

**SJR**

**22**

MEMBER

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ALASKA STATE SENATE



SENATOR TIM KELLY

STATE CAPITOL  
JUNEAU, ALASKA 99801-1182  
(907) 465-3822  
FAX (907) 465-3756  
1-800-770-3822  
(JANUARY - MAY)  
INTERNET: <http://www.state.ak.us/>

716 WEST 4TH, SUITE 400  
ANCHORAGE, ALASKA 99501  
(907) 258-8180  
FAX (907) 258-4524

SPONSOR SUMMARY

**SJR 22 - Urging Alaska For Military Training**

Senate Joint Resolution 22 would encourage the U.S. Department of Defense to make maximum use of Alaska's considerable base facilities and training areas for future strategies, as the the department undertakes its periodic review of all national military resources.

Under budgetary and force-reduction pressures, the Department of Defense, through its Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR), will analyze virtually all of it activities, resources, plans, and strategies to determine where it may make adjustments in its operations. Additional base closures system-wide are possible as the QDR is initiated.

SJR 22 would invite the department to consider Alaska's vast military-related resources, favorable civilian-military relations, and strategic global location as it pursues the review.

If there are questions, please contact Tim Benintendi at 3770.

# Army Officials Fret QDR May Force Base Closures

By GEORGE I. SEFFERS  
Defense News Staff Writer

WASHINGTON — A Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) focused on budget cutting rather than strategy could result in the closing of major U.S. Army bases, such as Fort Carson, Colo., Fort Polk, La., or Fort Drum, N.Y., Army sources and independent analysts warn.

As the QDR, a congressionally mandated Department of Defense study of force structure and strategy, progresses, Army

## Say Focus Favors Budget Cuts Over Strategy

sources, White said.

Statements like those are making Army officials nervous.

"If the Army had to do another base closure and realignment, the Army may have to go after some major posts like Fort Carson or Fort Riley [Kan.] or Fort Stewart [Ga.] or Fort Drum," an Army source said March 3.

Army sources warn the service could save little through cutting smaller, less politically volatile bases because most were axed during earlier rounds of closures. The only major savings, they said, would have to come from closing larger bases with strong political support.

Area analysts agree major bases almost certainly would go.

"I would say that's very likely," David Stelgman, senior analyst for government, defense and aerospace agencies at Fairfax, Va.-based consulting firm Teal Group, said March 6. Stelgman said Fort Carson and Fort Polk are the most likely candidates because they recently had major units reassigned to other posts.

Fort Carson in 1996 lost the 4th Infantry Division (Mechanized), leaving only the 10th Special Forces Group. Fort Polk lost the 2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment to Fort Hood, Texas, in 1993, leaving only the 108th Air Defense Artillery Brigade and supporting units.

"Fort Carson is sticking out like a sore thumb, and Fort Polk also looks like a likely candidate to be closed," Stelgman said.

The perceived emphasis on budget cut-

ting in the QDR is a disappointment to Army officials who once saw it as the service's savior. With the review focused on strategy, service officials predicted the Army, which has been sending more troops on overseas deployments than the other services, would get a larger portion of the budget.

"Unfortunately, there are some in the Office of the Secretary of Defense who believe that their tasking is to cut the defense budget in concert with the strategy. And if there's something in the strategy you cannot afford, you keep whittling at the strategy until you get it down to whatever the appropriate level is," the Army source said.

Of major concern to Army officials is that base closures and force structure cuts would hamper readiness and cost lives in times of conflict. Officials also warn, however, that cutting bases now could drive up costs in the future.

A decision by the president to pull one of the three overseas Army divisions back to the United States, for example, would be very costly if major bases have been closed.

"If you're going to keep that division and you've already given away the space where that division could come back to, now you're in a bind. Now you have to rebuild a division's worth of infrastructure that you got rid of just a few years before," the Army source said.

The Army is hampered in budget-cutting efforts by having a smaller budget than the

other services and a smaller portion of its budget in discretionary funds.

The Army receives 24 percent of the overall Defense Department budget, the Air Force and Navy 29 percent and 30 percent respectively.

The Army also invests 79 percent of its budget in nondiscretionary areas such as pay and operations and management. That leaves only 21 percent subject to major cost-cutting initiatives unless force structure is cut.

Army officials insist the service must

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U.S. Army source

keep force strength at 496,000 to meet the Pentagon's two major regional conflict requirement, which calls for the military to be capable of fighting two nearly simultaneous wars in two regions.

The Army has protected force strength so fiercely it has been accused by critics of virtually ignoring the need to purchase more modern weapons. Lt. Gen. Jay Garner, Army assistant vice chief of staff, repeated March 3 the service's commitment to preserving force strength.

"We really think we are at rock bottom now," he said.



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officials said it has become more an exercise in cost cutting than in strategy review, meaning force structure may be cut and bases closed.

The possibility of further rounds of base closings is being mentioned more often in discussions of the study and what its effects might be, they said.

John White, deputy secretary of defense, admitted the possibility Feb. 24 before an Association of the U.S. Army audience here.

"We are looking at whether or not we must propose another round of base clo-