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Army Drawdown and Restructuring: Background and Issues for Congress

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Summary

On January 26, 2012, senior DOD leadership unveiled a new defense strategy based on a review of potential future security challenges, current defense strategy, and budgetary constraints. This new strategy envisions a smaller, leaner Army that is agile, flexible, rapidly deployable, and technologically advanced. This strategy will rebalance the Army's global posture and presence, emphasizing where potential problems are likely to arise, such as the Asia-Pacific region and the Middle East.

As part of the Administration's original proposal, two armored brigade combat teams (ABCTs) in Europe were to be eliminated out of a total of eight BCTs that would be cut from Active Army force structure. The Army had originally stated that it might cut more than eight BCTs from the Army's current 44 Active BCTs. Army endstrength would go from 570,000 in 2010 to 490,000 by the end of 2017. As part of this reduction, the Army would no longer be sized to conduct large-scale, protracted stability operations but would continue to be a full-spectrum force capable of addressing a wide range of national security challenges. The Army National Guard and Army Reserves were not targeted for significant cuts.

On June 25, 2013, the Army announced it would cut 12 BCTs from the Active Army as well as a number of unspecified support and headquarters units. As part of this initiative, infantry and armored BCTs would receive a third maneuver battalion plus additional engineering and fires capabilities. In addition, National Guard BCTs would also be restructured in a similar fashion. Due to the impact of sequestration, the Army also decided to accelerate the Active Army drawdown to 490,000 soldiers by two years—these cuts would now need to be completed by the end of 2015. In an effort to reduce costs, the Army also announced that it would examine cutting all two-star and higher headquarters staffs by 25%—a figure that includes soldiers, Army civilians, and contractors.

In January 2014, it was reported that the Administration's FY2015 Budget Guidance will direct the Army to reduce its Active Component end strength to 420,000 soldiers—a level that Army leadership has stated will not permit it to implement the nation's defense strategy. The Army is also proposing reducing and restructuring its Aviation brigades, and there are concerns about the Army National Guard losing all of its AH-64 Apache attack helicopters under this proposal.

On February 24, 2014, Secretary of Defense Hagel announced that he would recommend reducing Army active endstrength to between 450,000 to 440,000 soldiers, and if sequestration-level cuts were imposed in 2016, the Army would be required to drawdown to a 420,000 soldier active force.

The Army drawdown will likely be achieved in large degree by controlling accessions (i.e., the number of people allowed to join the Army). If limiting accessions is not enough to achieve the desired endstrength targets, the Army can employ a variety of involuntary and voluntary drawdown tools authorized by Congress, such as Selective Early Retirement Boards (SERBs) and Reduction-in-Force (RIF). Voluntary tools that the Army might use include the Voluntary Retirement Incentive, the Voluntary Separation Incentive, Special Separation Bonuses, Temporary Early Retirement Authority, the Voluntary Early Release/Retirement Program, and Early Outs.

Potential issues for Congress include what is the appropriate size of the active component force and the balance between active and reserve components. This report will be updated.

Contents

Importance to Congress 1
The Administration's Decision to Drawdown and Restructure the Army 1
Background 1
January 6, 2011, News Briefing with Secretary of Defense Gates and Chairman Admiral Mullen 1
January 26, 2012, Administration Major Budget Decision Briefing 2
January 2012 Drawdown and Restructuring Proposals 3
Proposal to Reduce Endstrength 3
Units to Be Eliminated 4
Units to Be Realigned and Restructured 5
Changes in Unit Basing 5
Impact on the National Guard and Reserve 6
Force Structure Announcements 6
DOD Announces U.S. Army in Europe Force Structure Changes 6
June 2013 Army Force Structure and Stationing Announcement 8
Specific BCTs to Be Cut Between FY2013 and FY2017 8
Army to Accelerate Downsizing 9
How the Army Plans to Achieve Accelerated Downsizing 9
National Guard to Also Reorganize BCTs 9
Army to Cut Headquarters Staffs 10
Active Army Endstrength Reduction to 420,000 Soldiers 10
Army Aviation Brigade Restructuring 11
Details of Aviation Brigade Restructuring 11
National Guard Association Objections to the Army's Aviation Restructuring Proposal 12
Secretary of Defense Hagel's February 24, 2014, Remarks on the FY2015 Budget Preview 12
Force Reduction and Force-Shaping Programs 14
The Human Dimension of a Force Drawdown 14
Accessions 15
Officer Accessions 15
2013 Officer Selective Early Retirement Board (SERB) Announced 15
Protecting the Institutional Army 16
Potential Issues for Congress 16
What Is the Appropriate Size of the Active Component Force? 16
Active Component/Reserve Component Force Mix 17

Tables

Table 1. Army's Proposed Aviation Brigade Restructuring 11

Table A-1. Army Retention Control Points (RCP) 22
Table A-2. Promotion Timing and Opportunity 22

Appendixes

Appendix A. Title 10 Drawdown Authorities 19
Appendix B. Brief History of Past Army Drawdowns 23

Contacts

Author Information 25

Importance to Congress

The Administration's proposal to reduce the size of the Army as well as restructure units and headquarters has national security implications that Congress will need to consider as part of its oversight and authorizations and appropriations role. In terms of size of the force, Congress sets the endstrength for both the Active and Reserve components of the Army. Congress also authorizes and appropriates funds needed for Army restructuring, training exercises, equipment, basing, and infrastructure, as well as the various manpower management tools the Army could use to drawdown the force. Administration decisions about the structure of the Army can have a significant impact on Army bases in a Member's district or state, which can also have economic ramifications for communities around or near affected bases. The Administration's downsizing and restructuring proposals also can have a significant impact on local and state defense-related industries. Lastly, soldiers and their families who might be affected by the Administration's decisions constitute a unique element of Members' constituencies.

The Administration's Decision to Drawdown and Restructure the Army

Most experts would agree the Administration's decision to reduce the size of the Army was an outgrowth of its decision to withdraw U.S. forces from Iraq by the end of 2011 and the stated intent of handing over security responsibilities for Afghanistan to the Afghan government and Afghan National Army by the end of 2014. The United States has routinely drawn down forces upon the completion of a major conflict, eschewing a "large standing army" during peacetime—although it can be argued that in a post-9/11 world, "peacetime" is a somewhat subjective term. A brief history of past Army drawdowns can be found at **Appendix B.**

Background

The foundation for the Army's drawdown and restructuring was laid in early 2011. A year later in January 2012, the Administration provided additional details on proposed force structure and global posture.

January 6, 2011, News Briefing with Secretary of Defense Gates and Chairman Admiral Mullen[1]

On January 6, 2011, Secretary of Defense Robert Gates and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Admiral Mike Mullen held a news briefing "announcing a number of decisions and measures that mark the next major step in this department's reform agenda." These decisions and measures, largely taken in response to fiscal pressures, involved a variety of cross-service actions, including consolidating and eliminating headquarters and organizations, modifying or eliminating weapon systems programs, and force reductions. Army force structure-specific actions included

- reduce Active Army endstrength by 27,000 troops starting in 2015, and
- acknowledgement there was "excess" force structure in Europe but no action would be taken until 2015 or without consultation with allies.

[1] Information from this section is taken from U.S. Department of Defense News Transcript, "DOD News Briefing with Secretary Gates and Admiral Mullen from the Pentagon," January 6, 2011.

Secretary Gates noted the Army was also in the process of divesting itself of an additional 22,000 troops who were temporarily authorized in 2010 and this temporary endstrength would be eliminated by 2013. Combined with the 27,000 Active permanent endstrength reductions that will start in 2015, this represents a reduction of 49,000 Active Duty troops from FY2011 levels.

January 26, 2012, Administration Major Budget Decision Briefing[2]

On January 26, 2012, senior DOD leaders unveiled a new defense strategy, based on a review of the defense strategy at the time and budgetary constraints. This new strategy envisioned

- a smaller, leaner military that is agile, flexible, rapidly deployable, and technologically advanced;
- rebalancing global posture and presence, emphasizing where potential problems are likely to arise, such as the Asia-Pacific region and the Middle East;
- maintaining presence elsewhere in the world (Europe, Africa, and Latin America), using innovative partnerships, strengthening key alliances, and developing new partnerships;
- being able to quickly confront and defeat aggression from any adversary anytime, anyplace; and
- protecting and prioritizing key investments in technology and new capabilities as well as the capacity to grow, adapt, mobilize, and surge when needed.

During this briefing, the following Army force structure decisions were highlighted:

- **Asia-Pacific/Middle East:** Sustain Army structure in the Pacific;
- **Europe and Global Partners:**
  - Adjust Our Posture in Europe:
    - Eliminate two forward-stationed Army heavy brigades;
    - Maintain NATO Article 5 commitments[3] and ensure interoperability with allied forces by allocating a U.S.-based brigade to NATO Response Force;[4] and
    - Rotate U.S.-based Army units to Europe for training and exercises.
- **Forces No Longer Sized for Long-Term Stability Operations:**

[2] Information in this section is taken from U.S. Department of Defense News Transcript, "Major Budget Decisions Briefing from the Pentagon," presented by Secretary of Defense Leon E. Panetta and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Martin E. Dempsey, January 26, 2012; U.S. Department of Defense News Transcript, "Major Budget Decisions Briefing from the Pentagon," presented by Deputy Secretary of Defense Ashton B. Carter and Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Admiral James A. Winnefeld Jr., January 26, 2012; and U.S. Department of Defense Publication, Sustaining U.S. Global Leadership: Priorities for 21st Century Defense, January 2012.

[3] According to NATO, http://www.nato.int/terrorism/five.htm, Article 5 of the Washington Treaty is the basis of a fundamental principle of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. It provides that if a NATO Ally is the victim of an armed attack, each and every other member of the Alliance will consider this act of violence as an armed attack against all members and will take the actions it deems necessary to assist the Ally attacked. This is the principle of collective defense.

[4] According to NATO, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_49755.htm, The NATO Response Force (NRF) is a highly ready and technologically advanced multinational force made up of land, air, maritime, and special forces components that the Alliance can deploy quickly to wherever it is needed. It is comprised of three parts: a command and control element from the NATO Command Structure; the Immediate Response Force, a joint force of about 13,000 high-readiness troops provided by Allies; and a Response Forces Pool, which can supplement the Immediate Response Force when necessary.

    - Reduce Active Army endstrength. Army will go from about 570,000 in 2010 to 490,000 in the Future Year Defense Plan (FYDP); and
    - Preserve expertise in security force assistance and counterinsurgency.
- **Protecting the Potential for Future Adjustments:**
    - Retain a slightly more senior force in the Active Army to allow growth if needed;
    - Preserve Army organizational structure and training force to allow growth if needed; and
    - Retain a Ready and Capable Reserve Component;
        - Reduce Army National Guard endstrength slightly;
        - Sustain increased readiness prior to mobilization; and
        - Maintain key combat-support and combat service-support capabilities.

In addition to force structure and endstrength decisions, the Administration also made the following specific commitments:

- A significant land force presence would be maintained in Korea as well as an operationally responsive peacetime presence in the Middle East;
- In light of repositioning of forces overseas and eliminating force structure, the President would ask Congress to authorize the use of the base realignment and closure (BRAC) process;
- The new strategic guidelines will require the Army to return to full-spectrum training, develop a versatile mix of capabilities, formations, and equipment to succeed on land, including environments where access will be contested; and
- Align a brigade combat team (BCT) with each geographic combatant command.

January 2012 Drawdown and Restructuring Proposals

Proposal to Reduce Endstrength[5]

On January 27, 2012, Army Chief of Staff General Odierno noted 90,000 soldiers were deployed in support of operations and another 96,000 soldiers forward-stationed overseas in nearly 150 countries. DOD announced the Army would reduce the size of the Active Army starting in 2012 from a post-9/11 peak in 2010 of about 570,000 soldiers to 490,000 soldiers by the end of 2017. DOD planned for only marginal reductions in the Army National Guard and none in the Army Reserve. Army leadership stated endstrength reductions would "follow a drawdown ramp that allows us to take care of soldiers and families while maintaining a ready and capable force."[6]

[5] Information in this section is taken from DOD White Paper "Defense Budget Priorities and Choices," January 2012 and transcripts of Army Chief of Staff Raymond T. Odierno Army Briefing on the FY-13 Budget Request, January 27, 2012.

[6] Transcripts of Army Chief of Staff Raymond T. Odierno, Army Briefing on the FY-13 Budget Request, January 27, 2012.

Army leaders noted the 490,000-strong Army would have the following advantages over the 482,000-strong Army of 2001:

- a combat-seasoned force;
- increased investments in special operations forces and the cyber domain;
- drastically improved command and control capabilities, which significantly enhance mission command;
- modularized brigade combat teams (BCTs);
- increased aviation assets;
- an operational National Guard and Reserve affording increased depth and capacity; and
- lessons learned over 10 years of combat.[7]

Units to Be Eliminated[8]

During the January 27, 2012, briefing, DOD and Army leaders stated they planned to eliminate at least eight Active Duty BCTs from existing force structure. Army leaders also stated two armored BCTs[9] (ABCTs) would be removed from Europe and these two ABCTs would not be re-stationed in the United States but instead eliminated from Army force structure. On February 16, 2012, the Army issued an information paper to Congress[10] that provided additional details. According to the paper:

- The Army's V Corps Headquarters would not return to Europe upon the completion of its deployment to Operation Enduring Freedom in late FY2013. The long-term future and location of the V Corps Headquarters would be addressed as part of the Total Army Analysis (TAA) process in which overall force structure and endstrength issues are evaluated.
- Two ABCTs would be inactivated (the 170th BCT in FY2013 and the 172nd BCT in FY2014).
- Additional Army enabler forces, potentially in the range of 2,500 soldiers, could be reduced from Europe as part of the TAA process.[11]

Press reports at the time suggested the Army might cut more than eight BCTs Army-wide.[12] These additional cuts would most likely result from a reorganization of the BCT's structure. It was also reported that the Army would cut more ABCTs, as DOD had issued strategic guidance calling for a leaner and more rapidly deployable force. As already noted, the 170th ABCT stationed in Baumholder, Germany, and the 172nd ABCT stationed in Grafenwoehr, Germany, would be

[7] Ibid.

[8] Ibid.

[9] Armored BCTs were formerly known as Heavy BCTs (HBCTs).

[10] Army Information Paper, "Subject: Army Force Structure in Europe," February 16, 2012.

[11] Ibid.

[12] Information in this section is taken from Sebastian Sprenger, "Odierno: Army May Cut More Than Eight Brigade Combat Teams," *InsideDefense.com,* January 27, 2012; Michelle Tan and Richard Sandza, "European Pullout: Plan to Move 2 BCTs and Up to 10,000 Soldiers Could Start in October," *Army Times,* January 23, 2012; and Michelle Tan, "Reduction to Include 8 BCTs," *Army Times,* February 6, 2012.

eliminated. The 170th ABCT was deactivated on October 9, 2012.[13] In terms of cuts to forces in the Pacific, the Chief of Staff of the Army, General Raymond T. Odierno, reportedly stated Army forces in the Pacific would remain at current levels, with plans to keep Stryker, infantry, and aviation units—about 10,300 soldiers—at Schofield Barracks in Hawaii.[14]

Units to Be Realigned and Restructured[15]

In terms of realigning and restructuring the Active Army, DOD and the Army announced in January 2012 that

- active forces would no longer be sized to conduct large and protracted stability operations;
- Army force structure would be sustained in the Pacific, and a persistent presence would be maintained in the Middle East;
- Army forces will rotate through Europe and other regions on a more frequent basis;
- a U.S.-based heavy brigade would be allocated to the NATO Response Force;
- a brigade combat team (BCT) would be aligned with each geographic combatant command to provide cultural and language training to support engagement operations; and
- BCTs and enabling units would be examined for optimum design, which could lead to further BCT reductions if the Army decides to increase the capability of BCTs.

Press reports offered additional details on how BCTs might be restructured.[16] Prior to the 2003 decision to restructure the Army to a modular force, all combat brigades had three maneuver battalions (infantry, armor, or mechanized infantry). Under modularity, only Stryker battalions have three maneuver battalions, and infantry BCTs (IBCTs) and armored BCTs (ABCTs) have only two, based on a contested belief at the time that additional intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) units added to the BCT could substitute for the third maneuver battalion. Reportedly, Army leaders who had returned from Iraq and Afghanistan lobbied to add back the third maneuver battalion to IBCTs and ABCTs, arguing this additional battalion could enable more successful combat, patrol, and site-security operations.

Changes in Unit Basing[17]

On January 27, 2012, Secretary of Defense Panetta indicated that he would ask Congress to authorize a Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) process whereby bases in the United States

[13] "USAREUR to Cut Civilian Jobs," *Army Times,* November 30, 2012.

[14] William Cole, "Army Won't Shrink Force Level in Pacific Region, General Says," *Honolulu Star-Advertiser,* January 18, 2102.

[15] Information in this section is taken from DOD White Paper "Defense Budget Priorities and Choices," January 2012 and transcripts of Army Chief of Staff Raymond T. Odierno Army Briefing on the FY-13 Budget Request, January 27, 2012.

[16] Sebastian Sprenger, "Odierno: Army May Cut More Than Eight Brigade Combat Teams," *InsideDefense.com,* January 27, 2012.

[17] Information in this section is taken from U.S. Department of Defense News Transcript, "Major Budget Decisions Briefing from the Pentagon," presented by Secretary of Defense Leon E. Panetta and Chairman of the Joints Chiefs of Staff General Martin E. Dempsey, January 26, 2012; U.S. Department of Defense News Transcript, "Major Budget

can be realigned or closed. If Congress approves BRAC, it is likely some Army bases could be realigned or closed, which could require some Army units to move to other new or existing bases. With the reliance on an increased use of rotational forces under the Administration's new strategic guidelines, it is likely a number of smaller bases—some permanent but many temporary—might need to be established to accommodate these rotational forces. In terms of the two ABCTs eliminated from Europe, it is not known what will happen to the Army bases at Baumholder and Grafenwohr.

Impact on the National Guard and Reserve[18]

As previously noted, under DOD's 2012 strategic guidance, the Army intends to

- retain a ready and capable reserve component;
- reduce National Guard endstrength slightly;
- sustain increased readiness prior to mobilization; and
- maintain key combat-support and combat service-support capabilities.

Like previous pronouncements, no specifics were provided regarding reductions in Reserve Component endstrength and how readiness and support capabilities would be maintained.

Chief of Staff of the Army General Raymond T. Odierno reportedly stated the Pentagon's decision to cut the active force by 80,000 soldiers would place greater reliance on the National Guard and Reserves, "particularly if the United States gets into two major long-term combat operations at the same time."[19] The report further noted the United States would be required to keep its reserve forces at a higher state of readiness than it did before the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. General Odierno suggested if the Army had to fight two large, simultaneous, long-term wars; the United States would rely more heavily on allies and request a large-scale mobilization of the reserves. The reserves would also be used to "buy time to increase the size of the active component," and because of the requirement for higher readiness, a new readiness model would need to be developed to keep the National Guard and Reserves at a higher state of readiness.[20]

Force Structure Announcements

DOD Announces U.S. Army in Europe Force Structure Changes

On March 1, 2013, DOD announced a series of force structure changes for the U.S. Army in Europe from the period 2013 through 2016. The text of the news release is as follows:[21]

DOD Announces U.S. Army in Europe Force Structure Changes

Decisions Briefing from the Pentagon," presented by Deputy Secretary of Defense Ashton B. Carter and Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Admiral James A. Winnefeld Jr., January 26, 2012; and U.S. Department of Defense Publication, Sustaining U.S. Global Leadership: Priorities for 21st Century Defense, January 2012.

[18] Ibid.

[19] Information in this section is taken from Lolita C. Baldor, "Army Chief Sees Greater Role for Guard and Reserves," *Norfolk Virginian-Pilot,* January 27, 2012.

[20] Transcripts of Army Chief of Staff Raymond T. Odierno, Army Briefing on the FY-13 Budget Request, January 27, 2012.

[21] U.S. Department of Defense News Release, "DOD Announces U.S. Army in Europe Force Structure Changes," No. 120-13, March 1, 2013.

The Department of Defense announced today that Germany-based elements of the 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team will relocate within Germany and to Italy in summer 2013. A total of four battalions will be relocated. Two battalions will relocate from Germany to Italy; the brigade's headquarters and one infantry battalion will relocate from Caserma Ederle in Vicenza, Italy, to the Army's new facility in Del Din (formerly known as Dal Molin) in Vicenza. The other two battalions will relocate from Schweinfurt and Bamberg, Germany, to Grafenwoehr, Germany. In addition to the previously announced inactivation of V Corps Headquarters and the 170th and 172nd Infantry Brigades, the disposition of 2,500 enabling forces are provided as follows:

In 2012:

170th Infantry Brigade, Smith Barracks, Baumholder, Germany – **Inactivated**

167th Medical Detachment (Optometry), Grafenwoehr, Germany – **Inactivated**

In 2013:

535th Engineer Company, Warner Barracks, Bamberg, Germany – **Inactivates**

12th Chemical Company, Conn Barracks, Schweinfurt, Germany – **Inactivates**

V Corps Headquarters, Clay Kaserne, Wiesbaden, Germany – **Inactivates**

172nd Infantry Brigade, Grafenwoehr, Germany – **Inactivates**

Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 391st Combat Service Support Battalion, Warner Barracks, Bamberg, Germany – **Inactivates**

B Detachment, 106th Finance Company, Katterbach Kaserne, Ansbach, Germany – **Inactivates**

42nd Engineer Company, Warner Barracks, Bamberg, Germany – **Returns to the United States**

99th Movement Control Team, Aviano Air Base, Italy – **Returns to the United States**

In 2014:

Headquarters, 18th Engineer Brigade, Conn Barracks, Schweinfurt, Germany – **Inactivates**

243 Engineer Detachment, Conn Barracks, Schweinfurt, Germany – **Inactivates**

54th Engineer Battalion, Warner Barracks, Bamberg, Germany – **Inactivates**

370th Engineer Company, Warner Barracks, Bamberg, Germany – **Inactivates**

7th Signal Brigade, Ledward Barracks, Schweinfurt, Germany – **Inactivates**

72nd Signal Battalion, Ledward Barracks, Schweinfurt, Germany – **Inactivates**

Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment, 95th Military Police Battalion, Sembach Kaserne, Kaiserslautern – **Inactivates**

630th Military Police Company, Warner Barracks, Bamberg, Germany – **Inactivates**

464th Military Police Platoon, Camp Ederle, Italy – **Inactivates**

511th Military Police Platoon, Livorno, Italy – **Inactivates**

541st Engineer Company, Warner Barracks, Bamberg, Germany – **Returns to the United States**

In 2015:

230th Military Police Company, Sembach Barracks, Kaiserslautern, Germany – **Inactivates**

3rd Battalion, 58th Aviation Regiment (Airfield Operations Battalion), Storck Barracks, Illesheim, Germany – **Returns to the United States**

In 2016:

69th Signal Battalion, Grafenwoehr, Germany – **Inactivates**

525th Military Police Detachment (Military Working Dogs), Baumholder, Germany - **Returns to the United States**

1st Battalion, 214th General Support Aviation Regiment structure is reduced at Clay Kaserne, Wiesbaden, by 190 soldier spaces and at Landstuhl Heliport by 50 soldier spaces. Information on the disposition of other units in the closing U.S. military communities of Bamberg and Schweinfurt will be provided in the near future, as those force structure actions are determined. These actions are part of DOD's ongoing restructure of resources worldwide in line with our national defense strategy and in support of combatant commanders, NATO and our European allies.

June 2013 Army Force Structure and Stationing Announcement[22]

On June 25, 2013, the Army announced Active Component force structure decisions and stationing plans that it attributed to the fiscal constraints resulting from of the Budget Control Act of 2011 and the previously cited 2012 Defense Planning Guidance. The Army noted that additional force reductions would be required if "sequestration-driven funding reductions remain unmitigated."[23] In terms of force structure changes the Army stated it would

- Reorganize Infantry and Armored BCTs to restore the third maneuver battalion and increase engineer and fires capability;
- Reduce Active Component BCTs from 45 to 33; and
- Continue to grow aviation, special operations, missile defense, and cyber capabilities.

Specific BCTs to Be Cut Between FY2013 and FY2017

In addition to the previously announced cuts of the 170th and 172nd BCTs in Germany, the Army stated the following 10 BCTs would also be eliminated:

- 4th Stryker BCT, 2nd Infantry Division, Joint Base Lewis-McCord, WA;
- 3rd Armored BCT, 4th Infantry Division, Ft. Carson, CO;
- 3rd Armored BCT, 1st Armored Division, Ft. Bliss, TX;
- 4th Infantry BCT, 1st Infantry Division, Ft. Riley, KS;
- 4th Armored BCT, 1st Cavalry Division, Ft. Hood, TX;
- 4th Infantry BCT, 101st Airborne Division, Ft. Campbell, KY;
- 3rd Infantry BCT, 1st Infantry Division, Ft. Knox, KY;
- 3rd Infantry BCT, 10th Mountain Division, Ft. Drum, NY;
- 2nd Armored BCT, 3rd Infantry Division, Ft. Stewart, GA; and

[22] Information in this section is taken from Army Information Paper for Members of Congress, "Army Force Structure and Stationing," June 25, 2013 and Army Public Affairs Guidance on Army Force Structure and Stationing Decisions, June 24, 2013.

[23] Army Information Paper for Members of Congress, "Army Force Structure and Stationing," June 25, 2013.

- 4th Infantry BCT, 82nd Airborne Division, Ft. Bragg, NC.

These reductions will leave the Army with 12 Armored BCTs, 14 Infantry BCTs and seven Stryker BCTs.

As part of this announcement, the Army also noted that it would reduce and reorganize numerous non-BCT units—often referred to as enablers—as part of the drawdown. The Army did not provide specifics on these units as it did the BCTs to be cut, and providing a similar level of detail for these non-BCT units to be eliminated would be particularly helpful to Congress as it examines the potential national security impact of these force reductions.

Army to Accelerate Downsizing[24]

Reports suggest that:

> The impact of sequestration [in fiscal 2013], coupled with the threat of continued sequestration levels of funding, is forcing the Army to implement significant reductions to end-strength, readiness and modernization in order to generate short-term cost savings, we are accelerating the downsizing of the Army's active component end-strength to 490K by FY15 instead of FY17. Additionally, we will maintain a certain number and mix of units at a higher level of readiness to meet contingency requirements.[25]

The implications of shortening the drawdown by two years could be quite profound. A significant level of effort will be involved in the planning and execution of these complex operations. This might also lead to a great deal of turbulence for the soldiers and their families as these units are rapidly disbanded.

How the Army Plans to Achieve Accelerated Downsizing[26]

In order to achieve this accelerated drawdown, the Army reportedly plans to use a "full menu of involuntary separation programs."[27] This new accelerated plan means the Army will reduce the Active Component by almost 42,000 soldiers by the end of September 2015 and that many soldiers with good service records and who are qualified for continued service will be involuntarily separated from the Army. The Army estimates that 5,000 officers and 20,000 enlisted soldiers will be forced to leave active duty through involuntary separation or early retirement. Reportedly, for the first time since the 1970s, the Army plans to convene reduction-in-force, or RIF, boards in early 2014 for captains and majors in over strength year groups. In addition to involuntary separations, the Army will reduce the number of soldiers and officers (usually newly commissioned second lieutenants) it brings into the Army each year.

National Guard to Also Reorganize BCTs[28]

An *Army Times* article also details the Army National Guard's reorganization plans:

> Six of the Guard's 28 BCTs will be reorganized this fiscal year, with the others to follow through fiscal 2018, said Lt. Gen. William Ingram, director of the Army National Guard.

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[24] Michelle Tan, "Army Accelerates BCT Overhaul by Two Years," *Army Times*, October 21, 2013.

[25] Ibid. Article attributes this quote from Col. Daniel King, a spokesman for Army Forces Command (FORSCOM).

[26] Information in this section is taken from Jim Tice, "High-Speed Drawdown: Army Ramps Up Force-Outs," *Army Times*, October 21, 2013.

[27] Ibid.

[28] Michelle Tan, "Army Accelerates BCT Overhaul by Two Years," *Army Times*, October 21, 2013.

> The goal is to have the Guard's primary fighting formations match those in the active Army, Ingram has said.
>
> Under the reorganization, each armored and infantry BCT will receive a third maneuver battalion. The Stryker brigades each have three maneuver battalions.
>
> The BCTs will receive additional engineer and fires capabilities.
>
> Once the reorganization is completed, each BCT will have about 4,500 soldiers, nearly 1,000 more than they do in their current configuration.
>
> The Guard's BCT reorganization will mirror that of the active Army, Ingram said. The plan is to take existing Guard units and align them with the BCTs, he said.
>
> The six BCTs that will be reorganized this fiscal year [FY 2014] are:
>
> - 56th BCT, 36th Infantry Division, Texas National Guard;
> - 29th BCT, Hawaii National Guard;
> - 76th BCT, Indiana National Guard;
> - 79th BCT, California National Guard;
> - 55th BCT, 28th Infantry Division, Pennsylvania National Guard; and
> - 1st BCT, 34th Infantry Division, Minnesota National Guard
>
> Plans call for six more BCTs to be reorganized in fiscal 2015, officials said. Another six will be converted in 2016, and five each will be done in fiscal 2017 and 2018.[29]

Army to Cut Headquarters Staffs[30]

In an effort to decrease costs, Army leadership is reportedly examining the possibility of cutting up to 25% of personnel assigned to two-star and above headquarters. These potential cuts include such organizations as Army Forces Command and Training and Doctrine Command, as well as Army corps and division headquarters. Also eligible for cuts are the Army's service component commands such as Army Africa and Army Pacific, which are part of the United States' nine combatant commands. These personnel cuts are not just limited to soldiers but also to Army civilians and contractors and would occur over the course of five years.

Active Army Endstrength Reduction to 420,000 Soldiers

In January 2014, it was reported the Administration's FY2015 Budget Guidance will direct the Army to reduce its active duty force to 420,000 soldiers, the Army National Guard from 354,000 to 315,000 and the Army Reserve from 205,000 to 185,000 by FY2019.[31] In terms of BCTs, at this force level, the Active Component would have 24 BCTs and the Army National Guard would have 22 BCTs.[32] According to the Army:

> An Army force structure of 24 AC and 22 RC BCTs lacks the capacity to conduct simultaneous major combat operations while defending the nation at home, sustaining

[29] Ibid.

[30] Paul McLeary and Michelle Tan, "A 25 Percent Cut for HQs," *Army Times,* September 2, 2013.

[31] Sebastian Sprenger, "DOD Makes it Official: Budget Cuts Will Shrink Army to 420,000 Soldiers," *InsideDefense.com,* January 10, 2014.

[32] Army Briefing, "Army Force Mix: Least Risk, Best Value," January 6, 2014.

minimal presence in critical regions, and retaining a Global Response Force (1 BCT) at the direction of the Commander-in-Chief.[33]

The Army has stated that a 450,000 Active Component, a 335,000 Army National Guard, and a 195,000 Army Reserve—28 active BCTs and 24 reserve BCTs (52 BCTs total)—is the "smallest acceptable force to implement the defense strategy."[34] If the Army does draw down to the 420,000 active duty force level, there will likely be a number of issues associated with eliminating additional BCTs and enabling forces as well. In addition, it is likely that both voluntary and involuntary separation programs will be pursued more aggressively to eliminate soldiers from the force.

Army Aviation Brigade Restructuring[35]

As part of its restructuring initiative, the Army is proposing restructuring Army aviation brigades as follows:

Table 1. Army's Proposed Aviation Brigade Restructuring

	Aviation Brigades	
	Current	Restructured
Active	13	10
Army National Guard	11	10
Army Reserve	1	2[a]

Source: Army Briefing, "Army Force Mix: Least Risk, Best Value," January 6, 2014, p. 6.

a. Adds an aviation brigade headquarters to command and control consolidated aircraft.

Details of Aviation Brigade Restructuring[36]

Additional details of this proposed restructuring include the following:

- Eliminating three airframes/fleets; reorganize and re-mission remaining aircraft to increase capacity to support combatant commanders, preserve readiness, cut costs, and increase support available to Governors [for Army National Guard].
  - Consolidate all AH-64 Apache attack helicopters in the Active Component [eliminates all AH-64 Apaches from Army National Guard]; along with unmanned aerial vehicles, these AH-64s will be employed in armed scout role as two models of the OH-58 Kiowa helicopters [currently serving as armed scouts] will be eliminated.
  - Transfer nearly all of active and half of Army National Guard LUH-72 Lakota light utility helicopters to the U.S. Army Aviation Center at Ft. Rucker, AL to serve as the new training helicopter and eliminate the current training helicopter (Jet Ranger).
  - Transfer 111 UH-60 Blackhawk utility helicopters from the Active Component to the Army National Guard.

[33] Ibid., p. 6.

[34] Ibid., p. 5.

[35] Army Briefing, "Army Force Mix: Least Risk, Best Value," January 6, 2014, p. 6.

[36] Ibid.

The Army contends this will free up funds to modernize Army aviation, improve Army pilot training, and better meet the operational demand for Army aviation. In terms National Guard aviation, the Army notes transferring 111 UH-60 Blackhawks to the National Guard will enhance the lift capability immediately available to governors, which could be beneficial for disaster relief/homeland defense operations.

National Guard Association Objections to the Army's Aviation Restructuring Proposal[37]

In its advocacy role for the Army National Guard, the National Guard Association noted its objections to the Army's proposal:

- By taking all AH-64s from the National Guard, they will lose attack and aerial reconnaissance capabilities.
- Elimination of AH-64s also means the loss of some of the Total Army's most experienced Apache pilots and maintainers.
- Eliminating AH-64s also eliminates a place for Active Component pilots and maintainers to serve should they leave active service.

Secretary of Defense Hagel's February 24, 2014, Remarks on the FY2015 Budget Preview[38]

On February 24, 2015, Secretary of Defense Hagel briefed the press on his recommendations to the President for the Defense Department's FY2015 Budget Request. His comments on the Army included:

> We seek a highly ready and capable Army, able to dominate any opponent across the full spectrum of operations. To achieve this, the Army must accelerate the pace and increase the scale of its post-war drawdown. Today, there are about 520,000 active-duty soldiers, which the Army had planned to reduce to 490,000. However, the Strategic Choices and Management Review and the QDR both determined that since we are no longer sizing the force for prolonged stability operations, an Army of this size is larger than required to meet the demands of our defense strategy. Given reduced budgets, it is also larger than we can afford to modernize and keep ready. We have decided to further reduce active-duty Army end-strength to a range of 440-450,000 soldiers.
>
> I have also accepted the Army's recommendation to terminate the current Ground Combat Vehicle program and re-direct the funds toward developing a next-generation platform. I have asked the leadership of the Army and the Marine Corps to deliver new, realistic visions for vehicle modernization by the end of this year.
>
> The changes to end strength would result in a smaller Army, but would help ensure the Army remains well-trained and clearly superior in arms and equipment. While this smaller capacity entails some added risk if we execute extended or simultaneous ground operations, our analysis showed that this force would be capable of decisively defeating aggression in one major combat theater – as it must be – while also defending the homeland and supporting air and naval forces engaged in another theater against an adversary. If

[37] From a National Guard Association briefing "The National Guard: The Affordable Solution for a Strong Defense," undated and an accompanying paper, "Two Plans for the Army National Guard But Only One Saves Dollars & Defense Capabilities," also undated.

[38] Remarks by Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel FY2015 Budget Preview, Pentagon Press Briefing Room, Monday, February 24, 2014.

sequestration-level cuts are re-imposed in 2016, the active-duty Army would have to draw down to an end strength of 420,000 soldiers.

The Army National Guard and Reserves will also draw down in order to maintain a balanced force. Today, the Army National Guard numbers about 355,000 soldiers and the Reserves about 205,000 soldiers. By 2017, under our recommendations, there would be 335,000 soldiers in the Army National Guard force structure and 195,000 in the Reserves. If sequestration returns in 2016, the Army National Guard would continue drawing down further, to 315,000. Army Reserves would draw down to 185,000.

We have protected the National Guard and Reserves from cuts to the extent possible, but to maintain a ready and capable force at a time of fiscal constraints, no component of DOD can be entirely exempted from reductions.

This five percent recommended reduction in Guard and Reserve soldiers is smaller than the 13 percent reduction in active-duty soldiers. I'm mindful that many in the Guard and Reserve community and in Congress have argued that the reserve component should be protected from cuts because they provide more troops at lower cost. If our priority was having the largest possible force in the event of a large-scale, prolonged war, that would be reasonable. However, our defense strategy calls for more than that. Surge capacity is just one factor, as we must prioritize readiness, capability, and agility. And while it is true that reserve units are less expensive when they are not mobilized, our analysis shows that a reserve unit is roughly the same cost as an active duty unit when mobilized and deployed.

Guardsmen and Reservists performed well in Iraq and Afghanistan. We could not have achieved what we did in either place without them. But experience shows that specialties requiring greater collective training to achieve combat proficiency and service integration should reside in the full-time force, where these capabilities will be more ready and available to commanders. What best serves our national security is when Guard and Reserve units complement the active force.

That's why we've recommended Army Guard Apache attack helicopters be transferred to active-duty units. The Active Army will transfer Blackhawk helicopters to the National Guard, where they will bolster the Guard's needed capabilities in areas like disaster relief and emergency response.

These changes to the Guard's helicopter fleet are part of a broader realignment of Army aviation designed to modernize its fleet and make it highly capable and more affordable. The force will retire its Kiowas, and the "JetRanger" training helicopters used at Fort Rucker. The Active Army's overall fleet would decrease by about 25 percent, but it would be significantly modernized under the President's budget plan.

The Guard's fleet of helicopters would decline by eight percent, but it would gain new Blackhawks and the Army will sustain the Guard's fleet of Light Utility Helicopters. If sequestration-level cuts are re-imposed in 2016, the Army would have to cut 50 of these helicopters from the Guard force.

While any force reduction has some risk, the future Guard helicopter force will still serve as an important operational and strategic complement to our active duty military, while also being equipped for state and federal requirements for homeland defense, disaster relief, and support to civil authorities.

In making these difficult decisions on the Guard and Reserves, we affirmed the value of a highly capable reserve component, while keeping the focus on how our military can best meet future demands given fiscal constraints. We made choices based on strategic

> priorities, clear facts, unbiased analysis, and fiscal realities… and with the bottom line focus on how best we can defend the United States.[39]

Force Reduction and Force-Shaping Programs

Historically, military drawdowns have been rather blunt instruments of national policy. As noted in the earlier descriptions of the drawdowns at the conclusion of World War II and Vietnam, the focus was primarily on immediate reductions in accessions and separating/discharging others as soon as possible. The rapid and poorly planned demobilization of Army forces in the past had a deleterious impact on morale, terminated many aspiring military careers, and released significant numbers of military personnel with limited transition assistance.

The recent post-Cold War drawdown was substantially different. Congress still determined the endstrength levels but provided a number of voluntary and involuntary tools to shape each year group of the force—officer, warrant officer, and enlisted. Voluntary separations were emphasized, and some of the tools had robust financial incentives. Few skills were exempt from consideration, and every soldier was vulnerable for separation at some point during nearly a decade of drawdown. It was also the first time that resources were focused on transition assistance and stressed the importance of working with military alumni, even after their separation.

Title 10 Drawdown Authorities are discussed in greater detail in **Appendix A.**

The Human Dimension of a Force Drawdown

For the past decade, U.S. military forces have been engaged in combat operations on two fronts—Iraq and Afghanistan. The deployments to these austere environments have been long—typically 7 to 12 months for ground forces, sometimes involuntarily extended to support surge operations and requiring the use of "Stop Loss" policies.[40] Deployments have also been frequent, sometimes with less than a year between rotations resulting in reduced "dwell time" for both active and reserve component personnel. These conflicts have often been very stressful for service members, spouses, and families as indicated by higher than normal divorce and suicide rates.[41]

Throughout this period, support from the American public and political leaders has been consistent. Many now refer to our servicemembers as "America's Heroes" and honor the wounded as "Wounded Warriors." They return home to welcome ceremonies and spontaneous outbreaks of applause in airports, and even those who may disagree with the war effort have been generally supportive of military personnel.

Soon the services will begin to transition from high-tempo combat operations to a more stable training and garrison environment, while simultaneously downsizing and reshaping the force. Those with multiple combat tours may feel that they have lost a common cause. Those with pride in the units that they fought with may now see those units eliminated or friends separated from the service either voluntarily or involuntarily. Those who have experienced a military focused on fighting insurgency on multiple fronts over the past decade will see a shift of emphasis to training for full-spectrum operations and individual professional development. The collective effect of these changes could result in a temporary degradation of individual morale and unit effectiveness.

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[39] Ibid., pp 6-8.

[40] For a complete description of the Stop Loss program, see CRS Report R40121, *U.S. Military Stop Loss Program: Key Questions and Answers*.

[41] Military Review, "Saving Military Families," by Captain (Navy) Gene Thomas Gomulka, January-February 2010.

The key for leaders at all levels will be to refocus and minimize these potentially negative impacts. However, reducing accessions has its own implications.

Accessions

It is assumed that the post-Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF)/Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) drawdown will focus primarily on reduced accessions, because a reduction in accessions significantly reduces the need for other voluntary and involuntary force shaping actions and their inherent negative implications.

The military acquires or procures new personnel annually—enlisted, warrant officer, and officer—through the enlisted recruiting process and officer accession programs. The number to be recruited or accessed is based on the congressionally established endstrength, which is published annually in the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA). With a known endstrength, the services can then project losses for the coming year, compare this to the endstrength target, and determine the number to be recruited and trained.

During the years of OIF/OEF, the Army generally recruited approximately 75,000 to 80,000 enlisted soldiers a year, initially to sustain an endstrength of 482,000 and, later, to incrementally grow the force to its eventual target strength of 562,000. As announced in the FY2013 President's Budget,[42] the Army will be required to draw down to an endstrength of 490,000 by FY2017, a reduction of 72,000.[43] With five years to accomplish, it appears that the accessions program could absorb a reduction of nearly 15,000 per year and still sustain the force over time, ensure the right mix of training and experience, and allow for reasonable promotion expectations.

Officer Accessions

In 2008, Congress authorized an increased enrollment at the U.S. Military Academy,[44] from 4,000 to 4,400, and the Army greatly expanded its Officer Candidate School (OCS) program at Fort Benning, GA, while also increasing the size of the Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) program. West Point and ROTC have four-year timelines associated with their programs, but the duration of the OCS program is measured in weeks rather than years. Therefore, to reduce officer accessions, OCS can be quickly ramped down with any additional decrements coming from the ROTC program and potentially reverting the service academies to their previous cap of 4,000 students.

2013 Officer Selective Early Retirement Board (SERB) Announced[45]

On March 22, 2013, the Army announced it would convene a Selective Early Retirement Board (SERB) in August 2013 to involuntarily retire up to 30% of Active Duty Colonels and Lieutenant Colonels. The Army states high retention rates and a reduction in officer requirements among senior officers have resulted in an excess of Colonels and Lieutenant Colonels, thereby

[42] Department of Defense, "Overview: Fiscal Year 2013 Budget Request," Office of the Under Secretary of Defense (Comptroller), February 2012.

[43] The FY2013 Budget also announced a drawdown for the Marine Corps from its current strength of 202,100 to 182,100, also by FY2017.

[44] §540, P.L. 110-417, October 14, 2008. Congress expanded each of the service academy programs—U.S. Military Academy, U.S. Naval Academy and the U.S. Air Force Academy from 4,000 to 4,400 as determined for any year as of the day before the last day of the academic year.

[45] Department of the Army Message, Selected Early Retirement Board dated March 22, 2013 and Jen Judson, "Army Plans to Involuntarily Retire Excess Colonels, Lieutenant Colonels," *InsideDefense.com*, April 3, 2013.

necessitating the SERB. In terms of levels of command, Colonels command brigade-sized units and Lieutenant Colonels command battalion-sized units. Both Colonels and Lieutenant Colonels also can serve as staff officers in division and higher level formations.

The SERB will consider Lieutenant Colonels who were not selected for promotion to Colonel two or more times as of the FY2012 Colonel Army Promotion Selection Board and Colonels with a date of rank of August 1, 2008, or earlier (five or more years of active duty time in grade). The SERB will also consider the records of every eligible officer and make recommendations for early retirement based on the best interest of the Army.

Protecting the Institutional Army[46]

In order to quickly reactivate mid-grade leaders in the event of a future ground war—the "retain a slightly more senior force in the Active Army to allow growth if needed" proposal from the January 2012 Drawdown and Restructuring Proposal—the Army plans to insulate from the drawdown about 90,000 soldiers from its institutional, non-operational portion of the service. Army service leaders reportedly will instead take an end strength cut of almost 80,000 soldiers from the operational Army. In order to retain mid-grade leaders needed to reactivate units, the Army had planned to put these personnel in units designed to mentor foreign security forces, but the Army is currently considering putting these individuals in Army educational institutions. If this does become policy, these mid-grade soldiers could replace Department of the Army Civilians and contractors presently serving in many of these billets.

Potential Issues for Congress

What Is the Appropriate Size of the Active Component Force?

On February 24, 2014, Secretary of Defense Hagel stated that he would recommend the following to the President:

- DOD will further reduce active-duty Army end-strength to a range of 440-450,000 soldiers;
- "If sequestration-level cuts are re-imposed in 2016, the active-duty Army would have to draw down to an end strength of 420,000 soldiers;" and
- "The Army National Guard and Reserves will also draw down in order to maintain a balanced force. Today, the Army National Guard numbers about 355,000 soldiers and the Reserves about 205,000 soldiers. By 2017, under our recommendations, there would be 335,000 soldiers in the Army National Guard force structure and 195,000 in the Reserves. If sequestration returns in 2016, the Army National Guard would continue drawing down further, to 315,000. Army Reserves would draw down to 185,000."[47]

As previously noted, Army leadership has stated a 450,000 soldier active component force is the "smallest acceptable force to implement the defense strategy" and a 420,000 soldier active force

[46] Information in this section is taken from Sebastian Sprenger, "Leaders Envision Institutional Army as Buffer Against Loss of Talent," *InsideDefense.com,* November 12, 2012.

[47] Remarks by Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel FY2015 Budget Preview, Pentagon Press Briefing Room, Monday, February 24, 2014, pp. 6-8.

provides "insufficient capacity; cannot implement defense strategy."[48] During a February 11, 2014, appearance at the Council on Foreign Relations, Chief of Staff of the Army General Raymond Odierno, reportedly noted:

> I think about 450,000 is right. At 420,000, that last 30,000 makes a huge difference in the capabilities that we have. You've got to remember there's a sunk cost in the Army. In other words, there's about 20 percent of our Army that has to be set just to run the institution in terms of training new soldiers, training officers, running the Army.[49]

Given DOD's proposed range of active endstrengths from 450,000 to 420,000 and the Army's contention that a 450,000 active soldier force is needed to execute the nation's defense strategy, further examination and discussion of these force levels might be warranted. Congress could decide to examine in detail with the Army the overall process employed by the Army to reach its minimal acceptable level of 450,000 of active duty soldiers. Aspects of this examination could include—but should not be limited to—the defense planning scenarios employed by the Army; allocation rules used by the Army to apportion forces in response to planning scenarios; whether Marine Corps units are included in the Army's analysis of ground forces required for various planning scenarios; and if the Army's rotational readiness model, the Army Force Generation (ARFORGEN) model, is "driving" the 450,000 active soldier minimum requirement. Such a comprehensive examination and ensuing discussion with Congress could promote greater understanding of the Army's current position or possibly identify an alternative active component endstrength, which would permit the Army to successfully execute the nation's defense strategy.

Active Component/Reserve Component Force Mix

Army leadership is currently on record stating that a minimum of 52 BCTs (28 active and 24 Army National Guard) under the 450,000 active duty plan is the "smallest acceptable force to implement the defense strategy."[50] Others representing Army National Guard interests suggest that the 52 BCT requirement can be met in a 420,000- strong active component Army by increasing the number of Army National Guard BCTs above Army-recommended levels.[51] Given these seemingly divergent positions and the reported level of debate, there appears to be no public agreement between the Army and National Guard on a common force structure to meet defense strategy requirements.

This seeming impasse could provide Congress with the opportunity to revisit the Active Component (AC)/Reserve Component (RC) force mix. Advocates for a larger reserve component argue that in many cases, the RC is cheaper than the AC, in part because AC troops receive a more generous pension benefit and make costly change-of-station moves every few years.[52] Pentagon leadership noted because RC units maintain a lesser degree of readiness, relying on them too much could put the nation at risk during a crisis.[53] What some are suggesting is that the balance between the AC and RC be reexamined and potentially some AC units the Army deems mission-essential be moved into the RC in order to achieve a degree of cost efficiency. This

[48] Army Briefing, "Army Force Mix: Least Risk, Best Value," January 6, 2014, p. 5

[49] Tony Bertuca, "Chief Doubles Down on Army's Requirement for 450,000 Active Soldiers," *InsideDefense.com,* February 14, 2014.

[50] Army Briefing, "Army Force Mix: Least Risk, Best Value," January 6, 2014, p. 5

[51] National Guard Association briefing "The National Guard: The Affordable Solution for a Strong Defense," no date given.

[52] Andrew Tilghman, "Advisory Board to Suggest Military Heavy on Reserves," *Army Times,* September 9, 2013.

[53] Ibid.

would not be an unprecedented action, as the Army as frequently rebalanced the AC/RC mix, but because this impacts the Active "full-time" Army and the "part-time" National Guard and Army Reserves—both of which have strong constituencies both inside and outside the Army—this tends to be a somewhat sensitive and sometimes contentious undertaking.

While it is possible that the AC and RC balance could be reexamined, the Army contends active forces are best suited unpredictable contingency operations due to their high state of readiness by virtue of their full-time status.[54] The Army further notes in order to build RC readiness, predictability is needed and anywhere from 80 to 195 pre- and post-mobilization preparation days were needed to prepare RC units for their planned deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan during the 2003-2012 period.[55] This training day requirement, as well as the need to train many units to a battalion or brigade level of proficiency, makes it extremely difficult to incorporate many types of RC units into the early phases of an operation as well as participate in certain types of missions such combined arms maneuver.[56] Given these circumstances, the Army suggests transferring AC units to the RC as a cost-saving measure could make them unavailable for short-notice or contingency operations and increase overall military risk.

Congress has already indicated an interest in examining Army force mix in greater detail. H.R. 3930, To Establish the National Commission on the Structure of the Army, and for Other Purposes, which was referred to the House Armed Services Committee on January 27, 2014, calls for, among other things, the establishment of a national commission to:

> Undertake a comprehensive study of the structure of the Army to determine the proper force mixture of the active component and reserve component, and how the structure should be modified to best fulfill current and anticipated mission requirements for the Army in a manner consistent with available resources and estimated future resources.[57]

While the Association of the U.S. Army (AUSA)—an Army advocacy group—reportedly views such as commission as "unnecessary" and stated it "would impede the Army's ability to implement spending reductions required by the 2011 Budget Control Act,"[58] it can be argued congressional involvement in the Army force mix debate could prove to be both beneficial and timely, given the apparent degree of divergence in the defense community on this issue.

[54] CRS conversations with Army Staff, February 21, 2014 and Army Briefing, "Army Force Mix: Least Risk, Best Value," January 6, 2014.

[55] Ibid.

[56] Army TRADDOC Pam 525-3-1, The United States Army Operating Concept 2016 – 2028, August 19, 2010, describes combined arms maneuver as "the application of the elements of combat power in a complementary and reinforcing manner to achieve physical, temporal, or psychological advantages over the enemy, preserve freedom of action, and exploit success." A more general description of combined arms maneuver is when one military force engages another nation's military force in direct combat such as the opening phases of Operation Iraqi Freedom in 2003 when U.S. forces attacked Iraqi ground forces in order to seize Baghdad and other political/military objectives in Iraq – an operation which lasted approximately 21 days.

[57] H.R. 3930, To Establish the National Commission on the Structure of the Army, and for Other Purposes, January 27, 2014.

[58] Michelle Tan, "AUSA Boss Takes Stand on Congress' Push to Protect Guard," *Defense News*, February 13, 2014.

Appendix A. Title 10 Drawdown Authorities[59]

Several authorities in Title 10 result in involuntary separation. They were used sparingly during the post-Cold War drawdown and always preceded by the offer of voluntary incentives. These involuntary tools include the following:

Title 10 Drawdown Authorities—Involuntary

Selective Early Retirement Boards (SERB)[60]

Selective Early Retirement is the involuntary retirement of senior officers who are (1) serving lieutenant colonels or commanders (Navy) who have been twice non-selected for promotion to colonel or captain (Navy) or (2) are serving colonels or captains (Navy) who have at least four years in grade and have not been selected for promotion. If not selected for SERB, an officer cannot be considered for another five years. Those selected must be retired not later than the first day of the seventh month after the Secretary concerned approves the recommendation for retirement. While considered involuntary, those selected will receive retired pay and remain eligible for military healthcare and the other benefits associated with military retirement.

Reduction-in-Force (RIF)[61]

Reduction-in-Force is the second involuntary program available for downsizing the officer cohorts. While SERB is focused on those with 20 or more years of service, RIF is directed at those with more than 6 but less than 20 years of service. While the post-Cold War drawdown emphasized voluntary separations and retirements, RIF was available (but used sparingly) if the voluntary programs did not generate adequate volunteers.

2012 Enlisted Qualitative Service Program (QSP)[62]

On March 14, 2012, the Army announced the initiation of the Enlisted Qualitative Service Program (QSP) directed toward the grades of staff sergeant through command sergeant major. Under these provisions, those soldiers under consideration for this program can opt to separate voluntarily in lieu of being subjected for review by the QSP board.

Title 10 Drawdown Authorities—Voluntary[63]

The drawdown tools available during the post-Cold War drawdown are still available to force planners, with several of them recently reinstated by the FY2012 NDAA. These programs were used extensively during the post-Cold War drawdown of the 1990s. While these tools are

[59] For a detailed discussion of each drawdown authority, see David McCormick's "The Downsized Warrior: America's Army in Transition," 1998.

[60] §638, Title 10.

[61] §647, Title 10.

[62] Information in this section is taken from Army Message dated 141359Z March 2012, Subject: Enlisted Qualitative Service Program (QSP).

[63] Calculating the actual value of any of these voluntary programs requires individual calculations best done by a finance and accounting professional.

available to all of the services, the following descriptions will focus on Army programs for the drawdown. They include the following:

Voluntary Retirement Incentive[64]

The Voluntary Retirement Incentive is the one incentive that was not available during the post-Cold War drawdown; it was introduced in the FY2012 NDAA. This program targets retirement-eligible servicemembers with between 20 and 29 years of service. The amount of the incentive is determined by the Service Secretary but may not exceed the member's annual basic pay. In exchange for the payment, the servicemember agrees to retire. The program is capped at no more than 675 officers, and the program expires on December 31, 2018.

Voluntary Separation Incentive (VSI)[65]

The Voluntary Separation Incentive (VSI) is an incentive that is paid annually for twice the number of years the individual served on active duty. Servicemembers must have served between 6 and 20 years and additional eligibility criteria are established by the Service Secretary. The formula for determining the annual annuity is 2.5% times monthly basic pay at the time of separation, times 12, times the number of years of service. The original authority for this incentive was the National Defense Authorization Act for 1992/1993,[66] which terminated the program on December 31, 2001. The VSI program was reinstated by the FY2012 NDAA[67] for the period December 31, 2011, through December 31, 2018.

Special Separation Bonus (SSB)[68]

The Special Separation Bonus (SSB) is a voluntary separation incentive available to any eligible member of the Armed Forces. SSB is a lump sum payment equal to 15% times years of service (YOS) and 12 times monthly basic pay. To be eligible, members must have served for more than 6 years but for less than 20. Other requirements may be established by the Service Secretary. The original authority for the SSB program also expired on December 31, 2001, but was reinstated by the FY2012 NDAA[69] for the period December 31, 2011, through December 31, 2018.

VSI and SSB were complementary programs that were both offered to eligible populations. The primary difference was that VSI was an annuity program, while SSB represents a lump sum payment. Those who volunteer for VSI or SSB do not receive retirement benefits such as a lifelong annuity and retiree health care benefits, although they may later qualify for retirement through reserve service.

Temporary Early Retirement Authority (TERA)[70]

The Temporary Early Retirement Authority (TERA) provided an opportunity for eligible officers, warrant officers, and enlisted personnel to retire prior to completion of 20 years of service. Those

[64] §504, P.L. 112-81, December 31, 2011.

[65] §1175, Title 10.

[66] P.L. 102-190, December 5, 1991.

[67] §504, P.L. 112-81, December 31, 2011.

[68] §1174a, Title 10.

[69] §504, P.L. 112-81, December 31, 2011.

[70] §1293, Title 10 (note).

in selected grades and skills could voluntarily retire with as few as 15 years of service. TERA retirees have their retired pay reduced for every year less than 20. However, as a retiree, they remain eligible for retired pay; military healthcare; commissary and exchange privileges; and Morale, Welfare and Recreation activities. The original TERA program expired on September 1, 2002, but has been reauthorized by the FY2012 NDAA. The current program began on December 31, 2011, and extends through December 31, 2018.

Voluntary Early Release/Retirement Program (VEERP)[71]

This voluntary program targeted the most junior and the most senior ends of the officer spectrum, with the incentive being a reduction in service obligation. Junior officers (lieutenants and captains) were permitted to resign prior to fulfilling their active duty obligation (five years for U.S. Military Academy graduates, four years for most ROTC scholarship graduates, and three years for Officer Candidate School graduates). Senior officers (lieutenant colonels and colonels) were permitted to retire at their present rank, waiving one year of the existing retirement eligibility criteria (normally three years). For example, a colonel could retire as a colonel but with only two years in grade, rather than the usual three years. This authority was originally included in the FY1991 NDAA.

"Early Outs"[72]

Service Secretaries have the authority to discharge enlisted servicemembers up to three months prior to the end of their term of enlistment. The FY2012 NDAA[73] expanded the three-month standard to one year with no loss of benefits for the members taking advantage of this opportunity. However, members are not entitled to pay and allowances for the period not served. There is no termination date associated with this authority.

Other Personnel Tools with Drawdown Implications

Enlisted Retention Control Points

The military expects that individual performance will result in the periodic promotion of enlisted personnel as their military experience increases and as their individual responsibility within the organization grows. Those who do not progress in a timely manner may be separated prior to the end of their term of service. This policy is implemented through a series of retention control points that dictate how long a servicemember may remain at the current rank/grade before being promoted. Those who fail promotion in a timely manner can be separated prior to their normal term of service. These retention control points can be adjusted over time and can aid in force shaping by separating those with less potential.

The current and previous Army retention control points are shown in **Table A-1**.

[71] §647, Title 10.

[72] §1171, Title 10.

[73] §525, P.L. 112-81, December 31, 2011.

Table A-1. Army Retention Control Points (RCP)

("Shaping the enlisted force through tenure")

Rank	Previous RCP	Current RCP (as of June 1, 2011)
Private and Private First Class	8 years	5 years
Specialist	10 years	8 years
Promotable Specialist	15 years	12 years
Sergeants	15 years	13 years
Promotable Sergeants	20 years	15 years
Staff Sergeants	23 years	20 years

Notes: The previous RCP allowed a Sergeant (E-5) to remain on active duty until retirement eligibility at 20 years of service. With the recent tightening of these standards, a Sergeant must separate at 13 years and only the Staff Sergeant (E-6) may remain until 20 years.

Officer Promotion Non-selection

The military's officer management system is an "up or out" system—officers who fail to promote after being twice considered for the next higher grade may be involuntarily separated. To support the officer manpower requirements during the decade of OIF and OEF, many non-selected officers were selectively continued in their current grade. In addition, the OIF/OEF period was one of unusually high promotion selection rates (opportunity) and reduced time-in-grade (timing) before promotion consideration. With the withdrawal of U.S. forces from Iraq and the gradual drawdown of forces in Afghanistan, the services are again enforcing the standards for promotion and retention. The promotion timing and opportunity standards established by DOD are shown in **Table A-2.**

Table A-2. Promotion Timing and Opportunity

To Grade	Opportunity	Timing
Major/Lieutenant Commander	80%	10 years +/- 1 year
Lieutenant Colonel/Commander	70%	16 years +/- 1 year
Colonel/Captain	50%	22 year +/- 1 year

Source: DOD Instruction 1320.13, July 22, 2009.

Notes: Major, Lieutenant Colonel, and Colonel apply to the Army, Marine Corps, and Air Force. Lieutenant Commander, Commander, and Captain apply to the Navy.

Most recently, the Air Force involuntarily separated 157 majors who had been twice non-selected for promotion to lieutenant colonel.[74] These officers received separation pay and other transition benefits and may be eligible to transfer to the Air National Guard or Air Force Reserve but their Active Duty careers have ended.

[74] *The Wall Street Journal*, "Air Force Is Following Congress's Mandate, as It Must," January 6, 2012.

Appendix B. Brief History of Past Army Drawdowns

Post-World War II

During World War II, the Army determined what its reasonable post-war strength should be and developed plans for a peaceful demobilization. Initially, the Army established a post-war goal of an Active and Reserve structure capable of mobilizing 4 million troops within a year of the outbreak of a future war. Later, the Army set the strength of the active ground and air forces at 1.5 million (the Army Air Corps did not become the U.S. Air Force until July 26, 1947, with the enactment of the National Security Act of 1947, P.L. 80-235). The vast majority of servicemembers in the Army during World War II were draftees. The Army's demobilization plans provided for the release of troops on an individual basis based on points. Soldiers received point credits for length of service, combat participation and awards, time spent overseas, and parenthood. Also factoring into the Army's plans was the availability of shipping to bring overseas troops to the United States, as well as the capacity to process the discharged soldiers.

However, pressure for faster demobilization from the public, Congress, and the troops themselves affected the Army's plan for an orderly process. The Army responded by easing eligibility requirements and released half of its 8 million troops by the end of 1945. In early 1946, the Army slowed its return of troops from overseas to meet its constabulatory requirements in Germany and Japan, which elicited another public outcry to speed up demobilization. Public opposition diminished after the Army more than halved its remaining strength during the first six months of 1946.

President Truman was determined to balance the national budget, which also affected the Army's manpower. The Administration's dollar ceiling for FY1947 led to a new maximum Army strength of just over 1 million. In order to reach this new level, the Army stopped draft calls and released all post-war draftees along with any other troops eligible for demobilization. By June of 1947, the Army consisted of 684,000 ground troops and 306,000 airmen. Although considered large for a peacetime Army by American standards, the loss of many capable maintenance specialists resulted in widespread deterioration of equipment. Active Army units were understrength, had many barely trained replacements, and were considered "shadows of the efficient organizations they had been at the end of the war."

This post-war reduction saw the Army go from 8 million soldiers and 89 divisions in 1945 to 591,000 men and 10 divisions by 1950—a 93% reduction in manpower over five years. Half of the Army's 10 divisions were deployed overseas, with Far Eastern Command controlling four infantry divisions on occupation duty in Japan and the European Command controlling one infantry division in Germany. The remaining five divisions (two airborne, two infantry, and one armored division) were stationed in the United States and constituted a general reserve to meet emergencies. All 10 divisions had undergone organizational changes, largely based on wartime experience. Despite this reorganization, 9 out of 10 divisions were well below their authorized strength, with most infantry regiments having only two of their three authorized battalions, for example. Also, most units lacked their organic armored units and lacked their wartime complement of weapons. Whatever weapons and equipment these units had were described as "worn-out leftovers from World War II." The low personnel and equipment readiness levels in 1950 became apparent during the initially weak U.S. military response when the Korean War broke out in June of that year.

Post-Vietnam

During the 1960s, DOD had shaped and sized the Armed Forces to fight two and a half wars simultaneously. The wars were two major theater wars, or MTWs—a war in Europe and one in Asia—and a "half war," a small-scale contingency operation. The force to fight this two-and-a-half-war construct numbered over 950,000 through the middle of the 1960s, and at the height of the Vietnam War in 1968, the Army grew to over 1,570,000 men and women. The conscripted Army of the Vietnam War had a disproportionate representation of lower-income and non-college-educated soldiers in its ranks, with many middle and upper class men able to qualify for student deferments by attending college. This perceived unfairness of the draft and the protracted nature of the Vietnam War were credited with helping to bring about the All-Volunteer Force.

In 1970, in anticipation of a drawdown in Vietnam, the Army instituted a reduction in force—known as an RIF—with the intent of getting rid of low-performing soldiers that had accumulated during Vietnam. The process was applied unevenly and, although the Army eliminated some "deadwood," a significant number of good soldiers were released and many substandard soldiers remained on active duty.

1973 was a pivotal year for the U.S. Army as direct involvement in Vietnam's ground war ended and the transition to an all-volunteer Army began. Many believed the Army was a weakened institution, and military and political leaders were blamed by many for the poor conduct and outcome of the war. Because of the unpopular nature of the war, many returning soldiers faced a hostile or indifferent public reception. Noted one historian, "[T]he Army that left Vietnam and returned to America and its garrisons in Germany and Korea in the 1970s was at low ebb on morale, discipline, and military effectiveness."

The withdrawal of U.S. forces from Vietnam in 1973 also ushered in an era of decreased defense budgets. In 1973, in light of budgetary constraints, Secretary of Defense James Schlesinger formally instituted the Total Force. These budget reductions translated into a smaller Army, and the Army's endstrength declined from its Vietnam War high of 1.57 million in FY1968 to 785,000 in FY1974. By 1974, the Army fielded 13 Active Duty divisions.

Chief of Staff of the Army General Creighton Abrams believed that a 13-division Active Duty Army was insufficient to meet the United States' global requirements. Furthermore, the Army's Director of Manpower and Forces noted the Army's 13 divisions constituted the smallest force since prior to the Korean War and, in reality, the Army could field only 12 divisions, and only 4 of those divisions were rated as "combat ready."

General Abrams obtained the Secretary of Defense's approval to increase the Army's active divisions to 16 without an increase in Army Active Duty endstrength, which stood at 765,000. This was achieved, in part, by shifting soldiers from Army headquarters and instructional units to Army divisions, assigning reserve component "round-out" brigades to late-deploying Active Duty divisions, and moving combat support and combat service support units to the Reserve Component.

There were a number of perceived problems associated with the Total Force. Filling the Army's three new Active Duty divisions from capped endstrength severely taxed the Army's already thin manpower pool. The relationship between the Active Duty and Reserve Components was considered by many as poor, with Active Duty commanders typically viewing their Reserve Component counterparts as "weekend warriors" and doubting the combat readiness of reserve forces. The heavy reliance on reserve forces for combat support and service support also meant active forces would have a difficult time operating in the early days of a major conflict until reserve forces could be mobilized and trained up to standard. While some viewed the heavy

reliance on reserve forces as problematic, General Abrams believed increased reliance on the reserves would be beneficial in obtaining American public support in the event of a major conflict and avoiding the kind of public dissonance associated with Vietnam. Issues related to limited Army endstrength versus requirements, poor recruit quality, budgetary constraints, and lack of public support in the mid-to-late 1970s led senior Army leadership to characterize the Army as being a "hollow force."

Post-Cold War/Desert Storm

The "hollow force" of the mid-1970s and early 1980s recovered due in part to the arguments of senior DOD leaders, congressional action, and the defense build-up under the Reagan Administration. In 1987, the Active Army consisted of 780,815 personnel comprising 18 divisions, with 2 of the 18 divisions still forming and not yet at 100% strength. In late 1989, the Warsaw Pact and Soviet Union began to unravel. The demise of the Soviet Union led the United States and its allies to pursue a "peace dividend," whereby defense budgets and manpower would be drastically reduced in order to decrease taxes and divert resources to other uses. In the end, a 535,000 soldier Active Duty force—a more than 30% cut—was agreed to, constituting the smallest Army since 1939.

The late 1980s saw a fundamental rethinking of U.S. defense policy and Army force structure. A 1987 Army force structure review examining the declining Soviet threat recommended a smaller force structure of 15 divisions and 640,000 soldiers. This force level and structure was referred to as the "BASE Force." Under this scenario, Chief of Staff of the Army Carl Vuono argued that decreasing force structure by more than 35,000 soldiers per year would jeopardize readiness. Many believed in order to achieve any meaningful savings, the Army would need to be smaller than General Vuono's 640,000 soldier Army. Iraq's August 1990 invasion of Kuwait suspended downsizing debates. At the conclusion of the "100 Hour War" to liberate Kuwait, many saw it as a validation of a more technologically focused approach toward warfare, and the policy debates about reducing the size of the Army were renewed.

In 1993, the Clinton Administration announced it would pursue defense budget reductions of at least $88 billion from FY1994 to FY1997. As part of this effort, Secretary of Defense Les Aspin initiated a Bottom Up Review intended to modify force structure based on current and projected threats to national security. The review recommended placing added emphasis on U.S. air power and a reduction of Army endstrength to 495,000 soldiers while retaining the ability to fight two MTWs simultaneously. In March 1994, the Bottom Up Review recommendations were implemented and Active Army endstrength reductions to 495,000 soldiers began and 2 of 12 divisions were eliminated.

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