issue a report in early 2009, in accordance with the direction from the House Armed Services Committee to report annually on DOD's implementation of the 2005 BRAC recommendations,²⁵ that will discuss estimated implementation costs, among other issues.

DOD's Continued Oversight May Lessen Risks

In addition to the mitigation strategies discussed above, DOD plans to continue its ongoing oversight of the implementation of BRAC plans, which may lessen potential mission-disruption risks. This oversight is occurring at many levels within DOD, from the individual C4ISR organizations to DOD's BRAC office. Such oversight may allow officials to identify potential problems early and develop and implement solutions, which may lessen mission-disruption risks during the transfer. Plans in and of themselves cannot ensure a successful transition due to inherent uncertainties that may arise over time, the need to revise plans as circumstances change, and the need to effectively execute the plans. Therefore, it is critical that the Army continue to monitor the execution of its transfer plans and take corrective

²³[GAO-08-159](#).

²⁴GAO, *Military Base Realignment and Closures: Plan Needed to Monitor Challenges for Completing More Than 100 Armed Forces Reserve Centers*, [GAO-07-1040](#) (Washington, D.C.: Sept. 13, 2007); [GAO-08-315](#); [GAO-07-641](#); and [GAO-07-304](#).

²⁵H.R. Rep. No. 110-146, at 514 (2007).

actions to lessen the risk of operational disruptions. Because DOD has oversight mechanisms in place and intends to continue its monitoring efforts and revision of plans throughout implementation, we are not making recommendations at this time.

First, each C4ISR organization has established a BRAC unit within the organization to manage the development of detailed, organization-level plans; monitor the implementation of these plans; and revise plans as needed. For example, officials from some of the C4ISR organizations plan to monitor and review the results of the 2008 advance team's transition from Fort Monmouth to Aberdeen Proving Ground and revise plans for the 2009 advance team, as well as the transfer of remaining employees in 2010 and 2011, based on lessons learned.

Additionally, Fort Monmouth's BRAC relocation task force, made up of representatives from each of the C4ISR organizations and key staff offices, including personnel, logistics, and operations and plans, has been managing planning efforts across the C4ISR organizations and monitoring the implementation of these plans. The group has met regularly over the past year to discuss implementation issues and identify problems and potential solutions. The group has raised unresolved issues to higher levels, as needed, according to task force officials. Additionally, the group has developed numerous planning documents, including a schedule of the near-term tasks needed to complete the transfer with estimated starting and completion dates. Officials expect that the task force will be dissolved by the end of fiscal year 2008 and replaced with an implementation group, made up of representatives from key staff offices. The implementation group's role is to coordinate, integrate, and synchronize all efforts associated with the transfer. Representatives from the C4ISR organizations will provide assistance to the implementation group, as needed, according to Fort Monmouth officials.

Moreover, the BRAC offices at Aberdeen Proving Ground, Army Materiel Command, and Army headquarters are also monitoring the implementation of the BRAC recommendation, as they routinely monitor the implementation of all recommendations with relevance to their organizations. For example, an official in Aberdeen Proving Ground's BRAC office noted that the office is monitoring progress on construction projects for the C4ISR facilities, as well as all of the other construction on the installation, to ensure that the projects are completed on schedule. Additionally, as previously discussed, the Army established a headquarters-level senior oversight group.

Finally, as with the other BRAC offices, DOD's BRAC office is monitoring the implementation of this BRAC recommendation, as it routinely monitors the implementation of all of the BRAC recommendations. For example, to facilitate its oversight role, DOD's BRAC office required the military departments and defense agencies responsible for implementing BRAC recommendations to submit a detailed business plan for each recommendation and to update these plans twice each year. These business plans include detailed information, including a listing of all actions needed to implement the recommendation, schedules for personnel movements between installations, updated cost and savings estimates, and implementation completion time frames. DOD's BRAC office considers the business plans to be living documents that are updated throughout the implementation period. Officials from DOD's BRAC office said that they plan to continue reviewing the business plans as part of their comprehensive, centrally managed oversight of the BRAC program.

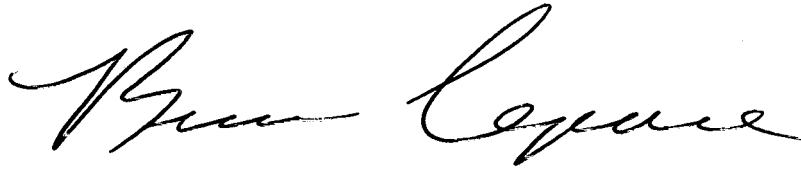
Agency Comments

In commenting on a draft of this report, the Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Installations and Environment stated that DOD agrees that the challenges of implementing the BRAC recommendation to close Fort Monmouth are not unique and that the department has strategies in place to mitigate these challenges. Nonetheless, as we stated in this report,

plans and mitigation strategies in and of themselves cannot ensure a successful transition due to inherent uncertainties that may arise over time, the need to revise plans as circumstances change, and the need to effectively execute the plans. DOD's written comments are reprinted in enclosure I. Additionally, DOD provided technical comments on a draft of this report, which we incorporated as appropriate.

We are sending copies of this report to other congressional committees and members, the Secretary of Defense, the Secretary of the Army, and the Director of the Office of Management and Budget. We will make copies available to others upon request. In addition, this report will be available at no charge on GAO's Web site at <http://www.gao.gov>.

If you or your staff have any questions concerning this report, please contact me at (202) 512-4523 or leporeb@gao.gov. Contact points for our Offices of Congressional Relations and Public Affairs may be found on the last page of this report. GAO staff who made contributions to this report are listed in enclosure II.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Brian Lepore". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Brian J. Lepore
Director
Defense Capabilities and Management

Enclosures – 2

Comments from the Department of Defense



ACQUISITION
TECHNOLOGY
AND LOGISTICS

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AUG 8 2008

Mr. Brian J. Lepore
Director, Defense Capabilities and Management
U.S. Government Accountability Office
441 G Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20548-0001

Dear Mr. Lepore,

This is the Department of Defense (DoD) response to the Government Accountability Office (GAO) draft report, GAO-08-1010R, "Military Base Realignment and Closures: Army Is Developing Plans to Transfer Functions from Fort Monmouth, New Jersey, to Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland, but Challenges Remain," dated August 4, 2008 (GAO Code 351127).

The Department fully agrees with the report's recognition that the challenges of implementing this recommendation are not unique and the Department has the necessary strategies in place to mitigate these challenges. The Department's success in implementing equally complex recommendations in the previous rounds and its actions to date in this round demonstrates its commitment to ensuring this recommendation will be implemented efficiently and effectively in order to expeditiously realize its benefits.

The Department appreciates the thorough review conducted by the GAO and the opportunity to comment on the draft report.

Sincerely,

Wayne Army
Deputy Under Secretary of Defense
(Installations and Environment)



Enclosure II

GAO Contact and Staff Acknowledgments

GAO Contact

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Acknowledgments

In addition to the individual named above, James R. Reifsnyder, Assistant Director; Michael Kennedy, Assistant Director (retired); Hilary Benedict; Rich Hung; Ron La Due Lake; Julie Matta; Stephanie Moriarty; Jay Smale; and Karen Werner made significant contributions to this report.

Related GAO Products

Military Base Realignment and Closures: Higher Costs and Lower Savings Projected for Implementing Two Key Supply-Related BRAC Recommendations. [GAO-08-315](#). Washington, D.C.: March 5, 2008.

Defense Infrastructure: Realignment of Air Force Special Operations Command Units to Cannon Air Force Base, New Mexico. [GAO-08-244R](#). Washington, D.C.: January 18, 2008.

Military Base Realignment and Closures: Estimated Costs Have Increased and Estimated Savings Have Decreased. [GAO-08-341T](#). Washington, D.C.: December 12, 2007.

Military Base Realignment and Closures: Cost Estimates Have Increased and Are Likely to Continue to Evolve. [GAO-08-159](#). Washington, D.C.: December 11, 2007.

Military Base Realignment and Closures: Impact of Terminating, Relocating, or Outsourcing the Services of the Armed Forces Institute of Pathology. [GAO-08-20](#). Washington, D.C.: November 9, 2007.

Military Base Realignment and Closures: Transfer of Supply, Storage, and Distribution Functions from Military Services to Defense Logistics Agency. [GAO-08-121R](#). Washington, D.C.: October 26, 2007.

Defense Infrastructure: Challenges Increase Risks for Providing Timely Infrastructure Support for Army Installations Expecting Substantial Personnel Growth. [GAO-07-1007](#). Washington, D.C.: September 13, 2007.

Military Base Realignment and Closures: Plan Needed to Monitor Challenges for Completing More Than 100 Armed Forces Reserve Centers. [GAO-07-1040](#). Washington, D.C.: September 13, 2007.

Military Base Realignment and Closures: Observations Related to the 2005 Round. [GAO-07-1203R](#). Washington, D.C.: September 6, 2007.

Military Base Closures: Projected Savings from Fleet Readiness Centers Are Likely Overstated and Actions Needed to Track Actual Savings and Overcome Certain Challenges. [GAO-07-304](#). Washington, D.C.: June 29, 2007.

Military Base Closures: Management Strategy Needed to Mitigate Challenges and Improve Communication to Help Ensure Timely Implementation of Air National Guard Recommendations. [GAO-07-641](#). Washington, D.C.: May 16, 2007.

Military Base Closures: Opportunities Exist to Improve Environmental Cleanup Cost Reporting and to Expedite Transfer of Unneeded Property. [GAO-07-166](#). Washington, D.C.: January 30, 2007.

Military Bases: Observations on DOD's 2005 Base Realignment and Closure Selection Process and Recommendations. [GAO-05-905](#). Washington, D.C.: July 18, 2005.

Military Bases: Analysis of DOD's 2005 Selection Process and Recommendations for Base Closures and Realignments. [GAO-05-785](#). Washington, D.C.: July 1, 2005.

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