

# FORT CARSON, COLORADO

## SECRETARY OF DEFENSE RECOMMENDATION

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Realign Fort Hood, TX, by relocating a Brigade Combat Team (BCT) and Unit of Employment (UEX) Headquarters to Fort Carson, CO.

## SECRETARY OF DEFENSE JUSTIFICATION

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This recommendation ensures Army BCTs and support units are located at installations capable of training modular formations, both mounted and dismounted, at home station with sufficient land and facilities to test, simulate, or fire all organic weapon systems.

This recommendation enhances the military value of the installations and the home station training and readiness of the units at the installations by relocating units to installations that can best support the training and maneuver requirements associated with the Army's transformation. This recommendation relocates to Fort Carson, CO, a Heavy BCT that will be temporarily stationed at Fort Hood in FY06, and a Unit of Employment Headquarters. The Army is temporarily stationing this BCT to Fort Hood in FY06 due to operational necessity and to support current operational deployments in support of the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT). However, based on the BRAC analysis, Fort Hood does not have sufficient facilities and available maneuver training acreage and ranges to support six permanent heavy BCTs and numerous other operational units stationed there. Fort Carson has sufficient capacity to support these units. The Army previously obtained approval from the Secretary of Defense to temporarily station a third BCT at Fort Carson in FY05. Due to Fort Carson's capacity, the BRAC analysis indicates that the Army should permanently station this third BCT at Fort Carson.

This relocation never pays back because it involves the relocation of a newly activated unit. No permanent facilities exist to support the unit.

## COMMUNITY CONCERNS

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The community argued that realignment of Fort Hood would result in a loss of personnel due to the relocation of approximately 4,100 soldiers to Fort Carson and almost 5,000 personnel to Fort Bliss, based on 2005 data, rather than the 2003 certified data provided to the Commission. The local community has embraced the newly activated BCT and did not consider this unit as temporarily stationed at Fort Hood. They asserted soldiers have already purchased homes and integrated into the community. The community fears housing prices will drop and soldiers forced to sell homes will experience significant financial losses. Also, the community stated that it responded to the so-called temporary increase in soldiers with increased housing, police, fire and municipal services. They argued that realigning Fort Hood, leaving only five Brigade Combat Teams (BCTs) permanently stationed there, would forego important existing training facilities and create 15 percent excess capacity. The community proposed retention of 6 BCTs at Fort Hood, believing the base has the capacity to train and support up to 50,000 soldiers and their families.

## COMMISSION FINDINGS

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The Commission's review and analysis found that moving a Brigade Combat Team (BCT) and Unit of Employment (UEX) Headquarters to Fort Carson would enhance military value and improve future mission capabilities. Fort Hood is a model installation for the Army in terms of its infrastructure, ranges, and power projection capabilities, and its very high overall quantitative military value score reflects those favorable installation characteristics. However, Fort Hood's constraining variable is maneuver acres and, more specifically, its contiguous maneuver acres. The Commission's independent and objective analysis

showed that, with or without including Piñon Canyon Maneuver Site in the accounting of acreage, Fort Carson still has more contiguous maneuver acres per brigade combat team than Fort Hood. The Commission views the UEx headquarters relocation to Fort Carson, CO, as important to provide the four planned BCTs with an appropriate-level command and control headquarters. The Commission found in favor of the overall recommendation as providing the necessary balance to the force structure. The Commission took community concerns into account but found them to be offset by the increased military value of DoD's recommendation.

## **COMMISSION RECOMMENDATIONS**

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The Commission found the Secretary's recommendation consistent with the final selection criteria and force structure plan. Therefore, the Commission approved the recommendation of the Secretary.