

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, we have received now a letter from the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff representing all of the chiefs urging the Senate to continue their unequivocalness to continue the 2005 round of base realignment and closures as authorized by Congress. They are pleading with us not to leave this issue unresolved because the savings which are essential for the transformation of our military are savings they want to achieve. They are working very hard on the transformation of our military. They clearly intend there be a global posture review, and there will be a global posture review, taking into account the closing of bases overseas.

There is a commission that must be created this year and is required to report to us on the review of the overseas military facility structure. This is referred to in the amendment. As I understand it, they have not yet been appointed, but it is required that the leadership appoint that commission, and it is required, obviously, that the Secretary of Defense and Department of Defense next year, in making their recommendations, take into account the very report this amendment says should be taken into account.

So we have a global posture review which is underway. It will be completed. We have a commission to review overseas military facilities. That is all in place. It is all ongoing. It is all in order. There is a logic to it all in terms of looking at the overseas bases first.

I could not agree more with the Senator from Mississippi and the Senator from North Dakota. Of course, you will look at overseas bases first. That is what is going on now. That is the global posture review. That is the commission on the review of the overseas military facility structure which is in the process of being appointed and will report this year.

But to disrupt all that and to leave every base in the United States in limbo for another 2 years is not doing a favor either to our military structure or to the bases around our country. We all have bases. Are we going to leave them nervous? Are we going to leave them in limbo for 2 more years? That is not doing them a favor and it is doing a significant disfavor to our military posture and the requirement that we transform, as the chief said, the combat capability of the Department of Defense.

I hope this amendment would be rejected.

Mr. WARNER. I simply add that right in this letter, and I ask unanimous consent this letter be printed in the RECORD at this point, a comprehensive overseas basing review is nearly complete. It is significant.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

CHAIRMAN OF THE
JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF,
Washington, DC, May 18, 2004.

Hon. JOHN WARNER,
Chairman, Committee on Armed Services,
U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: We are writing this letter to emphasize our continued and unequivocal support for conducting a 2005 round of base realignment and closure (BRAC), as authorized by the Congress. The convergence of ongoing strategy and overseas basing actions, the transformational direction in all the Services and force structure changes together afford us a once-in-a-generation opportunity to truly transform the Department's combat capability in an enduring way. A delay of this BRAC round, or a modification of the legislation that limits the Department's flexibility to execute it, will seriously undermine our ability to fundamentally reconfigure our infrastructure to best support the transformation of our forces to meet the security challenges we face now and will continue to face for the foreseeable future.

A comprehensive overseas basing review is nearly complete. The continued concentration of forces in Cold War locations highlights the need for a global repositioning to locations that best support our strategic goals. In order to ensure that the Department examines its entire infrastructure, the rationalization of our domestic infrastructure as conducted by the BRAC process must closely follow the Global Posture Review. Both efforts are necessary for a genuine capabilities-based infrastructure rationalization and to further transformation of our warfighting capabilities.

We ask for your careful consideration of the importance we place on conducting a 2005 BRAC round as currently authorized. BRAC has proven to be the only comprehensive, fair, and effective process for accomplishing this imperative. We assure you that the Department will conduct BRAC 2005 in a way that ensures it maintains force structure and infrastructure that is flexible enough to surge and respond to changing threats to our national security.

PETER PACE,
General, USMC, Vice
Chairman of the
Joint Chiefs of Staff.

RICHARD B. MYERS,
Chairman of the Joint
Chiefs of Staff.

PETER J. SCHOOMAKER,
General, U.S. Army,
Chief of Staff, U.S.
Army.

VERN CLARK,
Admiral, U.S. Navy,
Chief of Naval Operations.

JOHN P. JUMPER,
General, USAF, Chief
of Staff, U.S. Air
Force.

MICHAEL W. HAGEE,
General, U.S. Marine
Corps, Commandant
of the Marine Corps.

Mr. WARNER. I yield the floor.
Mr. DORGAN. How much time remains?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There is 1½ minutes.

Mr. DORGAN. I will respond, of course.

I must point out, to proceed as current law anticipates, we should anticipate it will cost us money in the short term. We are struggling around here to find money but we will actually expend

more money in the short term with respect to the 2005 BRAC round, and we do not propose we obliterate this entire process.

What we propose is to establish an order that makes sense. The order that would make sense would be to evaluate where we would house overseas troops, given the new realities of the world, and then from that understand what our domestic needs are. That seems to me to be the logical and right approach. I don't think it poses any additional risk for anyone.

The current 20-year plan, the unclassified portion of the 20-year forecast for the threat and for basing, apparently assumes the same size force as we now have and apparently assumes the same forces that are based overseas, which largely remain based overseas. I don't think that is likely to be the case.

We are proposing a structure which would put the horse in front of the cart. That is the amendment we have offered.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Utah.

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I be given 5 minutes, not on this subject.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. LEVIN. No objection.

Mr. WARNER. First, Mr. President, I yield back all time on our side. I believe that completes the debate, at this point, on this side.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. SNOWE). All time has expired.

Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. HATCH. Madam President, I thank my dear colleagues for allowing me this time. I apologize for taking a little extra time today, but I think it is important.

(The remarks of Mr. HATCH are printed in today's RECORD under "Executive Session.")

Mr. HATCH. Madam President, I appreciate your patience and I appreciate this extra time. I yield the floor.

RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate stands in recess until 2:15 p.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 12:46 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. VOINOVICH).

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nevada.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The majority leader.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, earlier today Senator DASCHLE and I had a