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Congress/DoD

One Deficit Reduction Plan Would Make a Large Dent in DOD Budget

The Defense Department would absorb $1 trillion in spending cuts over the next decade under the deficit reduction plan introduced last week by Sen. Tom Coburn (R-Okla.).

Coburn’s 614-page plan -- which would trim the federal deficit by $9 trillion and balance the budget -- has not gained traction among the leadership of either party, but it provides a useful benchmark for measuring prospective defense cuts.

The senator believes that $34 billion could be saved over the next decade by standardizing spending on base support across the services and reducing spending on facilities maintenance as a result of BRAC. There is a 50 percent difference in base support costs per service member from the Army to the Air Force, according to Coburn’s report, "Back in Black." The department's facility space dropped by 20 percent as a result of BRAC, but spending on maintenance rose by almost 20 percent, the report says.

The plan also would focus on eliminating spending on non-core functions of the Pentagon by:

- Consolidating DOD-administered grocery and retail stores ($9.1 billion in savings over 10 years) -- primarily by eliminating the federal subsidy for commissaries; and
- Closing DOD elementary schools ($10 billion) -- the department operates 64 schools on 16 installations in the U.S.

Several of the recommendations contained in the senator's report would cut the end strength of the Armed Forces:

- Reverse the Grow the Army initiative ($92.5 billion in savings over 10 years) -- would return the Army to 482,400 soldiers from the current strength of 547,400 soldiers; and
- Reduce military personnel in Europe and Asia by one-third ($69.5 billion) -- would cancel the Guam realignment and, instead, transfer 8,600 Marines to the continental U.S.

Read about other suggested cuts in the Washington Post.

Outlook Poor for Enactment of Individual Spending Bills before October

Due to multiple time constraints, Congress will have a difficult time passing any of the 12 annual spending bills for fiscal 2012 before Oct. 1.

After returning from their August recess, lawmakers are scheduled to be in session for only two weeks in September. As a result, both chambers likely will focus on passing a short-term, continuing resolution before the end of the fiscal year rather than individual, full-year spending bills, reported CQ Today.
Both parties have complained in the past about resorting to omnibus spending packages that combine multiple spending bills, but because the Senate already has fallen behind in moving FY 2012 spending legislation, Congress may not have a choice.

Both chambers have passed a military construction and veterans affairs spending bill, though, making it possible that a House-Senate agreement on the full-year bill could be the mechanism for moving a stopgap measure for the initial portion of FY 2012.

To date, the House has passed six spending bills, with a seventh on the floor. The Senate has passed only the milcon bill, reported CQ.

**Pentagon Review Likely to Result in Additional Cuts for 2012**

The review of the nation's military missions, capabilities and security roles now being conducted by the Defense Department as part of an exercise needed to identify up to $400 billion in potential spending cuts most likely will result in DOD requesting its fiscal 2012 budget request be trimmed.

According to Senate Armed Services Committee Chairman Carl Levin (D-Mich.), the department's proposed cuts should surpass the $6 billion reduction to the administration's budget request the panel recommended in the FY 2012 defense authorization bill, reported CQ Today.

Levin's comment came during Tuesday's confirmation hearing for Army Gen. Martin Dempsey to become chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Ranking member John McCain (R-Ariz.) asked Dempsey to describe the impact of cutting between $800 billion and $1 trillion in defense spending over the next decade.

"Based on the difficulty of achieving the $400 billion cut, I believe $800 billion would be extraordinarily difficult and very high risk," Dempsey said.

While President Obama asked the Pentagon to cut $400 billion in spending over the next 12 years, a plan proposed by Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-Nev.) to forge a compromise over raising the debt ceiling calls for cutting $800 billion from the department's budget over the next 10 years.

The Pentagon review prompted by Obama's plan to cut $400 billion in defense spending should be ready by early October, Dempsey said, according to CQ.

**Umatilla Closure Back Under BRAC**

An amendment added to the recently passed Senate military construction bill protects the Umatilla Chemical Depot from a potential removal from the BRAC process. Earlier this
summer, DOD decided not to close the chemical depot under BRAC 2005, after learning that officials had fallen behind schedule for destroying the remaining chemical weapons stockpile at the northern Oregon facility.

The amendment would overrule a determination by the Pentagon’s Office of General Counsel last month that the depot would not be closed under BRAC rules. Under BRAC, the community would have a larger voice in the redevelopment of the property once the chemical weapons are destroyed, which may happen as soon as November.

The amendment, added by Oregon senators Ron Wyden (D) and Jeff Merkley (D) would allow the community to implement the redevelopment plan that the local redevelopment authority finalized one year ago. According to a press release issued by Sen. Wyden, “This amendment will protect the plans put forth by the community and make sure that the land is used in a way that will best benefit the residents of the area.” Wyden has also spoken with Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta, who voiced his support for the amendment.
Mission Support/Community Partnerships

North Carolina Governor Launches First Installation Summit

North Carolina Gov. Bev Perdue (D) held the first of four regional military summits Thursday in the host community for Marine Corps Air Station Cherry Point, focusing on issues both inside and outside the installation's gates affecting its long-term military value.

One issue that came up repeatedly was the region's dependence on Cherry Point, reported the New Bern Sun Journal. The air station and Fleet Readiness Center East based there is the major employer for Craven and Carteret counties. For host Havelock, though, Cherry Point is even more significant, said Jimmy Sanders, the city's mayor.

"We are a one-economy community. We love it, but it makes us more vulnerable," he said.

Sanders, who also serves as president of Allies for Cherry Point, emphasized that leaders need to be aware of the impact of community projects on the base, using a wind farm as an example.

Other speakers, including Cherry Point's executive officer, highlighted the significance of a variety of community issues, including educational opportunities for military families.

The goal of the regional summits is to assess the military's impact on local economic development and find out where community shortfalls exist regarding infrastructure, encroachment, education and workforce, according to John Nicholson, the governor's military affairs coordinator. The remaining ones will be held at Camp Lejeune, Seymour Johnson AFB and Fort Bragg, with a final, statewide one scheduled for Bragg on Sept. 29.

Arizona Officials Appreciate Value of Uncongested Airspace for UAVs

Economic development officials in Arizona are trying to leverage several of their prime military assets -- open air space and ideal flying weather -- to grow the state's aerospace and defense industries.

Defense contractors currently are conducting several tests a week of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) in restricted airspace over land used by the Arizona National Guard above Mesa. Local officials hope it can be designated as one of the nation's sites for UAV testing.

While the area in Mesa is expected to generate growth in the UAV industry, larger opportunities exist closer to Fort Huachuca and Yuma Proving Ground, reports the East Valley Tribune. The world's largest UAV training center is at Huachuca, located in the state's southeast corner in Sierra Vista. The training center trains 3,000 UAV operators and technicians.
**Arrival of Military Families Bolsters School District Coffers at Ft. Carson**

Two school districts in south Colorado Springs, Colo., expecting to enroll dozens of more students stemming from growth at Fort Carson, stand to gain increased state funding.

Fountain-Fort Carson District 8 -- where students from military families or others working at the post make up 68 percent of the school's enrollment -- estimates it will receive $600,000 from the state based on adding 104 new students, reported the Gazette. The district's enrollment has climbed by 700 students since 2008, and by 470 over the past two years.

The district opened a new elementary school on the post in 2010; it already has 600 students. New housing under construction on Carson will further boost enrollment at the district's four elementary schools and one middle school on post, according to the story.

Widefield School District 3 is expecting to receive $306,000 for adding 50 students.

**Army Marks Closing of Walter Reed**

Amid a colorful ceremony Wednesday, the flags for Walter Reed Army Medical Center were symbolically cased, marking the closure of the Army's flagship hospital where hundreds of thousands of the nation's war wounded have received care since 1909.

With the hospital's actual closing scheduled for September, officials are preparing to move its operations in August to the National Naval Medical Center in Bethesda, Md., and a new hospital at Fort Belvoir, Va., reported the New York Times. Patients will be moved in ambulances, with a deadline for moving all patients by Aug. 31.

During the ceremony, Army Maj. Gen. Carla Hawley-Rowland, head of the North Atlantic Regional Medical Command and Walter Reed Army Medical Center, handed over Walter Reed's saber to Navy Rear Adm. Matthew Nathan, who will be the first commander of the new Walter Reed National Military Medical Center at Bethesda.

The State Department and the District of Columbia are slated to take over the historic, 113-acre site in northwest Washington. The city is expected to develop its section for retail and other uses.

**Quantico Growth Largely Free of Traffic Jams, School Overcrowding**

The northern Virginia region surrounding Marine Corps Base Quantico may have survived the BRAC growth coming to the installation.

Many of the 2,000 federal employees slated to transfer to Quantico already
have arrived without generating significant traffic congestion or an influx of new students in the schools of Prince William and Stafford counties, according to Tom Rumora, BRAC coordinator for the Quantico Growth Management Committee, as reported by PotomacLocal.com.

The reason, according to officials, is that many of the workers affected by BRAC did not move to Prince William or Stafford counties, and just adjusted their commutes instead.

**Proposed UAV Corridor Takes Shape in Oklahoma**

Officials with DOD, Oklahoma State University, and the Oklahoma state government are proposing an “air corridor” near Fort Sill for UAVs (Unmanned Arial Vehicles), according to DOD Buzz.

Army commanders continue to call for more UAVs to be designed and produced, while engineers complain that they have little opportunity to do any testing with the UAVs because of regulations put in place by the Federal Aviation Administration. The air corridor would provide a dedicated space for engineers to test UAVs at high altitudes without worrying about interfering with commercial or civil air traffic.

Stephen McKeever, Oklahoma’s Secretary of Science and Technology is optimistic that the corridor would also help bring in more UAV-related jobs and investments to the area. The FAA must develop a strategy by 2015 for opening up the national airspace to UAVs.

**Walter Reed Realignment on Track**

The largest medical restructuring by the military health system ever is expected to be completed on schedule, Navy Vice Adm. John M. Mateczun, commander of Joint Task Force, National Capital Region Medical, stated last week. The realignment includes the transfer of functions from Walter Reed to Bethesda, and the construction of a new facility at Fort Belvoir.

As a result of BRAC 2005, the Defense Department was required to combine four inpatient hospitals in the national capital region -- Walter Reed; the National Naval Medical Center in Bethesda, Md.; DeWitt Army Community Hospital at Fort Belvoir, Va.; and Malcolm Grow Medical Center at Joint Base Andrews, Md. -- into two.

Walter Reed Army Medical Center will close its doors Sept. 15, and a ceremony to case the colors of all Walter Reed activities will take place this week on July 27 reports the Army News Service. All inpatients are scheduled to be transferred from Walter Reed to Bethesda by the end of August.
Defense Real Estate

With New Town Center, Ft. Irwin Becomes an 'Installation of Choice'

Officials at Fort Irwin and the National Training Center in California last week celebrated the opening of the Irwin Town Center, a development featuring 26,000 square feet of retail space, unaccompanied housing and a community plaza in the heart of the garrison.

Lt. Gen. Joseph Fil, the installation's former commanding general called the project "a wonderful addition to the community." He said the town center is unique and is something the rest of the Army can aspire to, according to a story from Installation Management Command.

The town center has 200 bachelor apartments, 140 of which are on top of new shops such as Subway, Starbucks and Game Stop.

"It's huge because we're a long way from civilization here and we are out in the desert, but it's a wonderful place to be," said Fil, who now is special assistant to the vice chief of staff of the Army.

The grand opening was the culmination of a seven-year project, in which Clark Realty served as developer.

House Hearing Considers Alternate Proposals for Pruning Excess Properties

Two proposals for expediting the federal government's disposal of unneeded real property were highlighted during a hearing Wednesday by the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee.

The two bills were introduced by members of the committee earlier this year. At the hearing, Rep. Jason Chaffetz (R-Utah) said his bill, H.R. 665, would eliminate burdensome requirements giving priority claim on excess properties to public users, reported GovernmentExecutive.com. The measure would allow agencies to retain 20 percent of the revenue generated by selling properties and dedicate the remainder to debt reduction.

Rep. Mike Quigley (R-Ill.) also testified before the panel. His bill, H.R. 1205, would require the General Services Administration to submit a list of surplus properties to Congress annually, according to GovernmentExecutive.com.

To date, the oversight committee, chaired by Rep. Darrell Issa (R-Calif.), had not been leading the effort in the House to reform federal property disposal. That campaign has been spearheaded by the Transportation and Infrastructure's Subcommittee on Economic
Development, Public Buildings and Emergency Management whose chairman, Jeff Denham (R-Calif.), also testified yesterday.

Denham earlier introduced a measure establishing an independent commission that would review federal properties and make recommendations for consolidations, co-locations, redevelopment, selling or other actions to minimize costs and produce savings for the taxpayer. The economic development subcommittee passed Denham's bill, H.R. 1734, on May 25.

Tom Carper (D-Del.), chairman of the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs' Subcommittee on Federal Financial Management, is expected to introduce similar legislation shortly.

CBO Questions Savings

Issa used the hearing to unveil a recent analysis by the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) concluding that the Obama administration's proposal to streamline property disposal would cost the government money over the next 10 years in stark contrast to the $15 billion in savings it had touted. Denham's proposal is similar in many respects to the administration's; both, for instance, would create a civilian BRAC commission.

The administration's plan would allow agencies to spend up to 40 percent of the proceeds gained from selling excess properties. As a result, the proposal would increase direct spending by $60 million, CBO concluded, because some of the revenue going to agencies would have accrued to the federal government under current law and could not be spent. In addition, CBO estimated that carrying out the proposal would cost $420 million over the next five years to prepare properties for sale.

"There is broad agreement that the federal government should stop wasting money on properties it doesn't need and that taxpayers should reap the benefits," Issa said after yesterday's hearing. "For a monumental undertaking like this to work, the administration must back up their claimed savings and partner with Congress and private and non-profit stakeholders to forge consensus," he added.

Testimony from the hearing is available on the oversight committee's website.

Outlook Bright for Redstone EUL Project

As the completion of the first building at Redstone Gateway -- the $1 billion office park at Redstone Arsenal being developed under the enhanced use leasing (EUL) program -- approaches in the fall, the company that is leading the effort has high expectations for the project.

"It is not a normal office park. It is a first-class office park. All of the office buildings will be LEED certified," Rand Griffin, president and CEO of Corporate Properties
Trust, told the Huntsville Times.

Griffin's positive outlook is a direct result of the potential for growth he sees in Huntsville, Ala., in both the commercial and federal sectors. The EUL project was attractive, he said, because the region has a strong government presence and a need for facilities for defense contractors.

"There are a number of cities with strong military bases, but don't need office space," Griffin told the Times.

Another factor is the city's stance toward gaining new military missions.

"Unlike some other cities in the country, I think Huntsville has a very positive attitude toward BRAC, and they are willing to make investment of time and energy in successfully winning BRACs. Not just this BRAC, but in future BRACs, they will able to succeed," he said.

The project calls for 4.6 million square feet of space, including two 150-room hotels and 40,000 square feet of retail space; it is slated to be completed over a 15-to-20-year period.
Horsham LRA Rejects Airport Option for Willow Grove

The Horsham LRA Wednesday denied two separate applications to turn the 8,000-foot runway at Willow Grove Naval Air Station into a general aviation airport, settling one of the key questions facing the suburban Philadelphia community as it plans the reuse for 900 acres at the air station.

The votes came during a public meeting held for the reuse authority to evaluate applications from 17 local agencies and nonprofits to receive a portion of the air station under a public benefit conveyance.

Before the votes, the reuse authority's planning consultant said the two applications for Willow Grove's airfield had shortcomings, reported phillyBurbs.com. The one from Montgomery County was incomplete, while the one from the Bucks County Airport Authority was missing financial data. The public and local officials have largely opposed retaining the runway at Willow Grove since the base was recommended for closure six years ago.

Potential for Growth Exists at Former Norton AFB

The airport at the former Norton Air Force Base could generate an estimated $1.2 billion annually in economic activity, helping the region around San Bernardino in Southern California recover from the installation's closure in 1994, according to a university study.

San Bernardino International Airport now is responsible for 9,355 jobs and a $500 million payroll, reported Redlands Daily Facts. Between 2002 and 2010, business near the airport at the redevelopment project created more than 4,000 new jobs. Employers include Stater Bros., Mattel and Pep Boys.

One trend expected to benefit the airport is the increase in congestion in the Los Angeles/Long Beach port area, which would increase the attractiveness of the airport and logistics facilities at Norton. The air base's closure resulted in the loss of $1.9 billion in annual economic activity.

Deal Would Allow City Fire Personnel onto Ft. McPherson

Atlanta lawmakers and officials from Fort McPherson are crafting an agreement that would allow the city's fire department access to the post so personnel can become familiar with the Army's facilities prior to the 126-year-old base's pending closure.

The deal would ensure McPherson has adequate fire and rescue coverage during the transition period prior to its Sept. 15 closure when the city will be responsible for
responding to emergencies there, reported Cascade Patch. The city council could approve an agreement on Aug. 15.

After a deal is reached, the city's next goal will be to allow its police onto McPherson, according to the story.

Ft. Monroe LRA Aims for Seamless Transfer of Historic Post

Norfolk, Va. -- The Fort Monroe Authority is intent on ensuring that most facilities at Fort Monroe remain in use after the Army turns over responsibility for running the 570-acre site on Sept. 15.

"We're trying to blaze a different trail," Executive Director Bill Armbruster said last week during a tour of the historic post held during the ADC 2011 Annual Conference.

To meet that goal, the LRA is encouraging the existing military families living on post to remain. While the Army is shuttering Monroe in September, many of the personnel on base work for the Army's Training and Doctrine Command, which is only moving 16 miles away.

The authority has been leasing more than 100 of the post's 292 housing units to military personnel and DOD civilians. Starting Aug. 1, the authority will take possession of the remaining residences and offer them to the general public. It also will take on a limited number of commercial properties.

A major push now for the authority is getting ready to manage and provide municipal services for the site when the Army leaves in September.

The transfer of the property from the Army will follow a separate timeline, however. The authority will gain some, but not all, of the property slated to revert to the commonwealth on Sept. 15. Until it transfers the remainder of the property, the Army will assume the role of caretaker for those buildings it holds onto.

The actual transfer will not be complete until early 2012. About 375 acres are subject to revert to the commonwealth of Virginia. Soon the LRA will apply for an economic development conveyance from the Army to obtain the remainder of the property.

Horsham LRA Looks to NAS Glenview Reuse for Inspiration

With a mix of residential, commercial and open space, including a 45-acre town center shopping center, the redevelopment of the former Naval Air Station Glenview is one success story officials working on the reuse of Willow Grove NAS Joint Reserve Base located north of Philadelphia are paying close attention to.
And given that public opinion opposes retaining Willow Grove’s runway, the decision by the Glenview, Ill., community to get rid of the two runways at what is now called The Glen, located 20 miles north of Chicago, is of particular interest to the Horsham LRA, reported phillyBurbs.com.

More than 110 buildings at Glenview were torn down to make way for the redevelopment, but some elements of the original base were preserved. The Glen Town Center incorporates an air traffic control tower into its design along with a hangar. Given the current economic climate, however, Horsham officials will have a difficult time replicating the pace of Glenview's redevelopment. After landing on the 1993 BRAC list, the air station’s revitalization was completed in 2005.

**Brunswick Landing Selected for FAA’s Military Airport Program**

In its first year of eligibility, the general aviation airport at the former Brunswick Naval Air Station has been chosen to participate in the Federal Aviation Administration’s 2011 Military Airport Program (MAP), a critical source of funding for capital needs for former military airports and joint use airports.

Brunswick Executive Airport, which opened in April, will be eligible for funds for a wide variety of projects, including approach clearing, airfield marking and lighting, hangar rehabilitation and utility improvements, according to the FAA. The airport, located in Maine’s Midcoast region, was designated to participate in the MAP for five years.

"There’s a whole host of things this can pay for. It’s a fairly significant announcement," Steve Levesque, executive director of the Midcoast Regional Redevelopment Authority, told the Times Record.

The other two airports selected for the program participated previously. Plattsburgh International Airport, a commercial service airport at the former Plattsburgh Air Force Base in the North Country of New York, will participate in the program for three years. Its projects will include hangar rehabilitation, relocation of the fuel farm and utility upgrades.

Waynesville/St. Robert Regional Airport at Forney Field, a commercial service airport located on Fort Leonard Wood, Mo., will participate for four years. Funding will allow the airport sponsor to construct a large general aviation hangar and fueling facilities, helping to generate revenue and allow the joint use facility to become self-sustainable.
New Pentagon Office Simplifies Review of Commercial Energy Projects

A new DOD office established last summer to assess the impacts of proposed renewable energy projects located near installations has streamlined the federal review process, providing developers with greater notice when their plans potentially could interfere with military training and operations.

The first assignment for the siting clearinghouse was to evaluate a backlog of 249 proposed projects that had been delayed following initial objections by the military, reported American Forces Press Service. The office, led by David Belote, worked with the services, the Federal Aviation Administration and the Bureau of Land Management to assess the projects within 180 days.

Projects with no significant risk to military readiness and training, and test and evaluation responsibilities, or homeland defense, were rated green; projects with some risk that likely could be mitigated were rated yellow; and those with significant risk and no apparent mitigation were rated red.

Ultimately, all but 20 of the projects came back green, according to the story. Many of those remaining projects likely will be approved if the developer agrees to take mitigating steps. Four or five likely will not be able to go ahead because they are near critical military capabilities, Belote said.

Energy Savings to be Realized as a Result of BRAC

The Army should realize substantial energy cost savings as a result of BRAC, said Richard Kidd, deputy assistant secretary of the Army for Energy and Sustainability.

Unlike the Navy and Air Force, which consume much more liquid fuel, the Army is the largest consumer of facility energy, not only within the Defense Department, but within the entire federal government.

With a reshaping of its infrastructure by consolidating schools, bases, and headquarters into more energy-efficient buildings due to BRAC, combined with the new Net Zero initiative, the Army hopes to realize cost savings and reduce its energy footprint.

A net zero installation is one that produces as much of a particular resource as it uses, such as energy, over the course of a year. The pilot net zero energy installations are: Fort Detrick, Md.; Fort Hunter Liggett, Calif.; Kwajalein Atoll, Marshall Islands; Parks Reserve Forces Training Area, Calif.; Sierra Army Depot, Calif.; and West Point, N.Y.Â  There are also net zero installations for water and waste.
Military Families

'Community Challenge' to Recognize Efforts to Support Military Families

First Lady Michelle Obama and Jill Biden, wife of Vice President Joe Biden, this week unveiled a program to honor citizens, communities, schools, nonprofits, faith-based institutions and local governments that demonstrate exceptional support for military families.

The Joining Forces Community Challenge will recognize citizens and organizations providing programs, services, or support designed to ease the burden and alleviate the emotional and mental stress on service members and their families. Entries are due by Sept. 30; winners will be invited to an event in Washington next February.

Obama and Biden launched the Joining Forces initiative in April to raise awareness of military families and spark all Americans to ensure troops and their families have the support they have earned.

Young Veterans Face Resistance from Employers

Unemployment among male veterans aged 18 to 24 was 28.3 percent in the second quarter of 2011, up from 21.9 percent for all of last year, the latest indicator of the challenge young service members must confront after serving their country.

Male veterans aged 25 to 34 are doing better, averaging 14.5 percent unemployment in the second quarter, compared to 9.5 percent of non-veterans in that age group.

In response, the Department of Veterans Affairs has launched a website connecting veterans and employers and a new program linking counselors and veterans at eight college campuses. Officials also are trying to find better ways for military personnel to present their experience to civilian employers, reported Reuters.

Some military specialties don't translate well to the civilian sector. Service members in certain positions, such as medics, have a difficult time finding work because their certifications aren't recognized by state authorities, according to the story.