

### **Overseas Basing Commission Hearing Statement**

I would like to thank the members of the Overseas Basing Commission for the opportunity to make a statement at this hearing.

I was proud to join my friend and colleague, Senator Hutchison, in authoring the legislation that created this Commission. With another domestic base closing round scheduled for 2005 and the rapidly changing security environment of the post September 11<sup>th</sup> era, we believed the United States needed an independent commission to review military basing requirements overseas and move beyond Cold War basing concepts.

With your expertise in national security and foreign policy, your mission is to:

- assess the adequacy of the United States military footprint overseas;
- consider the feasibility and advisability of closing any current United States installations overseas, and;
- provide Congress recommendations for a comprehensive overseas basing strategy that meets the current and projected strategic needs of the United States.

The timing of this Commission is now even more critical.

On August 16, President Bush announced plans to move between 60,000 and 70,000 troops out of Europe and Asia over the next ten years as a part of a global repositioning of U.S. military force. These are sweeping changes which, if carried out, will have significant political, economic, and military ramifications.

While the specific details of the plan are not yet clear, it is imperative that Congress receive a bipartisan, independent assessment of our overseas basing requirements, including an analysis of the President's plan, the impact it may have on United States national security, and advice and recommendations for possible Congressional action.

The Commission is the ideal forum to discuss these matters and help Congress better fulfill its oversight role. We simply cannot afford to let these issues -- critical to our national security -- be dominated by politics and partisan bickering. We must work together.

In addition, with regards to the 2005 BRAC round, the Commission will play a vital role in ensuring that there is no disconnect between realignment overseas and the closing of bases in the United States. Some units currently stationed overseas may need to return to the United States and such moves will certainly have an impact on the 2005 round.

I thank the commissioners for their service and I look forward to their suggestions and recommendations.