



HAVE WE DRAWN THE ARMY DOWN TOO FAR?

At the end of the Cold War, the Army had 28 divisions (18 in the active force and 10 in the Army National Guard). By the end of FY 1996, the Army will have only 10 active divisions and eight Guard divisions. In addition, there will be 15 enhanced Guard brigades trained and equipped for early deployment. The eight Guard divisions are a strategic reserve.

The United States' national military strategy has shifted from maintaining substantial forces forward deployed overseas to projection forces stationed essentially in the United States. Army planning is based on using the lift capabilities of the Navy and Air Force to deploy forces to crisis areas. Because support services in the mission area may be nonexistent, operational deployments necessarily include a self-supporting force structure.

Although active Army forces necessarily carry the brunt of crisis operations, they depend heavily on critical combat support and combat service support units from the reserve components. Some reserve units routinely deploy with leading active forces and even ahead of those forces to establish key support services. During extended operations, the Army National Guard's enhanced brigades would bolster active maneuver forces, given sufficient time to mobilize, prepare and deploy to the theater.

The current Army force structure was derived from the recommendations of the DoD Bottom-up Review, which based sizing on a requirement to conduct successful operations in two overlapping major regional conflicts. However, the heavy demand on forces for other multiple contingencies was not fully appreciated. The Army is being seriously stressed with these lesser yet demanding commitments (the most recent in Bosnia). In the event of a major regional conflict, these forces would not be readily available.

This situation raises the question as to whether the present Army division force structure and military strength figures are sufficient. It also makes it clear that additional military strength cuts should not be made if the Army's multiple operational missions are to be covered now and in the future.

The active 10-division force, with its personnel strength of 495,000, typically has about 138,000 soldiers deployed overseas in Europe or Korea and other overseas areas in the Pacific and the Americas, plus multiple operational deployments. This involves over 40 percent of the Army's fighting forces now performing overseas missions. Bosnia alone commits about 30,000 plus a heavy effort on the part of European forces in support.

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If a major regional conflict should surface, forces would be drawn from those units otherwise not committed on other operations worldwide -- the contingency corps of five divisions, plus one reinforcing active division. The enhanced Guard brigades selected for deployment would require at least 90 days' preparation time. A second major conflict would challenge all resources and would require disengaging forces from lesser contingencies as well as major mobilization of the Guard's enhanced brigades.

It is apparent that the Army has a structure shortfall even before the needs of a second major regional conflict are considered. Planning assumptions further stress this situation. For instance, planners assume that the two major regional contingencies will overlap and be in a specified order: larger first, smaller second, with a significant reserve component activation and deployment for the second contingency. It is acknowledged that should they occur out of order, 10 active divisions would be seriously inadequate and a major draw on the enhanced brigades would be required, which introduces a definite time lag.

The adequacy of Army end strength within the force structure must also be considered. As now projected, there will be 495,000 in the active component and 575,000 in the reserve components (367,000 in the Army National Guard and 208,000 in the Army Reserve). Of the 495,000 active soldiers, only 435,000 fill force structure positions. A floating group of 60,000 are never available because they are trainees, in transit between jobs, in the hospital or in confinement. Approximately 125,000 soldiers are

committed to fill infrastructure positions in schools, medical facilities, training centers, laboratories, installations, and headquarters staffs and agencies. That leaves 310,000 soldiers to fill the combat, combat support, and combat service support that make up the operational forces that can be deployed for immediate mission requirements.

While structure is based on mission requirements, Congress authorizes and appropriates funds in terms of strength. If an insufficient end strength is authorized, the Army must choose between undermanned divisions or fewer divisions than needed. Therefore, Congress needs to authorize an end strength that matches structure and missions.

AUSA's position has been stated in previous congressional testimony: a 12-division active force with an end strength of about 550,000. If fiscal realities make this a non-option, what we must do is stop any further reduction in Army force structure. Ten active and eight Guard divisions, along with 15 enhanced brigades, are the minimum. Projected reserve component end strength is about right. Active Army end strength must be no less than 495,000.

Since 1989, eight active and two Guard divisions have been eliminated; combat brigades have been cut by 37 percent. End strength is down 35 and 26 percent respectively in the active and reserve components. Further reductions should not be made. The real answer lies in a recognition that the unstable world situation and the U.S. strategy of engagement and enlargement will require a larger Army than originally forecast.

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