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GAO: With no reliable schedule and risk planning for Guam, buildup could result in cost overruns and delays



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Twenty years in the making and counting, Guam is still waiting for the full implementation of the Department of Defense's realignment to the Asia Pacific Region. For two decades, the plan, although revised a few years ago, has been to move 4,100 Marines to Guam; 2,700 to Hawaii, 800 to the U.S. mainland, and 1,300 on a rotational basis to Australia.

The Government Accountability Office this week issued a report examining the realignment initiatives. Although the GAO determined the Defense Department has taken steps to develop plans for infrastructure and schedules for its relocation efforts, for Guam specifically the schedule is not reliable and DOD has not completed its risk planning for infrastructure. The GAO also found that the Marine Corps has not identified its strategy to address construction risks including labor shortages and endangered species protection. Without a reliable schedule and risk planning for Guam, the GAO notes that the buildup could result in cost overruns and delays.

The federal government's failure to address the labor shortage in Guam, in particular, its denials of H2B visas, was one of the main reasons Governor Eddie Baza Calvo announced on Thursday that he is no longer supporting the military buildup. Calvo even went so far as announcing plans to join a lawsuit filed by the Guam Contractors Association against the federal government for the denials. "What used to be more than 1,000 foreign laborers is reduced to 178 foreign laborers — this is woefully inadequate to fill the need for nearly 4,000 laborers to help construct facilities for the Department of Defense shifting military forces from Okinawa to Japan. It's insufficient even for the organic growth Guam is experiencing outside of the fence — and the buildup adds to the need," a press

release from the Governor's office stated.

The Guam Contractors Association issued a statement on Friday, welcoming the lawsuit, "this issue is not only about the construction industry, but has an impact on many businesses on Guam and is already casting a shadow over Guam's economy," a press release stated. The GCA, however, remains steadfast in its support of the military buildup. A hearing on the federal case is scheduled for May.



Report to Congressional Committees

April 2017

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