



Highlights of [GAO-08-1005](#), a report to congressional committees

Why GAO Did This Study

The Department of Defense (DOD) continues its efforts to reduce the number of troops permanently stationed overseas and consolidate overseas bases. The Senate and conference reports accompanying the fiscal year 2004 military construction appropriation bill directed DOD to develop and GAO to monitor DOD's overseas master plans and to provide annual assessments. The Senate report accompanying the fiscal year 2007 military construction appropriation bill directed GAO to review DOD's master planning effort for Guam as part of these annual reviews. This report examines (1) the changes and challenges described in the fiscal year 2009 master plans, the extent the plans address GAO's prior recommendations, and the plans' timeliness and (2) the status of DOD's master planning efforts for the proposed buildup of military forces and infrastructure on Guam. GAO reviewed the plans and other relevant documents, and visited three overseas combatant commands, various installations, and Guam organizations.

What GAO Recommends

GAO recommends that DOD (1) develop the global defense posture reports earlier each year to coincide with the budget submissions and (2) provide Congress annual updates of the Guam working-level plan until a comprehensive master plan is finalized and provided to Congress. DOD agreed with the second recommendation and partially agreed with the first, which was clarified in response to comments.

To view the full product, including the scope and methodology, click on [GAO-08-1005](#). For more information, contact Brian J. Lepore at (202) 512-4523 or leporeb@gao.gov.

DEFENSE INFRASTRUCTURE

Opportunity to Improve the Timeliness of Future Overseas Planning Reports and Factors Affecting the Master Planning Effort for the Military Buildup on Guam

What GAO Found

While the fiscal year 2009 master plans generally reflect recent changes in U.S. overseas basing strategies and the challenges DOD faces as well as address GAO's prior recommendations, DOD provided Congress the plans in May 2008, well after the February budget submission when the Senate and conference reports require DOD to issue the plans. This year's plans contain information on current overseas basing strategies and infrastructure requirements and the challenges that DOD faces implementing the plans. The plans also generally address GAO's recommendations except that the U.S. Pacific Command plan does not provide an update of the Air Force's training challenges in South Korea, despite GAO's prior recommendation that it should describe the challenges and their potential effects on infrastructure and funding requirements. DOD officials said that since last year the South Korean government and the U.S. Air Force have taken several steps to address these training challenges. According to DOD officials, efforts to incorporate last-minute changes in basing plans and projects and the lengthy review and approval process have contributed to the fiscal year 2009 plans' lateness. While the congressional requirement for the overseas master plans expired with the fiscal year 2009 plans, DOD said that it intends to provide Congress annual updates of its global defense posture through 2014 and that these updates would replace the master plans as DOD's overseas planning report to Congress. Since DOD will continue to provide annually updated global defense posture reports, it has an opportunity to reexamine its timeline for producing future reports earlier to provide Congress with time for review.

DOD has developed a basic framework for the military buildup on Guam but has not issued the congressionally required master plan that was initially due in December 2006, and which Congress later extended to September 2008. The Joint Guam Program Office, which is planning and managing the proposed military buildup, is coordinating the multi-service development of a working-level plan for DOD that is to be submitted to Congress by the 2008 deadline. However, this is a onetime requirement, and DOD officials said that the plan will be a snapshot of the status of the planning process and will not be considered a comprehensive master plan for several reasons. First, while the required environmental impact statement and the resulting record of decision will influence many key decisions about the buildup of military forces and infrastructure on Guam, these documents are not expected to be completed until January 2010. Also, officials of the Joint Guam Program Office said that they expect to complete a comprehensive master plan within 90 days after these required documents are finalized. Second, plans for the detailed force composition of units relocating to Guam, associated facility requirements, and implications for other services' realignments on Guam continue to be refined. Third, additional time is needed to fully address the challenges related to funding uncertainties, operational requirements, and Guam's economic and infrastructure requirements. However, without a comprehensive master plan, Congress may have limited data on requirements on which to make informed appropriation decisions and to carry out its oversight responsibilities.