



Commission on Review of Overseas Military Facility Structure of the United States

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Revised September 1, 2004

FOR MORE INFORMATION:
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OVERSEAS BASING COMMISSION TO HEAR FROM FORMER MILITARY LEADERS, POLICY ANALYSTS, FAMILY AND EDUCATIONAL EXPERTS

WASHINGTON, D.C., September 1, 2004 -- The Commission on the Review of Overseas Military Facility Structure of the United States (Overseas Basing Commission) will hear testimony from former military leaders, representatives of defense think tanks and experts on military family issues at a hearing to be held beginning at **9:30 AM, Thursday, September 2, 2004, in room 138, Dirksen Senate Office Building, 1st and C Streets, N.W., Washington, D.C.**

It is the second meeting held by the Commission, which was established by Public Law 108-132 to provide Congress and the President with a thorough study and review of matters relating to U.S. military facility structure overseas. The law requires the Commission's report to include a proposal for an overseas basing strategy to meet current and future Department of Defense (DoD) missions.

The Commission's task is to assess independently whether the current overseas basing structure is adequate to execute current missions, and to assess the feasibility of closures, realignments, or establishment of new installations overseas to meet emerging defense requirements. The Commission's work is not intended to preclude the Department of Defense's efforts toward developing an integrated global presence and basing strategy. Rather, the Commission report will serve as another data point to assist the Congressional Committees in performing their oversight responsibilities for the DoD's basing strategy, future military construction appropriations, and the 2005 Base Realignment and Closure Commission determinations.

On Thursday September 2, 2004, the Commission will take testimony from three expert panels former Military Experts, Washington Think Tanks, and Family and Educational Experts:

The meeting will begin at 9:30 AM with a panel of distinguished former military experts:

Admiral Donald L. Pilling U.S. Navy (Retired) former Vice Chief of Naval Operations, Commander, U.S. Sixth Fleet and Commander, Naval Striking & Support Forces Southern Europe and member of National Security Council staff.

General Michael J. Williams U.S. Marine Corps (Retired) former Assistant Commandant of the Marine Corps, Vice Director for Operational Plans and Interoperability, Joint Staff, Commander Marine Corps systems command and deputy chief of staff for programs and resources.

Major General George Harmeyer, U.S. Army (Retired) former Commanded the 7th Army Training Command in Grafenwoehr, Germany and served as Commander, Operations Group at the National Training Center, Ft. Irwin, CA; Commanding General of the U.S. Army Armor Center and Fort Knox, KY

They will be followed by a panel of three noted analysts and authors from some of Washington's most respected "Think Tanks" -- Center for American Progress, The Brookings Institute, and The Heritage Foundation

Center for American Progress -- Hon Lawrence Korb, Senior Fellow for Center for American Progress, Senior Advisor to Center for Defense Information, and former Assistant Secretary of Defense for Manpower, Reserve Affairs, Installations & Logistics.

Brookings Institute -- Michael E. O'Hanlon, Senior Fellow, Foreign Policy Studies

Heritage Foundation -- Jack Spencer, Senior Policy Analyst for Defense & National Security

The final panel will highlight family issues and educational impacts and includes:

Ms. Joyce Wessel Raezer, Director of Government Relations, National Military Family Association

Dr. Mary Keller, Executive Director, Military Child Education Coalition

The OSBC has been active since May 2004. In addition to standing up a commission, commissioners have received briefings from the Department of Defense, the Congressional Budget Office, Congressional Research Service, and other entities. The commissioners have just returned from their first trip abroad where they met with commanders and received extensive briefings on the transformation plan for the European Command.

They visited military installations in several countries, meeting with U.S. Forces, embassy representatives, foreign military officers, and local officials. The trip concluded with a meeting with General James Jones, Supreme Allied Commander, Europe and the European Combatant Commander. Additional trips are planned for this fall to three other regions of the world where American troops are stationed.

At its first meeting, held July 14, 2004, the commission heard a presentation from the Congressional Budget Office regarding Army Overseas Basing options.

The members of the Overseas Basing Commission are:

- Chairman; Al Cornella, a South Dakota businessman who also served on the 1995 Base Closure and Realignment Commission (BRAC). (Appointed by Senator Thomas Daschle)
- Vice-Chairman; Major General Lewis E. Curtis III (U.S. Air Force, Retired), Texas, (Appointed by Senator Bill Frist)
- Lieutenant General H.G. (Pete) Taylor, (U.S. Army, Retired), Texas, (Appointed by Representative Nancy Pelosi)
- Brigadier General Keith Martin, (PA Army National Guard, Retired) Director of Homeland Security, State of Pennsylvania (Appointed by Representative Nancy Pelosi)

James Thomson, California, President and CEO, RAND Corporation. (Appointed by Senator Thomas Daschle)

“The Commission will provide Congress and the President with an independent and objective analysis of the overseas basing structure of the United States,” said Chairman Cornella. “Its work is not intended to interfere with what is being proposed by the Department of Defense, but to provide Congress with requested information that may be used to help make critical decisions affecting our national defense.”