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Will There Ever Be Another BRAC?

Hon. Philip E. Coyle, III, Senior Advisor

This article first appeared in Defense News on Jan. 2, 2006.

The final recommendations of the 2005 Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) Commission became law in November. Congress or the president could have rejected the commission's recommendations entirely, but could not "cherry pick" the parts they liked or reject parts they didn't.

It is this feature of the BRAC process that makes it so valuable. To achieve a greater good, the commission may set aside the legitimate but parochial interests of individual members of Congress. But now the question is, will there ever be another BRAC? Some people think the 2005 version will be the last. Several arguments support this view.

First, military bases mean jobs, and every BRAC round -- in 1988, 1991, 1993, 1995 and 2005 -- threatened jobs someplace. As former House Speaker Tip O'Neill said, "All politics is local," and every BRAC has proved the point. Regardless of party or politics, elected officials will be wary of a future BRAC that might cut jobs in their communities.

Second, Congress may question the cost savings from a future BRAC. The 2005 BRAC was the largest and most complex, and produced the greatest savings. However, this assumes savings from the elimination of military personnel even when military end strengths were not reduced or when a military mission was to be continued at a new location.

Congress may also be concerned by underestimated costs of environmental cleanup, the price of new military construction and savings that are supposed to be generated by business process engineering.

The 2005 BRAC was different also in that many Defense Department proposals actually cost extra

Future defense secretaries and Congresses may need and want further BRAC rounds to accomplish greater efficiency and jointness at U.S. military installations across the country.

money, rather than saved it. Traditionally thought of as a mechanism for consolidation and savings, BRAC does not prohibit DOD from putting forward recommendations that add to expenses. The 2005 BRAC showed that future BRACs need not necessarily be about savings, at least not in the short term. Future BRACs could be used to achieve change whether it saves money or not, or to create important organizational efficiencies over the longer term.

Third, the 2005 BRAC involved 195 major recommendations consisting of 748 total actions, nearly twice as many actions as in all four previous BRAC rounds combined. Unlike previous BRACs, the 2005 recommendations involved multiple sites

and complex organizational realignments, sometimes of seemingly unrelated steps.

In no area was this more true than in the proposed realignment of Air Force Air National Guard and Reserve stations. While the Air Force sought to reduce aircraft inventories and maintain cost-effective squadron sizes, the states needed adequate Air Guard and Reserve resources for disaster relief or homeland security.

Before deciding on a future BRAC round, Congress may want to better understand exactly how snarled and complex the DOD recommendations might The 2005 BRAC Commission strongly supported jointness, the reorganization of military installations to bring the military departments more closely together. DOD has touted the principle. Unfortunately, there were few DOD proposals that achieved it. A notable exception was the establishment of seven joint bases, where two or three facilities near each other were connected as one.

The commission welcomed such proposals, but was generally disappointed with the degree of

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Our Soldiers' Unmet Needs

Winslow T. Wheeler, Director, Straus Military Reform Project

This commentary, originally titled "Rhetoric Versus Reality," first appeared on Military.com on Jan. 5, 2006.

Many in Congress and the Pentagon boast American soldiers and Marines have the best equipment in the world. Reports from the battlefields in Iraq and Afghanistan say otherwise. The information about the failures is not new; solutions are long overdue.

Reports from the Army's Natick Soldier Center and its Tank-automotive and Armaments Command and the Marine's Systems Command Liaison Team in Iraq, all from 2002 and 2003, tell us, for example, troops' "dislikes," including uniforms that rip easily, eyewear that fogs up and fits poorly under helmets, and boots that blister, crack and burst, and are "poor for movement," or as in one soldier's e-mail are "truly awful and also painful."

Troops buy some equipment with their own money, usually because Government Issue performs poorly. Such items include gloves, socks, flashlights, padding for backpacks, "CamelBak" hydration systems, and weapons cleaning equipment. Banal items? Perhaps to us back home, but certainly not for soldiers fighting in the winter mountains of Afghanistan and the desert heat of Iraq, doing whatever it takes to keep their bodies and their weapons working.

It is remarkable that the Pentagon refuses to pay out enough for top quality supplies while spending over \$1 billion per day. The Defense Department is only now implementing procedures for reimbursing troops for their personal expenses – an idea thrust on it by Congress.

The most disturbing information is about infantry weapons. In one official report, 13 to 20 percent of soldiers reported jamming in the M-4 carbine, even though many augmented their cleaning kits with special brushes and picks. Fifty-four percent of those equipped with the M249 machine gun reported maintenance problems, and up to 35 percent said they were not confident in the weapon. There were also complaints about the M9 pistol, that it suffers from corrosion problems and the weak magazine spring does not reliably feed rounds into the chamber. Complaints about poor performing M16 magazines are also common. These are not problems for the enemy; the Soviet-designed AK-47 assault rifle and its magazines operate unaffected in virtually all climates and conditions, even when not properly maintained.

An even more serious issue is lethality. The small size of the 5.56 mm bullet for the U.S. M4 carbine, M16 rifle, and M249 machine gun is highly controversial among some troops. One official report said troops "asked for a weapon with a larger round, 'so it will drop a man with one shot."" Even the M9 pistol, which shoots a sizeable 9 mm round, impressed few. Soldiers' blogs and e-mails report many of them like the small caliber weapons' lightness and the large amount of ammunition troops can carry, but some say those bullets are "too small and too stabilized" thus making them "woefully inadequate as a man stopper." The complaints seem widespread, but it is unclear how many are from direct experience or just word of mouth. Deserved or not, there appears to be a real crisis of confidence in these small caliber weapons.

That the large 9 mm caliber M9 pistol is collecting similar complaints

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jointness achieved in the DOD proposals overall. Before authorizing a future BRAC, Congress may decide to require greater efforts to achieve jointness.

The 2005 BRAC Commission recommended that future BRACs be conducted every eight to 12 years. In principle, BRACs could be held more often, but given the fresh memories of the 2005 round, members of Congress would probably not authorize another round in 2009.

In any case, the commission recommended that future BRACs come after a Quadrennial Defense Review and after a presidential election. The 1995 BRAC came right before a presidential election, and this added unnecessary pressure to the process. Accordingly, the 2005 BRAC Commission recommended that the next round begin in 2013.

Will there be future BRAC rounds? That will be up to a future president, a future secretary of defense and a future Congress. The base realignment and closure process provides a unique opportunity to save money, reorganize and transform U.S. military organizations, and achieve the kind of change that is nearly impossible under traditional defense planning and budgeting processes.

Future defense secretaries and Congresses may need and want further BRAC rounds to accomplish greater efficiency and jointness at U.S. military installations across the country.

Looking over the final recommendations of the 2005 commission, one can count hundreds of important and necessary changes that likely would not have been accomplished otherwise.

The Transitioning Afghan Security Conflict:

Expanding international forces confront a developing insurgency

Joseph Button, Research Assistant

Overshadowed by the U.S.-led war in Iraq, the conflict in Afghanistan quietly suffered through its most deadly year in 2005, four years after the start of operations. Similar to the war in Iraq, the original victory and quick defeat of the Talibanled government has transformed into a dangerous insurgent war. Higher casualty rates in Afghanistan last year created skepticism amongst analysts over statements made by U.S. military officials in Afghanistan claiming that the Taliban threat was nearing its end. If the statistics serve as a valid indicator, then concern over the 'resurging Taliban threat' in Afghanistan is legitimate.

The death toll of all war-related deaths in Afghanistan is consistently reported at nearing 1,500 for the year 2005, making it by far the most deadly year since the beginning of Operation Enduring Freedom in late 2001. U.S. troop deaths in Afghanistan increased nearly two fold in 2005, from 51 deaths in 2004 to 99 in 2005. International Security Assistance Forces (ISAF) also suffered an increase in troop deaths losing 30 soldiers last year compared to nine in 2004.

U.S. military officials recognize the recent trend of Taliban attacks. Col. Jim Yonts, the U.S. military spokesman in Afghanistan, explained that the Taliban are using suicide attacks and improvised explosive devices (IED) "out of desperation" as U.S. forces continue to take ground in the hostile eastern and southern provinces. Yonts added that the Taliban "only lose one person in a suicide attack, not 10 or 15," as they might lose when facing coalition forces in more con-

ventional fighting.

For U.S. officials, this trend is a sign of desperation from a severely weakened enemy. Critics of this view argue that the individual strike insurgency plan is only strengthening the resolve of the Taliban, and allows it to recruit and grow in numbers and influence.

The increase in hostile actions and rising death toll of 2005 is evidence of a full-fledged insurgency finally taking form. Until midway

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through 2004, for example, there were only three IED attack-related U.S. troop deaths in Afghanistan. Since then, there have been 33 IED attack-related deaths; 12 in 2004 and 21 in 2005.

Suicide attacks, abductions and IED threats are a daily worry for security forces and Afghan citizens. Recently, the Dutch government has considered reversing an agreement to send more troops for a scheduled move to the southern Uruzgan province because of the rising threat, especially the recent spike of attacks targeting ISAF forces over the past few months.

Similarly, Afghan citizens must deal with the consequences of the resurgent Taliban. In places like Helmand province in southern Afghanistan, where security forces are lower in numbers than other areas, the Taliban use fear to motivate rural citizens to do their will. Recently, in the town of Khanishin, a message appeared one morning on the doors of all the buildings in town saying: "Cultivate the poppy or we will come and kill you." It was signed: "The Taliban."

With minimal security and unhindered poppy production in Helmand province, not much will change until ISAF forces arrive in bigger numbers next year. U.S. Gen. James L. Jones, the top U.S. NATO military officer, argues that "the number one problem in Afghanistan is drugs." The destabilizing drug quandary matched with Taliban rebels terrorizing rural townships reveals that there is still much to be done on Afghanistan's security checklist.

The head of the French Army, Gen. Henri Bentegeat, has noted that another key problem is foreign fighters. He argues, "The threat has changed. Today there are no longer the groups of organized terrorists that move around in gangs as was the case only one year ago. Instead, what has appeared and poses today a general problem of security is the individual attacks, suicide attacks or attacks with homemade bombs or mines." For Bentegeat, the increase in suicide attacks is evidence that foreign fighters are returning to Afghanistan to support the Taliban cause.

For many analysts, the emergence of IED and suicide attacks point towards the 'Iraqisation' of Afghanistan; i.e., the shift toward

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Iraqi insurgency tactics. Yet, this comparison does not address or accurately represent the threat in Afghanistan. In Iraq during 2005, there were 428 IED attack deaths for U.S. forces compared to just 21 for both U.S. and ISAF troops in Afghanistan. Still, government officials and military leaders in Afghanistan confront the changed nature of the violence there with concern, desiring to quell the current trend before it becomes another Iraq.

Despite concern over the intensification of Taliban attacks, NATO foreign ministers on Dec. 8, 2005 authorized a plan to expand NATO's peacekeeping role in Afghanistan. NATO decided to send British, Canadian and Dutch troops into Afghanistan's hostile southern provinces.

This decision marks the beginning of Stage 3 in NATO's Afghan plan. The Stage 3 advancement will add an additional six provinces to routine NATO patrols, and at least four Provincial Reconstruction Teams and 6,000 more troops. These moves will bring NATO's total troop number up to 15,000 and expand its operation to three-fourths of the country.

NATO's decision does not come without opposition in Europe. The Netherlands and the United Kingdom both have experienced internal government discord over expanding their roles into the hostile south. The concern stems from the high probability that NATO troops will potentially face frontline combat situations, whereas the NATO mandate is supposedly limited to a peace-keeping role.

The Dutch indecision over troop deployment to the hostile southern regions was initially paralleled by British indecision. Some estimates of the 2006 British troop deployment hinted at just 1,200 soldiers compared to an initial 4,000 estimate; but on Jan. 26 Britain announced that it would send 3,300 troops to the hostile southern provinces. Following suit, the Dutch parliament must now make a controversial troop deployment decision this February.

Troops from Canada are in the process of transferring their main base into Kandahar; and the Canadian military fully realizes the different scope of the new southern Afghan mission. Canadian Col. S.J. Bowes said Canada is prepared to handle the offensive nature of the operation. "It's clear that this is not a peacekeeping mission," he said.

Taliban leaders, quick to recog-

This year's events will reveal if the insurgency is truly growing in strength, influence and threat, or if the U.S. and international forces are actually providing the necessary security.

nize political weakness, are bound to focus their attacks on NATO forces moving into the south, hoping to cause political turmoil back in Europe. Before NATO's Dec. 8 decision, a large spike of Taliban attacks on NATO forces demonstrated that the Taliban will do what they can to fuel concern among foreign governments with the hope of an eventual retraction of foreign troops.

In response to NATO's decision to expand operations into southern Afghanistan, the United States decided to scale back its presence by about 2,500 troops from the current 19,000 troop deployment. The U.S. withdrawal, according to U.S. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, will not hinder nor detract from the

offensive U.S. operations in the mountainous eastern provinces, where Taliban and al-Qaida forces hide out.

A main guestion for consideration in 2006 will revolve around the response by the European NATO forces and governments to an almost assured increase in casualty numbers as they move into the south. Any significant reduction of NATO troops would be a serious blow to the reconstruction effort in Afghanistan and a moral victory that would only strengthen Taliban resolve. The southern provinces are currently a hotbed for the production of poppies and the corresponding illicit drug trade. Without NATO countries attempting to curb the reliance of opium production, the security threat will remain and increase. Needless to say, NATO's continued advancement and efforts in southern Afghanistan could prove to be a real turning point in the country's reconstruction.

At this stage in the reconstruction process, the future success is still largely dependent on the reduction of militant violence, whether by the Taliban or between long lasting localized militias. This security conflict with the Taliban during 2006 will set the tone for the pace and scope of civil society reconstruction over the next decade. This year's events will reveal if the insurgency is truly growing in strength, influence and threat, or if the U.S. and international forces are actually providing the necessary security for an environment conducive to the growth of civil society in Afghanistan.

The full text and references for this article can be found on CDI's website: http://www.cdi.org/program/index.cfm? programid=39.

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Doubling in Seven Years

Victoria Samson, Research Analyst

Unless the Pentagon drastically changes missile defense priorities, investment will double by 2013

A recent report by the Congressional Budgetary Office (CBO) put the annual cost of missile defense peaking at \$19 billion by 2013. This number is probably on the low end, as it is based on an architecture that CBO formulated itself, since missile defense programs (unlike other Pentagon weapons systems) do not need to submit a timeline detailing their projected cost throughout the systems' operational lifetimes to the Secretary of Defense.

CBO's "The Long-Term Implications of Current Defense Plans and Alternatives: Detailed Update for Fiscal Year 2006" took a hard look at the programs' futures and what, if anything, should be done with them. Indeed, CBO's proposed "evolutionary" alternative would stop missile defense deployment entirely and instead have missile defense research and development holding steady at \$3 billion annually.

The CBO report looked at major acquisitions by all of the services and discussed possible changes that could be made. It offered what it called "evolutionary and transformational alternatives." "Transformational alternatives" are those which "place more emphasis on acquiring the advanced weapons and capabilities that DOD associates with military transformation."

On the other hand, CBO sees "evolutionary alternatives" as a way to "largely forgo those advanced systems and instead pursue upgrades to current capabilities." (From "The Long-Term Implications of Current Defense Plans and Alter-

natives: Summary Update for Fiscal Year 2006," CBO, October 2005)

When making its prognostication regarding future missile defense spending, the CBO assumed that the Missile Defense Agency (MDA) investment in missile defense would hit its highest point of \$15 billion in 2013, after which the missile defense programs should move out of their procurement stages and into their operational stages. However, the CBO noted that "If, however, costs grow as they have historically, pur-

The United States cannot afford to have missile defense spending double to an annual cost of \$19 billion by 2013, particularly given how little capability we are getting in return. The CBO shows us that this spending is not necessary and that a reasonable alternative of \$3 billion annually is possible.

suing the programs included in CBO's missile defense projection will cost an additional \$3 billion a year, on average, peaking at about \$19 billion in 2013." For this report, CBO considered the likely possibility that the costs of weapon systems will grow well beyond what was anticipated and the very good chance that the Pentagon will continue to conduct overseas operations to comprise its "cost risk."

In determining the potential future expenditures on missile defense, the CBO came up with a ballistic missile defense system architecture that is fairly similar from the layered systems approach favored by MDA; however, there are some

key differences. In the CBO's missile defense architecture is an expansion of the Ground-based Midcourse Missile Defense (GMD) system, with more radars and interceptors being built and fielded; a deployment of the Space Tracking and Surveillance System (STSS) by 2017; a boostphase kinetic energy interceptor starting to be fielded in 2013; seven Airborne Laser (ABL) aircraft acquired by 2017; and last, "the assumption that DOD will purchase as planned the Patriot Advanced Capability 3 short-range missile defense system as well as eventually procure the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense system."

This architecture is close to what MDA has been touting; however, it appears to leave out the Aegis Ballistic Missile Defense system, which if included would add greatly to missile defense expenditures. The timeline of fielding STSS by 2017 generously allows for the STSS to continue its slippage. In August 2005, MDA officials had thought the first two satellites could be launched in 2007, but with reports of \$200 million being cut from the program in the next presidential budgetary request, it will be delayed yet again for an indeterminate amount of time.

Seven ABLs, however, seems unrealistic, given how much trouble MDA has had getting the first one to work properly. Indeed, rumors have been swirling for years about its possible cancellation. Finally, CBO seems to have backed away from the hot-button topic of putting interceptors in space, a program that MDA, in its last budget request, had considered beginning in 2008.

Next, CBO examined the annual demand for missile defense in-

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brings into question just what it is that troops are complaining about. Up to now, neither the Army nor the Marines have performed any service-wide survey of troops' experiences in combat and therefore do not know how widespread is the low confidence or to what extent it is based on experience rather than rumor.

Nonetheless, the Army and Marine Corps seem to have decided what the solution is: Their reports state the rounds are lethal, for example, "as long as the shots were in the head or chest." But not all troops are, or can be, expert marksmen, and most rarely have the time and presence of mind in combat for minutely aimed shots. Telling soldiers and Marines in the chaos of war to aim

better is a bureaucrat's solution, not a real one.

Fortunately, there might be a way to address the problem. The DOD's inspector general has announced it will study whether U.S. troops in Iraq have the equipment they need, and the Marines have announced an inquiry of returning troops. This research should include a broad, representative survey of troops' direct experiences in combat with their weapons. If the valid complaints about poor lethality are widespread, there should be an immediate, thorough, and independent evaluation of the nature of the problem. Only then, can meaningful solutions be identified.

In the meantime, troops who do not have confidence in their weapons should be permitted to equip themselves with alternate assault rifles and pistols, either from stocks of previous designs currently available in DOD's inventory or weapons, such as AK-47s, which are available, complete with ammunition, in huge numbers in Iraq right now.

In 2004, a furor broke out when reports reached Washington that many Humvee vehicles in Iraq lacked armor and Americans were maimed and killed as a result. Congress quickly flooded defense budgets with funding for armor. Any problems in American infantry weapons are far more serious and can mean even more needless American casualties. If the DOD inspector general and the services do not move out on the needed research immediately, they should be ordered to do so by Congress.

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vestment resources from 2006-2024. With cost risk, that would have an average yearly cost of \$13 billion; without cost risk, it drops to \$10 billion annually.

CBO then explained that its "evolutionary alternative" for missile defense would drop the annual demand for missile defense investment over that same timeframe to \$3 billion annually (including cost risk). This alternative would bring missile defense deployment to an abrupt halt. According to the CBO, under this option, "DOD would deploy no additional ground-, sea-, air-, or space-based missile defenses beyond those already in place. Continuing efforts would be confined solely to research and testing of missile defense concepts."

The CBO's evolutionary alternative for missile defense investment actually makes sense. The bal-

listic missile defense system being worked on by the Pentagon has so many holes in it, and depends on such a variety of unfinished, rudimentary technologies, that it would make sense to stop fielding it and instead focus on improving what we have. Case in point: the interceptor for the GMD system. Despite the fact that an operationally configured kill vehicle has never made a successful intercept during testing, MDA has gone ahead and fielded 10 of the interceptors, with vague promises of making corrections in theater should the need arise.

Sadly, given the politicized climate surrounding missile defense and the overheated promises of its capabilities, it seems extremely unlikely that this administration will stop plans for fielding the system, as this would more or less be an admission of failure. Any statement that missile defense, in its present incarnation, provides a "limited" defense

would be nullified by a reversal of the deployment decision. To be blunt, if missile defense is doing so great, why wouldn't it be deployed? Missile defense has backed itself into a corner. The Pentagon's budget request for FY 2007, to be released next month, will tell us by how much.

The United States cannot afford to have the cost of missile defense double to an annual cost of \$19 billion by 2013, particularly given how little capability we are getting in return. The CBO shows us that this spending is not necessary and that a reasonable alternative of \$3 billion annually is possible. Additionally, this level of funding can allow missile defense to naturally evolve past its research and development stage at a more realistic pace.

The full text of this article, with graphs, can be found on CDI's website: http://www.cdi.org/program/index.cfm?programid=6

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

New WSI Brussels Website Launched

The World Security Institute's Brussels office has successfully launched the new WSI Brussels website!

"Defence-Europe.org will be a new gateway to the world of European security and defense politics, debates and missions. Our aim is to present a balanced overview of the current discussions in Brussels, explaining their purpose and background in a manner accessible to the general public," said former WSI Brussels Director, Tomáš Valášek. Please visit *www.Defence-Europe.org* to learn more about the WSI Brussels office.

On Feb. 1, Mark Burgess, a former research analyst with the Center for Defense Information, replaced Valášek as the director of WSI Brussels. Valášek will be taking a two year sabatical to head a new directorate within the Slovakian Ministry of Defense.

CDI Experts Featured in Lord of War

Senior Analyst Rachel Stohl and Senior Advisor Hon. Philip E. Coyle, III, both of the World Security Institute's Center for Defense Information, are prominently featured in the new documentary, "Making a Killing: Inside the International Arms Trade," available on the newly released *Lord of War* DVD. Coyle and Stohl are featured along with several other notable small arms experts providing in-depth analysis of the international arms trade.

The documentary highlights the methods and consequences of

both the illegal and the legal international trade in small arms. Covering a wide range of topics, from the use of small arms in conflicts in West Africa and the origins of the ubiquitous AK-47, to child soldiering and arms brokering, the documentary discusses the hard reality behind the events dramatized in Lord of War. Using footage from the film as well as from real events, and narrated by incisive expert commentary, "Making a Killing" engagingly illustrates why small arms and light weapons have been rightly called weapons of mass destruction.

Eurasia Security Digest Now Available

In 2005, the Washington Profile Information Agency launched the Eurasia Security Digest (ESD) biweekly newsletter. This digest monitors Russian-language media outlets in Russia and the former Soviet republics for security-related headlines and provides an Internet-delivered roundup of relevant news to targeted audiences in the United States and Europe. Apart from covering official news, ESD extends covering official news, ESD extends covering official news, ESD extends covering official news.

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erage to unconfirmed reports that might be of interest to security analysts, monitors opinion polls and surveys, and includes background notes, bios of news-making individuals, and brief analyses of pressing issues.

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Straus Project Claims Victory in Fundraising Challenge

Almost 2,400 individuals made new or increased gifts in 2005 totaling \$307,866 to meet the \$300,000 dollar-for-dollar Straus Challenge Grant! Their contributions, and that of WSI Board Member Phil Straus, Jr., will support this new intitiative led by Project Director Winslow Wheeler to involve those with demonstrated, practical expertise, not just academic backgrounds, to better inform Congress, the executive branch, the press, and the public on key defense issues. CDI wishes to thank all of its supporters for their generosity in helping it reach this

New Weekly e-Newsletter Launched

The World Security Institute's new weekly e-newsletter, "Weekly Security Review," provides the latest expert analysis on international security issues. Subscribing to the free service brings you analyses from the Center for Defense Information, a division of the World Security Institute, and WSI's International Media and Program offices in China, Russia, and Belgium. The weekly enewsletter will also update you on upcoming World Security Institute events, broadcasts from our acclaimed Azimuth Media division, and recent job and internship openings in our divisions. To subscribe, please send an email to:

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