

Military base realignments and closures (BRAC)

An overview of the past five BRAC rounds and potential future actions

March 6, 2018

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Overview & purpose of Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC)

What is BRAC?



BRAC is the congressionally authorized process DoD has used to reorganize its base structure to more efficiently and effectively support US forces, increase operational readiness and facilitate new ways of doing business



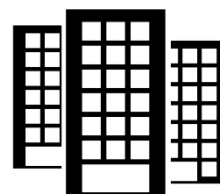
The purpose of BRAC is to provide a fair process that will result in the timely closure and realignment of military installations inside the United States. The process was set up to better address the US military needs after the Cold War



Senior DOD officials have stated that DOD continues to have excess infrastructure and that additional BRAC rounds may be needed to make further reductions and achieve cost savings

Issues with additional BRAC rounds

Reducing unneeded infrastructure has been difficult for the Department of Defense for many reasons:



**number and variation
of facilities**



**concern of
economic effects**

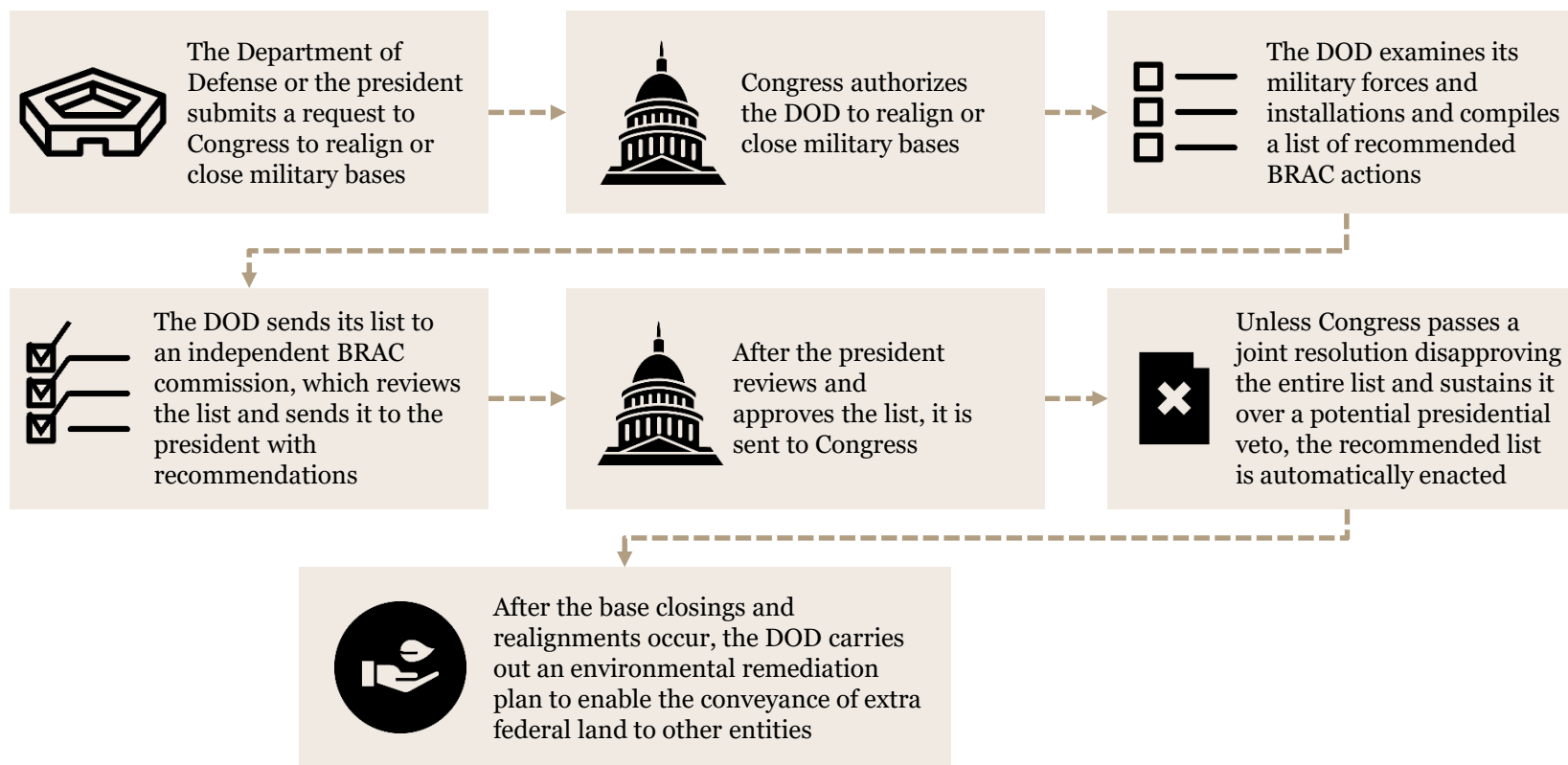


**perceived lack of
impartiality in
decision-making**



**legal
requirements**

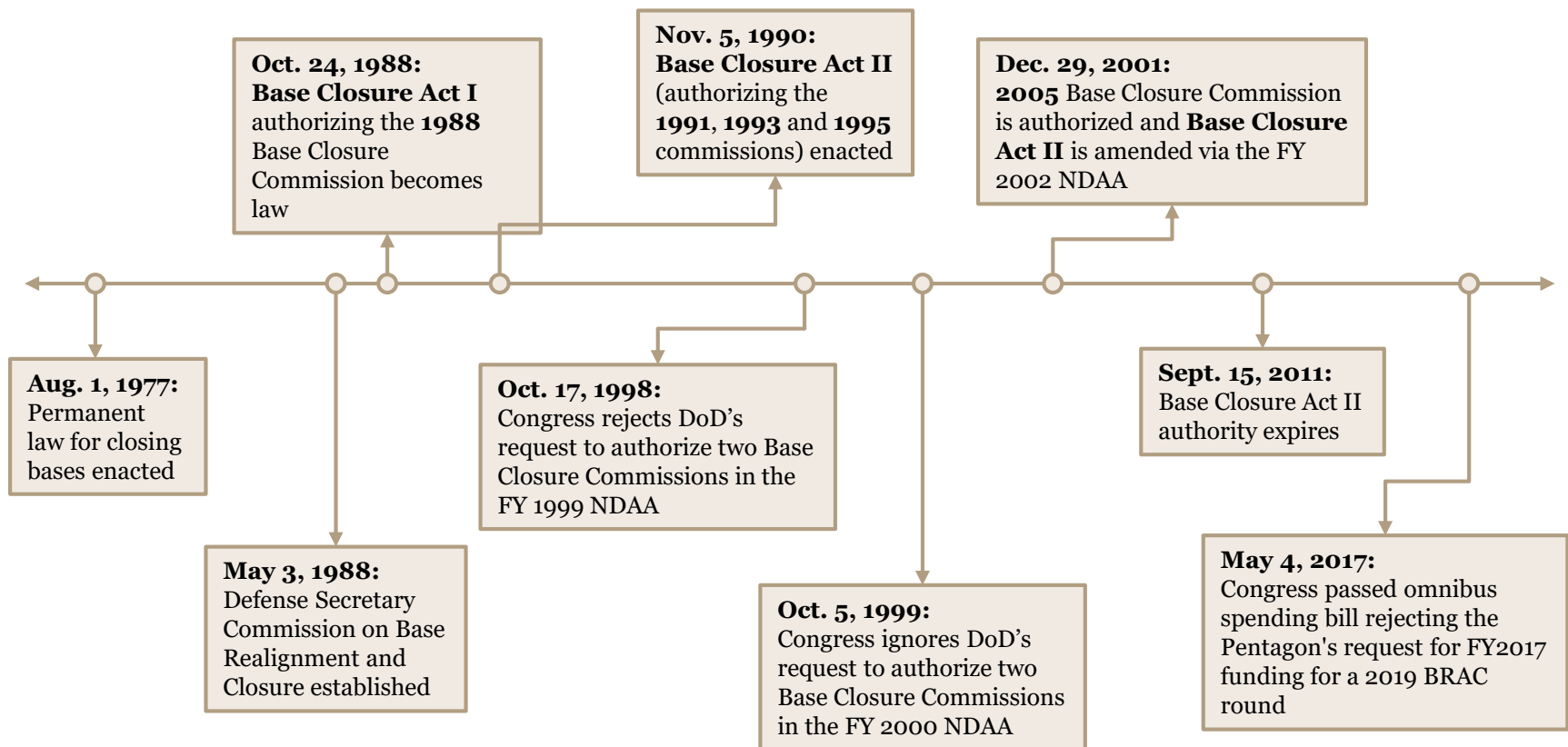
Step by step process required to initiate a BRAC round



Sources: Tadlock Cowan, "Military base closures: socioeconomic impacts," Congressional Research Service, February 7, 2012.

The complex process of closing bases is often marked by power struggles between the legislative and executive branches

Major events in the evolution of BRAC



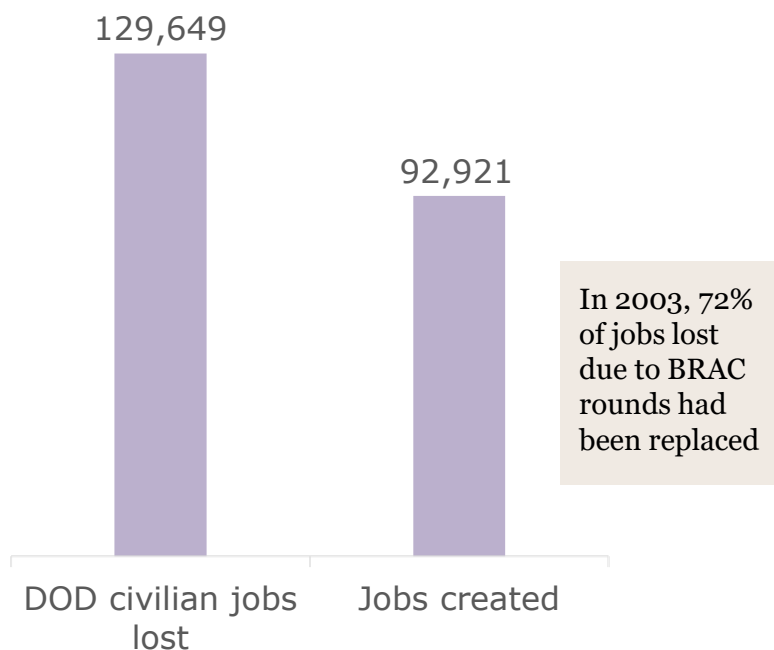
Sources: George Schlossberg, "How Congress cleared the bases: a legislative history of BRAC," Journal of Defense Communities, 2012.

Most communities affected by the first four BRAC rounds recovered or are recovering from its economic impact

Economic recovery progress report

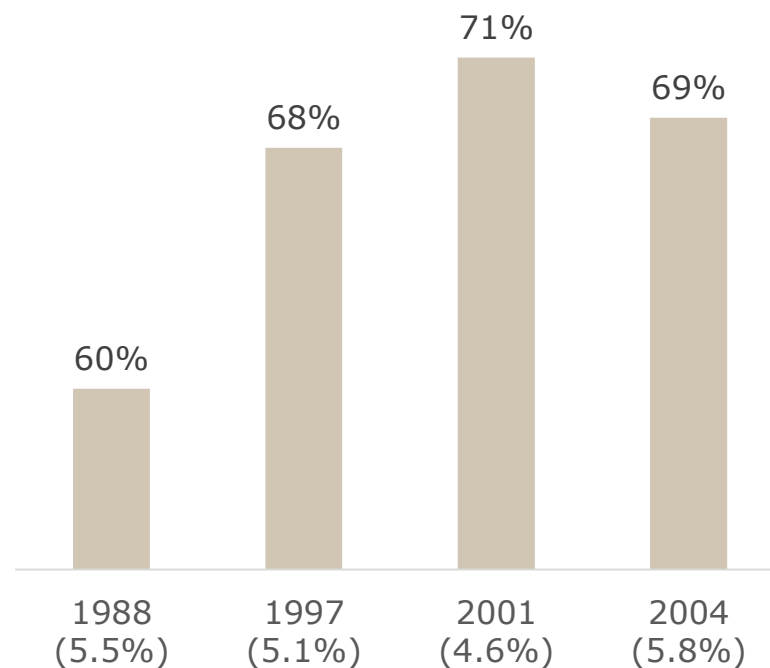
Number of local jobs recovered in BRAC-affected communities

AS OF OCTOBER 31, 2003



Number of BRAC-affected communities at or below the average national unemployment rate

YEAR (NATIONAL RATE)

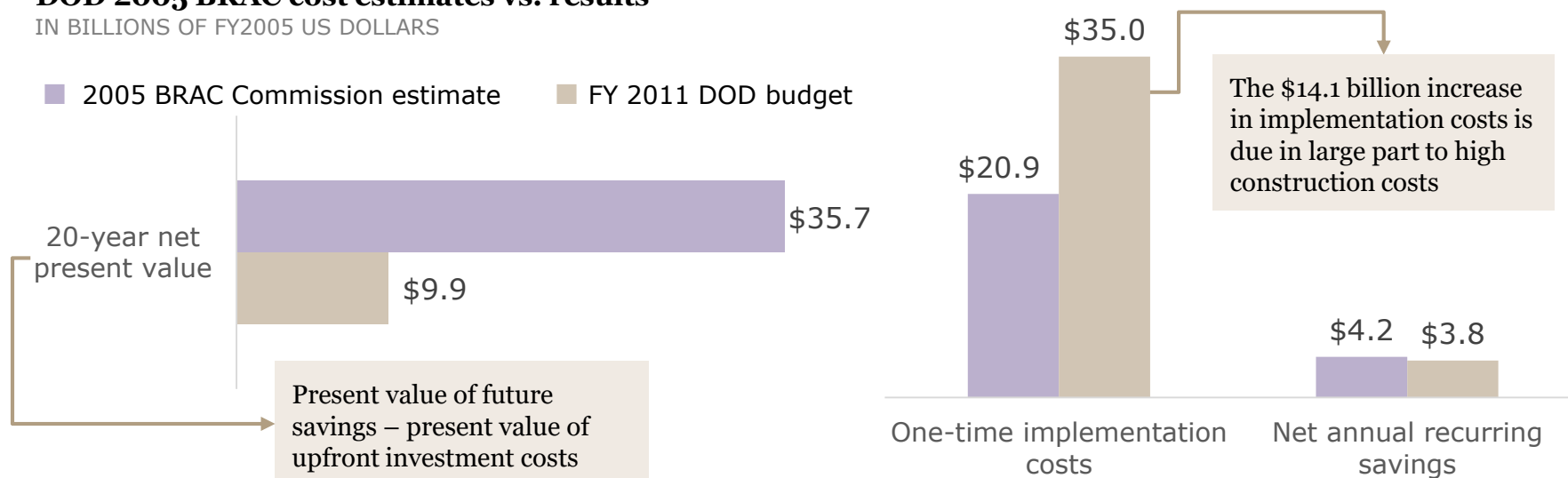


Sources: US Government Accountability Office, "Military base closures: updated status of prior base realignments and closures," January 2005.

Reluctance in Congress to approve another BRAC round stems in part from negative perceptions of the 2005 BRAC process

DOD 2005 BRAC cost estimates vs. results

IN BILLIONS OF FY2005 US DOLLARS



Background

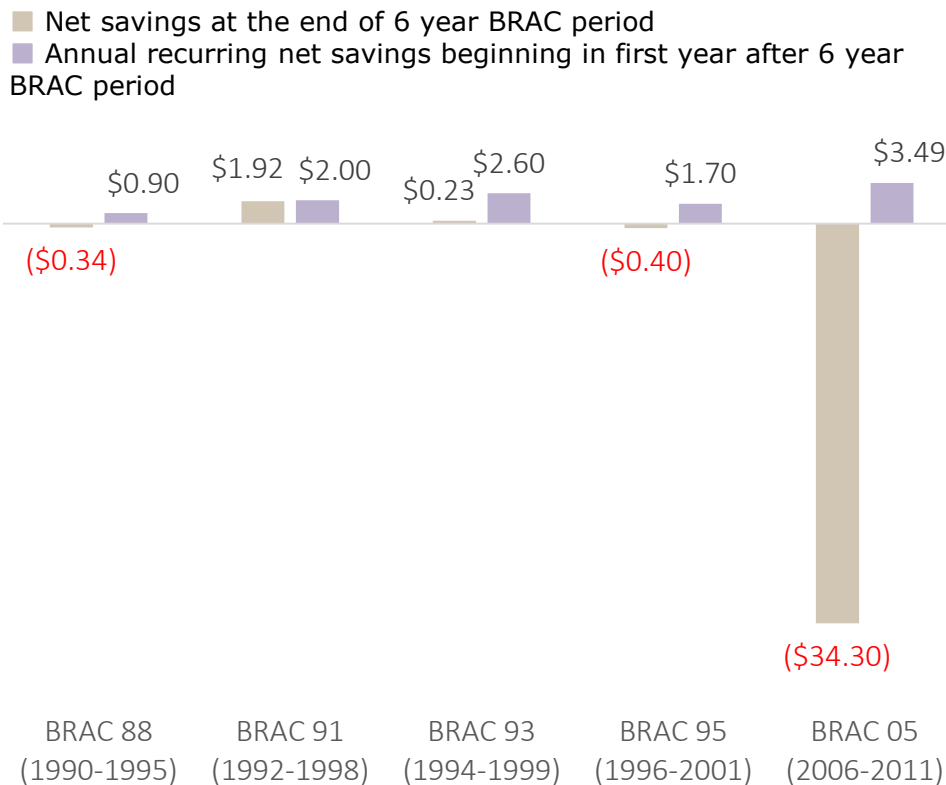
- BRAC 2005 was the fifth round of base closures and realignments undertaken by the Pentagon since 1988, and it was the biggest, most complex BRAC round to date as it focused more on realignments than outright closures
- The process dramatically exceeded original cost estimates and is widely considered to have been mishandled
- Construction cost \$24.5 billion according to the DoD FY2011 budget, while construction for all four previous BRAC rounds cost \$7 billion
- During the BRAC 2005 round, DOD implemented hundreds of BRAC actions that affected more than 800 defense locations in the United States

Sources: Jim Garamone, "Pentagon official says DOD needs more BRAC," DOD.gov, Nov. 22, 2013; Rebecca Kheel, "Pentagon says 22% of military bases will be excess by 2019," The Hill, April 15, 2016; U.S. Government Accountability Office, "Military base realignments and closures, updated costs and savings estimates from BRAC 2005," June 29, 2012.

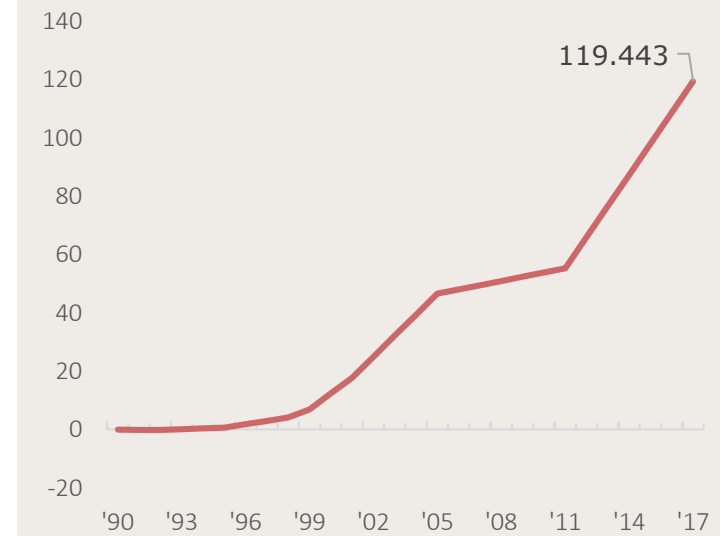
The combined savings from the past five BRACs has saved the Pentagon around \$120 billion

Costs and savings from BRAC

IN BILLIONS OF US DOLLARS



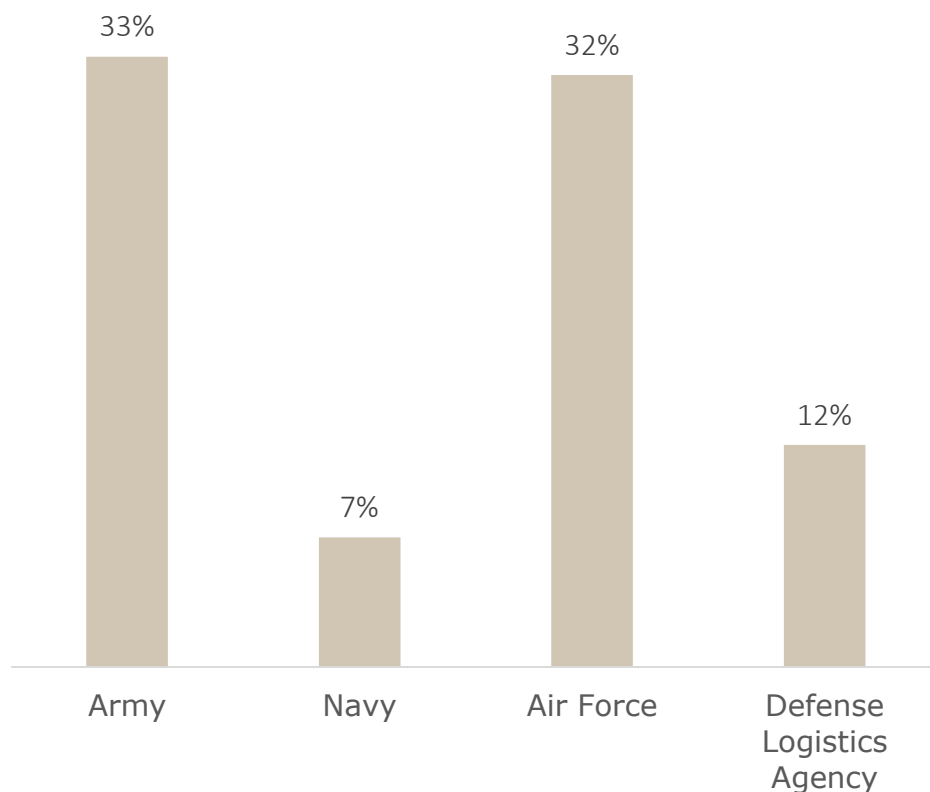
Compounded annual BRAC savings



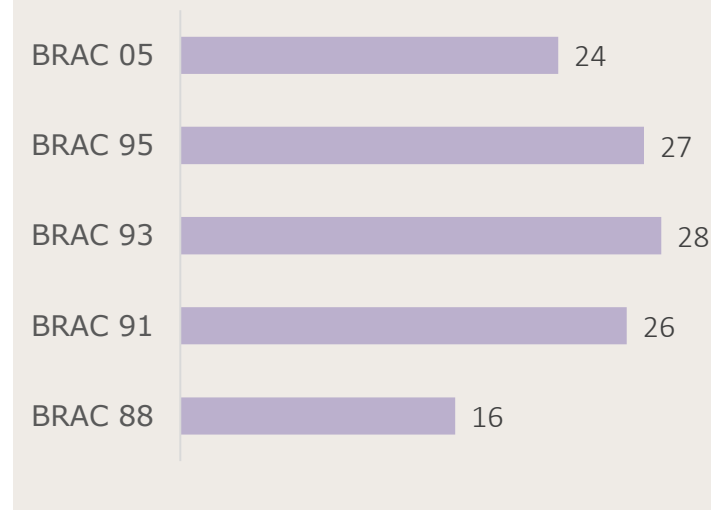
Sources: "DOD base realignment and closure: executive summary, fiscal year 2017 budget estimates," Department of Defense, February 2016; "Comparing BRAC Rounds," Department of Defense, October, 2005.

The DOD estimates that by 2019, 22% of bases will be excess

Excess infrastructure broken down by service for 2019



Number of major base closures per BRAC



Sources: Jim Garamone, "Pentagon official says DOD needs more BRAC," DOD.gov, Nov. 22, 2013; Rebecca Kheel, "Pentagon says 22% of military bases will be excess by 2019," The Hill, April 15, 2016; U.S. Government Accountability Office, "Military base realignments and closures, updated costs and savings estimates from BRAC 2005," June 29, 2012.

President Trump's FY2018 budget requests authorization for a new BRAC round beginning in 2021

The path to a sixth BRAC round



DOD has not conducted a BRAC round since 2005, but has requested BRAC authority every year from 2013 to 2018. The most recent BRAC round requested would have begun in FY2021. The request was rejected by Congress



According to the Pentagon, another BRAC round would close down 5% of the estimated 22% excess infrastructure and save an estimated \$2 billion or more annually by 2027



The Pentagon has started to use language surrounding the BRAC round that suggests the process would prioritize reducing excess in addition to adapting to the changing force structure. There was no BRAC requested in the President's FY2019 budget

"We believe there are, ultimately, billions out there we could save annually, but just as compelling is the ability to make our forces more lethal by where they train, how they train, where they are co-located... It's all about location, location, location."

— **Lucian Niemeyer**, assistant secretary of defense for energy, installations and environment

Sources: Office of Management and Budget, "A new foundation for American greatness," May 23, 2017; Leo Shane III, "McCain blasts congressional 'cowardice' in avoiding base closings," Military Times, January 24, 2017; Aaron Mehta and Joe Gould, "The new BRAC strategy: capability over cost savings," Defense News, December 14, 2017; Office of the Undersecretary of Defense Comptroller "Defense Budget Overview," Department of Defense, May 12, 2017

Congress rejects amendment from House and Senate Armed Services Committees to authorize 2021 BRAC round

Supporters



Sen. John McCain
(R-AZ)



Sen. Jack Reed
(D-RI)



Rep. Adam Smith
(D-WA)



Rep. Tom McClintock
(R-CA)

- Rep. Adam Smith usually offers an amendment each year to include a BRAC round in the NDAA. In January 2017, he introduced a bill that would allow the Pentagon to close bases beginning in 2019
- Rep. McClintock introduced an amendment to the NDAA to strike language prohibiting another round of BRAC, but this measure failed to pass 175-248
- Sens. McCain and Reed also introduced an amendment to authorize a BRAC round but Senators on both sides opposed the bill

Opposition



Sen. Jim Inhofe
(R-OK)



Rep. Mac Thornberry
(R-TX)



Rep. Austin Scott
(R-TX)

- Sen. Inhofe spoke in opposition to reauthorizing another round of BRAC citing cost in 2005
- Rep. Thornberry argued that if senior commanders testified the current military force was inadequate in size to confront threats, as they had, an additional BRAC round would not aid in increasing force readiness
- Rep. Scott similarly claimed a BRAC round would be fiscally irresponsible when the military was in the process of assessing their current capacity

Sources: National Journal Research, 2018; Sarah Anderson, "Congress Should Cut Defense Costs with BRAC Round Six," Freedom Works, February 8 2018. "ICYMI: Inhofe speaks on NDAA and BRAC," Inofe.senate.gov, September 15, 2017; Charles S. Clark, "Is Momentum Building for Another Round of BRAC?" Government Executive, June 20, 2017; "ICYMI: Rep. Austin Scott Fights Against BRAC in FY18 NDAA," austinscott.house.gov, July 13, 2017;