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U.S. Army's Modular Redesign: Issues for Congress

Updated May 5, 2006

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Summary

In what the Army describes as the “most significant Army restructuring in the past 50 years,” it is redesigning its current 10 active duty division force to a 42 or 43 brigade combat team (BCT) force by FY2007. The Army National Guard and Army Reserves will also redesign their forces in a similar fashion. The planned addition of active duty brigades and the conversion of Army National Guard brigades could provide a larger force pool of deployable combat units to ease the burden on units presently deployed, and possibly to shorten the length of time that units are deployed on operations. The Army has three other concurrent initiatives underway that it considers inextricably linked to its brigade-centric redesign: rebalancing to create new “high demand” units; stabilizing the force to foster unit cohesion and enhance predictability for soldiers and their families; and cyclical readiness to better manage resources and to ensure a ready force for operations. These initiatives involve substantial cultural, policy, organizational, and personnel changes.

Some experts believe that modular redesign, selective rebalancing, stabilizing, and cyclical readiness are prudent actions that should provide the Army with additional deployable units and also eventually bring stability to soldiers and their families. As long as no additional significant long term troop commitments arise, many feel that these initiatives could help ease the stress on both the active and reserve forces. As the Army continues its modular conversion, it may have to contend with budget, personnel, and equipment shortages which could impede plans to build this new force as intended. Some also question if the Army can afford both its Future Combat System (FCS) program and its modularity program.

Rebalancing and stabilization efforts are currently underway but it is difficult to gauge their impact on the modularization process. Based on DOD's Global Basing Strategy and 2005 Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) decisions, the Army has established a stationing plan for its modular forces. The Army also plans to begin its cyclical readiness program in FY2006. With significant budgetary issues, and personnel and equipment shortages impacting on the Army's plans to convert the entire Army into the Army Modular Force (AMF), the second session of the 109th Congress might decide to examine these and other concerns in greater detail. This report will be updated.

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U.S. Army's Modular Redesign: Issues for Congress

Issues For Congress

The United States Army is involved in a total organizational redesign of its combat and support units to better meet current and future operational requirements. This redesign effort, as well as associated rebalancing, stabilization, and cyclical readiness initiatives are deemed important by proponents as they are intended to sustain both the active and reserve Army through a potentially long term, manpower and resource intensive war on terror.

The overall issue facing Congress is how well the Army's modularity program is progressing and what are some of the issues affecting this major redesign effort. Also of critical importance is the Army's ability to fund both the Future Combat System (FCS) program and its modularity program concurrently. Key potential oversight questions for the second session of the 109th Congress can be summarized as follows:

- How many modular brigade combat teams (BCTs) does the Army plan on fielding and what are the risks associated with activating fewer BCTs than originally planned?
- What lessons have been learned by Army modular units in Iraq and Afghanistan that could affect the modularization of the rest of the Army?
- What are the specific modularity-related personnel and equipment shortages facing the Army?
- Does the Army's current modular force design adequately address counterinsurgency and stabilization operations?
- How are the Army's rebalancing, stabilization, and cyclical readiness efforts progressing and what are their associated costs?

The 109th Congress's decisions on these and other related issues could have significant implications for U.S. national security, Army funding requirements, and future congressional oversight activities. This report addresses the U.S. Army's redesign of its current force structure, based on large divisions, into one based on smaller brigade-level modular BCTs.¹

¹ According to Department of the Army Pamphlet 10-1, "Organization of the United States Army," dated June 14, 1994, a division consists of approximately 10,000 to 18,000 soldiers and a brigade consists of approximately 3,000 to 5,000 soldiers.

Background

What the Army Intends to Achieve by Modularization

The Army maintains that by organizing around BCTs and Support Brigades, it will be able to “better meet the challenges of the 21st century security environment and, specifically, jointly fight and win the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT).”² Accordingly, the Army hopes that modularization will result in:

- At least a 30% increase in the combat power of the Active Component of the force;
- An increase in the rotational pool of ready units by at least 50%;
- Army operating forces that require less augmentation when deployed — reducing the requirement for *ad hoc* organizations;
- Creation of a deployable joint-capable headquarters and improvement of joint interoperability across all Army units;
- Force design upon which the future network centric developments [Future Combat System] can be readily applied;
- Reduced stress on the force through a more predictable deployment cycle:
- One year deployed and two years at home station for the Active Component;
- One year deployed and four years at home station for the Reserve Force;
- One year deployed and five years at home station for the National Guard Force; and
- Reduced mobilization times for the Reserve Component as a whole.³

² *Army Strategic Planning Guidance 2005*, Jan. 15, 2005, p. 9. In addition the Army Staff Operations Division (G-3) and associated staff elements have provided comments on the issues addressed in this report a means of clarifying Army positions and also for programmatic accuracy purposes.

³ *Ibid.*

Reported Capability Deficiencies in the Army's Modularization Plan

The Army characterizes the Army Modular Force as “more strategically responsive across the entire range of military operations required by the 21st century security environment.”⁴ Some, however, question the design of the Army Modular Force in terms its ability to successfully conduct counterinsurgency and stabilization operations.

A Decrease In Maneuver Battalions. One report suggests that modularity will decrease the number of actual combat units, in the form of maneuver battalions,⁵ Army-wide by 30%.⁶ According to the Institute for Defense Analyses (IDA),⁷ the Army plans to incorporate only two maneuver battalions into its Heavy Brigade Combat Teams (HBCTs) and Infantry Brigade Combat Teams (IBCTs) (current non-modular, division-based brigades and Stryker Brigade Combat Teams (SBCTs)⁸ have three maneuver battalions). The IDA report asserts that this will reduce the size of the Army's combat maneuver force. According to IDA, the Total Army (Active, National Guard, and Reserve) had 233 combat battalions with 699 maneuver companies at the end of FY2004. By the end of 2011, the Army reportedly plans to have 161 maneuver battalions with 541 maneuver companies — a 30% reduction in the number of battalions and a 22% reduction in the number of companies. What concerns some analysts is that the Army is making “a significant reduction in its total ground maneuver capacity and its ability to control terrain,

⁴ Torchbearer National Security Report, “The U.S. Army: A Modular Force for the 21st Century,” The Association of the United States Army (AUSA), March 2005, p. 3.

⁵ According to Department of the Army Pamphlet 10-1, “Organization of the United States Army,” dated June 14, 1994, a battalion consists of approximately 400 to 1,000 soldiers and a company consists of 60 to 200 soldiers.

⁶ Information in this section is taken from the Institute for Defense Analyses (IDA) Working Paper “Army QDR Issue: Can the Overall Combat Output Potential of the Army Be Increased by Applying Existing Army Organizational Principles in a Different Way?” September 2005, p. 6. This report was prepared at the request of the Office of the Secretary of Defense for Program Assessments and Evaluation (OSD(PA&E)) in support of Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) 2005 discussions.

⁷ The Institute for Defense Analyses (IDA) is a non-profit corporation that administers three federally funded research and development centers to assist the United States Government in addressing important national security issues, particularly those requiring scientific and technical expertise. IDA only works for the government. To avoid institutional pressures to support Service positions, IDA does not work directly for the military departments. Also, to ensure freedom from commercial or other potential conflicts of interest, IDA does not work for private industry.

⁸ The Stryker is the Army's name for the family of wheeled armored vehicles which will constitute most of the brigade's combat and combat support vehicles. The Stryker Brigade Combat Team (SBCT) concept originated in the 1990s under Army Chief of Staff General Eric Shinseki as a rapidly deployable, medium weight combat force that could operate throughout the full spectrum of conflict.

resources, and people.”⁹ This reduction in ground maneuver capability — often referred to as “presence” or “boots on the ground” — may adversely impact the BCT’s ability to conduct counterinsurgency operations which often require the ability to cover large areas with a sufficient number of soldiers to provide security and to defeat and deter insurgents.

The Army’s View of the IDA Report.¹⁰ The Army conducted a detailed analysis of the IDA report and was severely critical of its findings — suggesting that IDA employed “faulty assumptions, incomplete and questionable analysis” as well as a lack of overall understanding of the Army Modular Force program.¹¹ Addressing IDA’s central criticism — a reduction from three to two maneuver battalions — the Army asserts that the modular conversion of brigade combat teams essentially trades three maneuver battalions (with three companies each) for two maneuver battalions (with four companies each) *plus* an armed reconnaissance battalion, equipped with a variety of technical capabilities and enhancements. The Army further contends that it made the decision to go with the two maneuver battalion BCT in order to generate sufficient combat forces for rotational purposes and in recognition of cost constraints and a need to continue FCS development.¹²

The Army suggests that the IDA report employed “Cold War metrics” in its analysis. By focusing strictly on BCTs, the Army feels that IDA ignored the benefits of “combat multipliers” such as the modular force’s Armored Reconnaissance Squadron and its Reconnaissance, Surveillance, and Target Acquisition (RSTA) Squadrons. In terms of the “boots on the ground” criticism, while IDA counts only infantry as “boots on the ground” the Army also includes soldiers from company weapons sections, snipers, dismounted scouts, sappers (specially trained combat engineers), military police, and assault weapons squads in its “boots on the ground” equation, which reflects how these soldiers are currently being used in stability and security operations in Iraq and Afghanistan.¹³

Stabilization Operations. Another issue is how effective these two battalion HBCTs and IBCTs will be in conducting stability operations, considered by many to be manpower-intensive operations. DOD Directive 3000.05, signed on November 28, 2005 essentially puts the conduct of stability operations on par with combat operations, which could have implications for HBCTs and IBCTs designed

⁹ Institute for Defense Analyses (IDA) Working Paper “Army QDR Issue: Can the Overall Combat Output Potential of the Army Be Increased by Applying Existing Army Organizational Principles in a Different Way?” September 2005, p. 8.

¹⁰ Information in this section is taken from discussions with and briefings from the Army Staff in December 2005 and February 2006.

¹¹ U.S. Army Staff Paper, “Analysis: IDA Modularity Study,” September 19, 2005.

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ “Task Force Modularity: The Role of Analysis in the Creation of the Modular Force,” Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) Analysis Center, Ft. Leavenworth, KS, July 1, 2005, p. 31.

primarily with a combat focus.¹⁴ A student research paper from the Army War College's Strategic Studies Institute asserts that while the Army's modular redesign may be adequate for rapid, decisive combat operations, it is inadequate to conduct stability operations.¹⁵ According to the report, the Army's current modular force design fails in three areas:

- It does not provide for a modular and scalable force pool of stabilization capabilities that can augment the HBCTs and IBCTs;
- It does not provide a multifunctional support brigade capable of exercising command and control of region-wide stabilization operations — a capability needed in order to free BCTs of this responsibility so that they can better perform combat operations if required, and;
- It does not generate an adequate mix of active and reserve modular components needed to for stabilization operations as envisioned in future land campaigns.¹⁶

The report's author suggests that the Army's new modular Combat Support Brigades (Maneuver Enhancement) (CSB(ME)) would be a suitable candidate to command region-wide stabilization efforts and provide BCTs with specific stabilization support.¹⁷ Of critical concern is that the Army's plan to have only three CSB(MEs) in the Active force could significantly degrade the ability to surge stabilization efforts early in a conflict as well as to sustain those efforts over an extended period. The report also suggests that the Army must modernize and reorganize its combat support and service support forces at echelons above the BCT into a force pool of modular stabilization capabilities. The Army, in the past, had been characterized by some as resistant to the development of specialized formations to deal specifically with stabilization operations, but now that stability operations have become an Army mission as important as combat itself, this position might no longer be a practical one.

Stabilization Operations and the Modular Force Construct.¹⁸ The Army appears generally supportive of the Army War College research paper's criticisms and recommendations, noting that some of the paper's recommendations would be applied to future CSB (ME) development. However, the Army contends that the current modular forces construct [that BCTs are full spectrum forces, equally

¹⁴ Sergeant Sara Wood, "Directive Boosts Priority of Stability Operations," *American Forces Press Service*, December 14, 2005.

¹⁵ Colonel Brian G. Watson, "Reshaping the Expeditionary Army to Win Decisively: The Case for Greater Stabilization Capacity in the Modular Force," U.S. Army War College's Strategic Studies Institute, Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania, August 2005.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ Information in this section is taken from discussions with and briefings from the Army Staff in December 2005 and February 2006.

capable of performing traditional combat, counterinsurgency, and stability operations] is more than adequate to address the demands of stability operations, asserting that the modular force, as designed, has vastly improved communications infrastructure that permits it to operate in a Joint, Interagency, and Multinational (JIM) environment. The Army also asserts that Army modular forces deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan in comparison to non-modular brigades, have proven to be equally as effective in conducting combat missions, more capable in conducting stability operations, and far better at interacting with other Service's forces.

Modular Conversions in FY2005¹⁹

In FY2005, the Army converted five Active units to BCTs - three Heavy Brigade Combat Teams (HBCTs); one Infantry Brigade Combat Team (IBCT); and one Stryker Brigade Combat Team (SBCT) — a process that takes 9 to 11 months for HBCTs and IBCTs and about 18 months for a SBCT. In FY2005, the Army National Guard started to convert seven units to BCTs - 3 HBCTs; 3 IBCTs; and 1 SBCT — a process that takes about three years to complete.

The Modular Army FY2006 and Beyond

Modularization Plans FY2006-FY2007

In FY2006, the Army plans to convert 18 brigades into the modular configuration — 11 in the Active Component and seven in the Army National Guard — and activate three new BCTs in the Active Component.²⁰

According to the 2005 Army Modernization Plan, dated February 2005, the Army will decide in FY2006 whether or not to add five additional BCTs to the Active component, possibly resulting in 48 Active Component BCTs.²¹ According to a number of sources, the Army decided internally as far back FY2005 not to add the additional five BCTs in FY2007 due to anticipated personnel and funding shortages.²²

If the Army has already decided not to add these five BCTs, then the Active Army could consist of 43 BCTs by FY2007 - up from 33 maneuver brigades in 2004 under the old divisional system. The Army's most current modernization and campaign plans call for the modular conversion of over 300 Active and National Guard and Army Reserve (Army Reserve units will only convert to Support

¹⁹ Information in this section is from The Army Campaign Plan, Change 2, Unclassified, September 30, 2005.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ *2005 Army Modernization Plan*, Feb. 2005, p. 5.

²² From discussions during the Eisenhower Series Conference, "The United States Army in Asia: Legacies of the Past, Current Challenges, and Prospects for the Future," Mar. 31, 2005, Alexandria, Virginia and Lisa Troshinsky, "Official: Army Could Decide by 2007 to Permanently Boost End Strength," *Aerospace Daily & Defense Report*, Apr. 12, 2005.

Brigades) combat, support, and headquarters units by the end of FY2012.²³ The Army acknowledges that it is possible that some National Guard and Army Reserve units may not be fully modularized due to equipment and budget constraints, but the Army suggests that if this becomes the case, it is within acceptable and agreed upon risk criteria.

National Guard Modularization²⁴

The Army National Guard initiated its modular conversion efforts with the organizational restructuring of one division headquarters and seven BCTs in FY2005. In 2005, the Army planned to inactivate four Army National Guard (ANG) brigades and then convert eight ANG division headquarters and 34 brigades to BCTs from 2005 to 2011. In mid-2005, the Army revised its plan and now plans to inactivate 10 ANG brigades and inactivate two ANG division headquarters and then modularly convert 28 ANG brigades and six ANG headquarters from 2005 to 2011. These changes were driven by a combination of personnel, equipment, and funding shortfalls.

The Army has acknowledged that the National Guard will be subject to the same personnel, equipment, and budgetary influences that will likely impact Active Component conversion. Furthermore, the Army notes that complete National Guard modularization costs extend beyond the current program, which could present the Army with even more difficulties in the later years of the modularization process.

Support Unit Modularization

In 2005, the Army defined the roles, designs and numbers of support brigades to be developed. The modular support brigades consist of both single function and multi-functional designs. The Army reports that by late 2007 or early 2008, that the majority of BCTs, support brigades, and headquarters that will deploy for the Global War on Terror operations will be modularly configured. Analysts suggest that once this occurs, the Army will then be able to gain a better appreciation of the capabilities and performance of its modular force. The Army's Modular Support Brigades include²⁵

- Combat Aviation Brigade (CAB): Consisting of between 2,600 to 2,700 personnel and a variety of Army aviation assets;
- Fires Brigade: Consisting of between 1,200 and 1,300 personnel, the Fires Brigade is to have a mix of cannon, rocket, and missile artillery

²³ Information in this section is taken from discussions with and briefings from the Army Staff in December 2005 and February 2006.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ U.S. Army Briefing, Modular Forces Overview, Jan. 19, 2005 and September 21, 2005 Chief of Staff of the Army (CSA) Decision on "Naming Conventions for Army Modular Forces."

systems and is to be able to employ Joint fires (Navy, Marine Corps, and Air Force) as well;

- **Combat Support Brigade (Maneuver Enhancement) (CSB (ME)):** Consisting of 435 personnel, the CSB (ME) is to have engineer, military police, nuclear, biological, and chemical (NBC) defense, and air defense units assigned to it. In addition, the brigade could also have explosive ordnance disposal and civil affairs units assigned to it;
- **Battlefield Surveillance Brigade:** Consisting of 997 personnel, the Battlefield Surveillance Brigade is to consist of an intelligence battalion, support troops, and a long-range surveillance detachment. In addition, the brigade can be augmented with special forces units as well as additional unmanned aerial vehicles; and
- **Sustainment Brigade:** Consisting of 487 personnel, the Sustainment Brigade is to have medical, finance, human resources, ammunition, transportation, maintenance, and supply and service units.

The Army currently plans to field the following numbers of Active, National Guard, and Reserve modular support brigades as indicated in **Table 1**.

Table 1. Numbers of Modular Support Brigades

Type of Support Unit	Active	National Guard	Reserve	Totals
Combat Aviation Brigade	11	7	0	18
Fires Brigade	5	7	0	12
Combat Support Maneuver Enhancement Brigade	3	14	2	19
Battlefield Surveillance Brigade	3	2	0	5
Sustainment Brigade	13	9	8	30
Total	35	39	10	84

Source: U.S. Army, "The Operational Army Over Time (AC/RC Side)," October 25, 2005 and Brigade-Based Army Slide as of January 31, 2006.

Cost Considerations

FY2006 Budget

Based on a reported agreement with the Administration, the Army did not include a modularity budget request for funds in its FY2006 Presidential Budget Request and instead will rely on an anticipated DOD FY2006 Supplemental Request to fund modularization. In the FY2005 DOD Supplemental Request, the Army was given \$5 billion for modularization in the budget categories shown in **Table 2**.

Table 2. FY2005 Supplemental Request for Army Modularization

Category	Dollars in millions
Operations and Maintenance	24.8
Research, Development, Test and Evaluation	3.0
Military Construction	261.0
Procurement of Equipment and Weapons	4711.2
Total	5,000.0

Source: Information in this table is taken from the Department of Defense FY2005 Supplemental Request, Ch. 1: Force Restructuring, Detailed Justification, Feb. 2005, p. 11.

In December 2004, the DOD Program Budget Decision No. 753 (PBD 753) directed the Army to “submit its Modularity requirements for FY2005 and FY2006 in supplemental requests” and provides \$ 5 billion per year from FY2007 to FY2011 for modularity, and directs the Army to find \$1.5 billion per year in FY2006 to FY2008 from reengineering its business practices to be applied to Army modularization.²⁶ While PBD 753 called for modularity to be paid out of supplements only in FY2005 and FY2006, some speculate that Army modularity will continue to seek to be funded from supplemental requests in FY2007 and FY2008,²⁷ despite Congressional warnings that modularity should be incorporated into annual budget requests²⁸. The Army contends, however, that the Army Modular Force Change Proposal, approved in December 2005, shifted all modular conversion costs into the baseline budget starting in FY2007.²⁹

FY2007 Budget

According to the Chief of Staff of the Army, the Army requested \$5 billion for modularity in the FY2007 budget request³⁰ but modularity costs are spread among a wide variety of Army programs, which makes it difficult for many to characterize an exact figure for the FY2007 modularity budget request.

²⁶ Program Budget Decision 753, Office of the Secretary of Defense, December 23, 2004, pp. 1-6.

²⁷ Gopal Ratnam, “Modular Brigade Supplements to End,” *Army Times*, December 12, 2005.

²⁸ The Senate, in S.Rept. 109-52 on the FY2005 Emergency Supplemental, cautions DOD and the Army that “The Department has now had ample time to incorporate requirements to support Modularity into its annual budget requests. The Committee is unlikely to regard supplemental appropriations as an appropriate vehicle for future efforts supporting modularity,” April 6, 2005, pp. 33-34.

²⁹ Information in this section is taken from discussions with and briefings from the Army Staff in December 2005 and February 2006.

³⁰ Transcripts from the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee Hearing on the Army’s FY2007 Budget Request, March 28, 2006.

FY2007 Defense Authorization Bill Markup. The House Armed Services Committee (HASC), in its markup of H.R. 5122, The FY2007 Defense Authorization Bill, expressed its “conceptual support” for modularity but expressed an number of concerns.³¹ The HASC’s concerns — escalating costs; inadequate equipment resources for Active and National Guard forces; and sufficient capability for sustained, high-intensity combat operations with only two maneuver battalion — resulted in the requirement for combatant commanders to submit an assessment of the Army’s modularity initiative to Congress in conjunction with the FY2008 budget request.³²

The Senate Armed Services Committee (SASC), in its markup up of H.R. 5122, added \$548.9 million for Army modularity directed to be spent on M-1 Abrams, M-2 and M-3 Bradley, and M-113 armored personnel carrier refurbishment.³³ In addition, the SASC directed the Army to develop a multi-year procurement strategy for the Abrams tank and the Bradley fighting vehicle and to also provide Congress with the full costs of Army modularity, including a breakdown of modularity costs for the National Guard.³⁴

Modularity Cost Estimates³⁵

According to the Government Accountability Office (GAO), modularity costs are “substantial and likely to grow.” Army cost estimates have increased significantly since January 2004 when the Army estimated that it would cost \$20 billion from FY2004-FY2011 to increase the number of active Army brigade combat teams from 33 to 48. According to GAO in July 2004, the Army added \$ 8 billion to reorganize the reserve component — bringing the estimated cost for the entire force to \$28 billion.

In March 2005, the Army revised their estimate and now reportedly estimates that modularity will cost at total of \$ 48 billion from FY2005-FY2011 — a 71% increase over the earlier \$28 billion estimate. This estimate does not, however, include an additional \$27.5 billion in personnel and constructions costs identified by GAO, potentially bringing the total estimated cost of modularity to \$75.5 billion.

The Army disputes GAO’s \$48 billion figure, suggesting instead that the figure is only \$ 43 billion.³⁶ The Army contends that the additional \$ 5 billion included in

³¹ “House Armed Services Committee Approves Fiscal Year 2007 Defense Authorization Bill,” House Armed Services Committee Press Release, May 3, 2006, p. 23.

³² Ibid.

³³ “FY07 National Defense Authorization Bill Summary,” Senate Armed Services Committee, May 4, 2006, p.17.

³⁴ Ibid., p. 17, p. 30.

³⁵ Information in this section is taken from GAO Report, GAO-05-926, *Force Structure: Actions Needed to Improve Estimates and Oversight of Costs for Transforming Army to a Modular Force*, September 2005.

³⁶ Information in this section is taken from discussions with and briefings from the Army Staff in December 2005 and February 2006.

GAO's figure includes personnel and unit and equipment reset costs not associated with the modularity program. In terms of the additional \$27.5 billion, the Army asserts that the construction costs associated with this figure are not modularity related but instead related the DOD's Global Basing Strategy and the 2005 Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) initiative. The disparity between GAO and Army figures is likely a function of the extent and complexity of the Army's modular reorganization and the well-documented difficulties of DOD cost accounting practices and procedures.

According to the GAO report, the Army anticipates funding the \$75.5 billion cost for modularity with \$10 billion in supplemental appropriations, \$42.5 billion through the regular defense appropriation process - including \$ 4.5 billion achieved through efficiencies, and a GAO-estimated \$23 billion through either additional supplemental or regular appropriations to pay for personnel expenses. GAO appears skeptical that the Army will be able to produce \$4.5 billion through business process reengineering, noting that, historically, DOD has had difficulty achieving these efficiencies.

GAO asserts that given the degree of uncertainty in the Army's modularity cost estimates, the reliance on difficult to achieve business reengineering efficiencies, and the likely cost growth from another high-cost program — the Future Combat System — that the Army's modularity program is at risk of becoming unaffordable.

Modularity Versus the Future Combat System (FCS)³⁷

A number of reports suggest that the Army is prepared to reduce the number of planned Active and Guard BCTs in order to protect funding for the FCS program.³⁸ While military officials maintain that no decisions regarding unit cuts have been finalized, anonymous defense officials have discussed the possibility of eliminating at least one Active BCT and from three to six Guard BCTs in order to keep the FCS program on track. Notwithstanding FCS funding, some Army officials maintain that budgetary pressures might possibly force the Army to “stop Active Army modularization at 39 brigades”³⁹ instead of the 43 Active BCTs currently planned for by the Army. Recent discussions with Army officials suggest that Army modularization could stop at 36 BCTs — resulting in a gain of only 3 more brigade-sized units over the 33 Active Component brigades in FY2003 before the Army launched its modularity program. Such reductions, particularly in the National

³⁷ For additional information on the Future Combat System (FCS) see CRS Report RL32888, *The Army's Future Combat Systems (FCS): Background and Issues for Congress*, by Andrew Feickert.

³⁸ Information in this section is taken from Tom Bowman, “Military Weighs Cutting Guard,” *Baltimore Sun*, December 21, 2005; Greg Jaffe, “Army Weighs Slower Troop Growth to Keep Modernization on Track,” *Wall Street Journal*, December 7, 2005; Megan Scully, “Army Poised to Cut Guard Troops to Protect Core Program,” *National Journal's Congress Daily AM*, December 6, 2005; Jonathan Karp, Andy Pasztor, and Greg Jaffe, “Pentagon Weighs Personnel Cuts to Pay for Weapons,” *Wall Street Journal*, December 5, 2005; and Greg Jaffe and Jonathan Karp, “Pentagon Girds for Big Spending Cuts,” *Wall Street Journal*, November 4, 2005.

³⁹ Greg Jaffe and Jonathan Karp, “Pentagon Girds for Big Spending Cuts,” *Wall Street Journal*, November 4, 2005.

Guard, could potentially meet with significant opposition from Congress, which has in recent years, overridden DOD by increasing the authorized size of U.S. ground forces.

While the likely reduction of at least one Active BCT would likely generate controversy, some analysts believe that the reduction of between three to six National Guard BCTs could result in significant political opposition. According to reports, the elimination of six Guard BCTs — approximately 26,000 troops — would likely consist of eliminating two division headquarters, one aviation brigade, and five BCTs. Under such a plan, the National Guard would be held to 28 BCTs as opposed to the 34 Guard BCTs originally planned for by the Army. According to Lieutenant General H. Steven Blum, Chief of the National Guard Bureau, such a major reduction in Guard forces would “amount to a significant loss of capability for the Guard both for its domestic responsibilities and in support of its overseas missions.”⁴⁰ Some suggest that the reduction of six Guard BCTs would likely make the Army’s stated goal of one year deployed and five years at home station for National Guard forces extremely difficult to achieve.

The Army’s Position.⁴¹ The Army asserts that recent reports on the National Guard cuts and the possible impact on rotations are misleading. According to Army officials, the National Guard will inactivate six BCTs, two divisional headquarters, and one aviation brigade and offset those losses by activating four additional Combat Support Brigades (Maneuver Enhancement) and three Engineer Brigades. The Army also maintains that the reduction of six National Guard BCTs would not have a significant impact on its goal of one year deployed and five years at home station for National Guard forces. According to the Army, the reduction of six BCTs would only result in the loss of one BCT available to the deployable force pool per year. Even at a high operational tempo (comparable to National Guard deployments during the height of operations in Iraq) this would result in deployed units having to extend their deployment by one month to cover this one brigade-per cycle shortfall.

Non-Budgetary Issues Affecting Modularization

Personnel Issues

In testimony to Congress, GAO suggested that its preliminary work indicated that there were “significant shortfalls in the Army’s capacity to equip and staff units.”⁴² While specific information on personnel shortages in terms of rank, military occupational specialities, and numbers have not been made public by the Army, GAO reports that modular BCTs will require additional truck drivers, civil affairs

⁴⁰ Tom Bowman, “Military Weighs Cutting Guard,” *Baltimore Sun*, December 21, 2005.

⁴¹ Information in this section is taken from discussions with and briefings from the Army Staff in December 2005 and February 2006.

⁴² GAO Testimony before the Subcommittee on Tactical Air and Land Forces, House Armed Services Committee, *Force Structure: Preliminary Observations on Army Plans to Implement and Fund Modular Forces*,” GAO-05-443T, Mar. 16, 2005, p. 5.

specialists, and military police, and that military intelligence specialists particularly were a critical shortage.⁴³ The Army has reportedly stated that it would require an additional 2,800 military intelligence specialists by the end of FY2005 to meet near-term shortages and an additional 6,200 by 2010 to meet modularity requirements.⁴⁴ It is not known if the Army was able to meet its FY2005 year-end requirements for military intelligence specialists and other military specialties needed to man BCTs and modular support brigades, but if the Army does decide to cut one or more active BCTs, these unit cuts could make it easier for the Army to fully man its remaining BCTs and support units.

Recruiting and Retention. Significant enlisted personnel shortages that some had predicted early in FY2005 did not occur, primarily due to a reported 68.3% retention rate which helped to offset recruiting shortfalls.⁴⁵ In FY2005, the Army missed its active duty recruiting target by 6,627 but exceeded its retention goal by 5,350 soldiers.⁴⁶ While the Army met its recruiting goals for October 2005 (the first month of FY2006) a reported 12% of October's enlistees scored in the lowest category of the military entrance tests on science, math, and word knowledge - a statistic that some say suggests that the Army might be lowering its entrance standards to sign up more recruits.⁴⁷ In FY2005, the Army's active duty officer retention returned to its historical averages, indicating that there was no "mass exodus" of junior company-grade officers as some had predicted.⁴⁸ Given these circumstances, it is reasonable to assume, while the Army will continue to experience recruiting difficulties in FY2006, that catastrophic personnel shortfalls will not likely occur and that the Army should be able to continue develop its modular force, although shortages will likely continue to exist in selected high-demand occupation fields.

Possible Limitations of Female Soldiers in Forward Support Companies. Reports concerning female soldiers in BCT Forward Support Companies (FSC), focused on the issue of women in combat, suggest that there may be "insufficient male soldiers in the inventory to fill forward support companies and that the pool of available male recruits may be too small to sustain the force."⁴⁹ FSCs are intended to collocate with and provide maintenance and logistic support to BCT combat battalions which, according to some, is a change to the Army's 1994 policy which not only banned women from units that engage in direct ground combat such

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Jeff St. Onge, "Family Costs Press Pentagon as More Soldiers Have Spouses, Kids," *Bloomberg.com*, December 29, 2005.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Dave Moynz, Matt Kelley, and Steven Komarow, "War's Strain Wearing on Army Troops, Tools," *USA Today*, November 25, 2005.

⁴⁸ Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Resources Report, "End of Year Recruiting and Retention Report Through 4th Quarter, FY2005," October 18, 2005.

⁴⁹ Rowan Scarborough, "Army Agrees No Women in Combat for Now," *Washington Times*, Jan. 13, 2005; Bryan Bender, "U.S. Women Get Closer to Combat," *Boston Globe*, Jan. 26, 2005; Rowan Scarborough, "Women in Combat Ban Again at Issue," *Washington Times*, Feb. 4, 2005.

as infantry and armor but also excluded women “from assignments below brigade level whose primary mission is to engage in direct combat on the ground.”⁵⁰

During the first session of the 109th Congress, efforts to legislate the Army’s 1994 position keeping women out of direct combat — specifically, the Hunter/McHugh Amendment to the FY2006 Defense Authorization Bill (H.R. 1815) — were opposed on the grounds that the nature of combat in Iraq already exposed women to combat and that such an exclusion would be discriminatory against women who comprise approximately 14% of the active Army and 6% of the Marine Corps.⁵¹ In response to this opposition, House Armed Services Committee Chairman Duncan Hunter proposed a less contentious amendment that would instead require DOD to notify Congress 60 days in advance of implementing any changes to the Army’s 1994 policy on assigning women to operational ground units. Although this measure was initially approved by the House, it did not make it into the FY2006 Defense Authorization Act (P.L. 109-163). Some assert that even though congressional restrictions on women in combat did not make it into legislation, that Congress has essentially sent DOD a “message” that it would take a dim view of DOD efforts to modify the Army’s 1994 policy on assigning women to units that could be involved in direct combat.

Equipment Issues

As previously stated, the Army is also faced with equipment shortages as it implements its modularity program. According to GAO, modular brigade combat teams will “require significant increases in the levels of equipment, particularly command, control, and communications equipment; wheeled vehicles; and artillery and mortars.”⁵² Command, control, and communications equipment are of particular concern as they constitute what the Army considers the key enablers for the modular brigade combat teams.

These equipment shortages could be significantly exacerbated by the Army’s planning assumption that equipment from ongoing operations in Iraq and Afghanistan “would remain in operational condition for redistribution to new and restructured modular units.”⁵³ Reports, such as the Congressional Budget Office’s (CBO’s) April 2005 report on increased usage of military equipment in ongoing operations and the Association of the U.S. Army’s (AUSA) October 2005 report on resetting the force,⁵⁴

⁵⁰ Department of Defense Memorandum, Subject: Direct Ground Combat Definition and Assignment Rule, Jan. 13, 1994.

⁵¹ Data on percentage of females in the Army and Marine Corps is from a September 2005 Defense Manpower Data Center report.

⁵² GAO Testimony before the Subcommittee on Tactical Air and Land Forces, House Armed Services Committee, *Force Structure: Preliminary Observations on Army Plans to Implement and Fund Modular Forces*, GAO-05-443T, Mar. 16, 2005, p. 6.

⁵³ GAO Report, GAO-05-926, *Force Structure: Actions Needed to Improve Estimates and Oversight of Costs for Transforming Army to a Modular Force*, September 2005.

⁵⁴ Statement of Douglas Holtz-Eakin, CBO, on “The Potential Costs Resulting from Increased Usage of Military Equipment in Ongoing Operations,” presented to the

suggest that equipment is being worn out at significantly higher rates than expected, asserting that deploying and using equipment in theater for one calendar year results in five years of wear and tear on that equipment. According to AUSA, the Army replaced over 800 major systems — ranging from helicopters, tanks, and infantry fighting vehicles to Stryker and tactical wheeled vehicles — in FY2005 due to both battle losses and equipment “wash outs” where equipment is deemed unusable due to excessive wear and tear and damage. According to Army officials, this excessive usage and loss of equipment has accounted for as much as 50% of Army modular equipment costs covered under previous wartime emergency supplementals⁵⁵. It is not known if the Army anticipated such a significant loss of equipment in its plans to equip its modular forces, but it is possible that these higher than expected losses have resulted in equipment shortages in BCTs and other units undergoing modular transition.

GAO visits to the 3rd Infantry Division (the first Army unit to undergo modular reconfiguration) and the 101st Airborne Division (the Army’s second modular unit) suggest that equipment shortages may also have a detrimental impact on unit training. Regarding command, control, and communications equipment, both units reportedly expressed concern that because of these shortages their soldiers might not be able to achieve proficiency “with some of this high-tech equipment because the equipment is not available in sufficient numbers.” In addition, the GAO report noted that both units were significantly short of their authorizations of tactical unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs).⁵⁶

Equipment shortages in the 3rd Infantry and 101st Airborne Divisions — the first two Army divisions to undergo modularization — raises additional issues for consideration. One concern is that if the Army’s first two divisions to undergo modularization could not be fully or even adequately equipped for training, what implications does that hold for the Army’s eight other active combat divisions that are scheduled for modularization? Some suggest that it would not be unreasonable to assume that these other eight divisions will also likely experience equipment shortages at levels experienced by the 3rd Infantry and 101st Airborne, and perhaps even greater.

According to Army officials, that while units at a lower readiness and training state may not have their full complement of equipment, units deploying on operations are deploying with 100% of their authorized equipment, although sometimes a unit is not brought up to 100% until it “falls in” on equipment left in a theater of operations by departing units.⁵⁷ While some analysts claim that this practice deprives units of

Subcommittee on Readiness, House Armed Services Committee, Apr. 6, 2005 and AUSA’s Torchbearer National Security Report “Resetting the Force: The Equipment Challenge,” October 12005.

⁵⁵ Information in this section is taken from discussions with and briefings from the Army Staff in December 2005 and February 2006.

⁵⁶ GAO Testimony before the Subcommittee on Tactical Air and Land Forces, House Armed Services Committee, *Force Structure: Preliminary Observations on Army Plans to Implement and Fund Modular Forces*, GAO-05-443T, Mar. 16, 2005, p. 6.

⁵⁷ Information in this section is taken from discussions with and briefings from the Army Staff in December 2005 and February 2006.

their full complement of equipment needed for training — as well as domestic missions in the case of the National Guard — the Army notes that a combination of under-resourcing and under-equipping units in the 1990s (the so-called “Procurement Holiday”); losses through combat and excessive use; and modularization needs make this practice necessary.

National Guard Equipment Issues. Another issue concerns National Guard modularization. Some maintain that equipment shortages for Guard units converting to the modular structure could be even more pronounced than those of active duty units. The National Guard Bureau Director, Lieutenant General H. Steven Blum, reportedly stated that the Army National Guard was already “under-equipped and “under-resourced” before the war⁵⁸ — a condition some suggest is historical as Guard units traditionally have less and older equipment than their active duty counterparts.

This condition is further exacerbated by the fact that many Guard units have been required to leave their equipment in Iraq for other units, both Active and Guard, to use.⁵⁹ In some instances, Guard units left all but their soldier’s individual equipment in Iraq, which has had a significant impact on those unit’s ability to train and also to fulfil their state missions, such as disaster relief and homeland defense. Such extreme shortages might also have a significant impact on Guard units converting to modular brigade combat teams.

Demands on Army Depots. Reports suggest that the demands at Army depots to maintain and repair equipment needed in Iraq and Afghanistan is having a detrimental effect on the depots ability to provide equipment for modularization.⁶⁰ The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) in 2005 testimony to the House Subcommittee on Readiness, noted that as a result of the wars “many of the hundreds of thousands of pieces of equipment that have been used in operations in Iraq and Afghanistan are in need of replacement or repair.”⁶¹ According to CBO, the Army’s trucks are being driven “roughly ten times more miles per year than has been the average over the past several years; tanks and armored vehicles are being driven at rates roughly five times those of peacetime; and helicopters flown at roughly twice peacetime rates.”⁶² Adding to the problem of excessive equipment utilization is that equipment and vehicles are also being destroyed as a result of enemy action and in non-combat related activities such as vehicle accidents. Army depots are reportedly confronting four to five times

⁵⁸ “NGB Chief: Guard Needs \$20 Billion for Equipment,” *National Guard Magazine*, Jan. 2005, p. 12.

⁵⁹ Information in this section is from Wayne Woolley, “Looking for a Fair Fight: Citizen Soldiers Given More Responsibilities Without the Resources,” *New Jersey Star-Ledger*, Nov. 23, 2003 and Christopher Prawdzyk, “Fracture Inventory,” *National Guard Magazine*, Apr. 2005.

⁶⁰ See Jonathan Weisman, “Army Repair Posts Scramble to Keep the Troops Equipped,” *Washington Post*, Dec. 13, 2004, p. A01 and Dave Moniz, “Worn-Out Army Equipment to Cost U.S.,” *USA Today*, Jan. 26, 2005, p. 7.

⁶¹ Statement of Douglas Holtz-Eakin, CBO, on “The Potential Costs Resulting from Increased Usage of Military Equipment in Ongoing Operations,” presented to the Subcommittee on Readiness, House Armed Services Committee, Apr. 6, 2005, p. 1.

⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 2.

more equipment wear than the Army anticipated and are said to be experiencing significant stress in not only repairing equipment needed for Iraq and Afghanistan, but also trying to meet the Army's modularity demands.⁶³ Given this situation of competing demands on the Army's industrial base, it is possible that the equipment shortages resulting from unit reorganization and the creation of new brigades might be further exacerbated by demands to repair equipment damaged or worn out by the war.

The Army's Budget Concerns Regarding Equipment. The Army's Campaign Plan assumes that supplemental funding will continue "until the end of the emergency plus two fiscal years,"⁶⁴ in order to fund the repair and reset equipment returning from deployed operations. Given the somewhat unpredictable nature of combat losses and equipment usage rates, some Army officials suggest that supplemental appropriations may be required for more than the planned "end of emergency plus two fiscal years." Army planners suggest that should the planned-for supplemental appropriations be reduced or eliminated at the conclusion of the "emergency" that the Army's equipment situation could rapidly enter a "death spiral" whereby units could be significantly and perhaps permanently underequipped due to a lack of funds for repair and reset of equipment.⁶⁵

Basing

On July 27, 2005, the Army announced the stationing locations for its active duty BCTs.⁶⁶

Table 3. Active BCT Stationing Plan

Location	Number of BCTs	BCT Flagging Designations ^a
Ft. Benning, GA	1 BCT	3 rd Infantry Division
Ft. Bliss, TX	4 BCTs	1 st Armored Division
Ft. Bragg, NC	4 BCTs	82 nd Airborne Division
Ft. Campbell, KY	4 BCTs	101 st Airborne Division
Ft. Carson, CO	4 BCTs	4 th Infantry Division
Ft. Drum, NY	3 BCTs	10 th Mountain Division
Ft. Hood, TX	5 BCTs	4 BCTs - 1 st Cavalry Division 1 BCT - 3 rd Armored Cavalry Regiment
Ft. Knox, KY	1 BCT	1 st Infantry Division

⁶³ See Jonathan Weisman, "Army Repair Posts Scramble to Keep the Troops Equipped," *Washington Post*, Dec. 13, 2004, p. A01 and Dave Moniz, "Worn-Out Army Equipment to Cost U.S.," *USA Today*, Jan. 26, 2005, p. 7.

⁶⁴ The Army Campaign Plan, Change 2, Unclassified, September 30, 2005.

⁶⁵ Information in this section is taken from discussions with and briefings from the Army Staff in December 2005 and February 2006.

⁶⁶ Department of Defense News Release, "Army Unveils Active Component Brigade Combat Team Stationing," July 27, 2005.

Location	Number of BCTs	BCT Flagging Designations ^a
Ft. Lewis, WA	3 BCTs (Stryker)	2 nd Infantry Division
Ft. Polk, LA	1 BCT	10 th Mountain Division
Ft. Richardson, AK	1 BCT	25 th Infantry Division
Ft. Riley, KS	3 BCTs	1 st Infantry Division
Ft. Stewart, GA	3 BCTs	3 rd Infantry Division
Ft. Wainwright, AK	1 BCT (Stryker)	25 th Infantry Division
Schofield Barracks, HI	2 BCTs (Stryker)	25 th Infantry Division
Korea	1 BCT	2 nd Infantry Division
Germany	1 BCT (Stryker)	2 nd Cavalry Regiment
Italy	1 BCT	173 rd Airborne Brigade
Ft. Irwin, CA	1 BCT (-)	11 th Armored Cavalry Regiment

a. Flagging Designations from AUSA Report, “Active Component Division and Brigade Combat Team Stationing and Flagging Designations,” August 2005.

In September 2005, the Army published its stationing plan for its Active, National Guard, and Reserve Component BCTs, support brigades, and operational headquarters in Change 2 to the Army Campaign Plan. The Army does acknowledge that there have been some minor changes to this plan since it was issued.

Rebalancing and Stabilizing the Force and Cyclical Readiness

Other Critical Army Initiatives

The Army has three other concurrent initiatives underway which have been described as “critical enablers” in the Army’s brigade-centric reconfiguration: rebalancing and stabilizing the force and cyclic unit readiness. These initiatives involve substantial policy, organizational, and personnel changes and some observers contend that these initiatives may be more difficult to achieve than the creation of modular BCTs and support brigades as they require significant cultural changes for the entire Army.

Rebalancing the Force

In what the Army describes as its “most significant restructuring in 50 years,” the Army is presently converting a number of units deemed less relevant to current requirements into units more appropriate to the types of operations ongoing in Iraq and Afghanistan. This change involves over 100,000 active and reserve personnel and involves decreasing certain types of units while increasing others as described in **Table 4**, below.

Table 4. Restructuring of Units, FY2004-FY2009

Decrease	Increase
26 - Field Artillery Battalions	149 - Military Police Units
10 - Air Defense Battalions	16 - Transportation Units
13 - Engineer Battalions	9 - Petroleum/Water Distribution Units
19 - Armor Battalions	9 - Civil Affairs Units
65 - Ordnance (Battalions - Teams)	7 - Psychological Operations Units
—	11 - Biological Integrated Defense Companies

Source: Torchbearer National Security Report, “The U.S. Army: A Modular Force for the 21st Century,” The Association of the United States Army (AUSA), March 2005, p. 19.

According to the Army’s 2005 Posture Statement dated February 6, 2005 this rebalancing is underway with more than 34,000 spaces having been converted.⁶⁷ Army officials state that recommendations from QDR 2005 could possibly alter the numbers and types of units that will be decremented and increased, but these officials believe that such changes would likely be minor in nature.⁶⁸ The Army further maintains that rebalancing will increase its capabilities sufficiently to relieve the stress on high demand/low density units. This rebalancing is also intended to place more combat support and combat service support units back into the active component from the Reserves to improve overall deployability and sustainability, as well as to reduce requirements for immediate mobilization of reserve units.⁶⁹

Stabilizing the Force

This initiative transitions the Army from an individual replacement manning system to a unit-focused system. This stabilization initiative is applicable only to Active Component forces. The objective is to keep soldiers in units longer in order to reduce historically high turnover rates of soldiers and their leaders and to foster unit cohesion and operational effectiveness.⁷⁰ In addition, this initiative is intended to provide stability to Army families, and could ultimately save the Army money as it could result in fewer moves for soldiers and their families. The 172nd Separate Infantry Brigade in Alaska was the first unit to implement the unit stability program and four additional brigades began unit stability in 2005.⁷¹

⁶⁷ U.S. Army’s 2005 Posture Statement (Unclassified), Feb. 6, 2005, p. ii.

⁶⁸ Information in this section is taken from discussions with and briefings from the Army Staff in December 2005 and February 2006.

⁶⁹ U.S. Army’s 2005 Posture Statement (Unclassified), Feb. 6, 2005 p. 9.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Ibid.

Cyclical Readiness - Army Force Generation⁷²

In FY2006 the Army plans to implement a new readiness system — modeled on the cyclical readiness systems of the other Services — to replace its old “Tiered Readiness System” which, according to the Army, created a “Haves” and “Haves Not” culture - with most of the “Haves Not” consisting of Army National Guard and Reserve units. Under this readiness system, called the Army Force Generation Model, units will move through a structured progression of unit readiness over time intended to produce predictable periods of availability of trained, ready, and equipped units available for deployment. Under this model, units will fall into one of three pools: the reset/retrain pool; the ready pool; and the available pool. In the reset/retrain pool units will not be ready or available for major combat operations but could conduct homeland security and disaster relief operations. Units in the ready pool are conducting training and receiving additional personnel and equipment to bring them up to full strength and units in this pool can be deployed to meet “surge requirements” if need be. After passing the ready pool, units are assigned to the available pool for one year where they become eligible to deploy for combat and other operations. The Army hopes to maintain 20 BCTs (14 Active and 6 Reserve) in the available pool on a continuous basis.

The Army hopes that the Army Force Generation Model for readiness will result in:

- A steady-state supply of 20 ready, fully-resourced, BCTs and supporting units;
- Stabilized personnel to join, train, deploy, and fight together in the same unit;
- Assured and predictable access to National Guard and Reserve units for operational requirements;
- Better ability to allocate constrained resources (particularly equipment) based on unit deployment schedules;
- More predictable unit deployments for soldiers, their families, and employers; and
- Opportunity to synchronize unit readiness with a wide variety of Institutional Army requirements such as professional schooling needed for promotion and military specialty-specific training.

⁷² Information in this section is taken from an Army Information Paper “Congressional Engagement — Army Force Generation,” June 24, 2005.

Potential Oversight Issues for Congress

How Many BCTs Will the Army Field?

Over the past two years the Army has gone from its originally planned “48 to 43 Active Component BCTs” to reportedly only “43 Active Component BCTs” to “42 BCTs” and, according to some Army officials, perhaps as few 39 or 36 Active Component BCTs. Analysts suggest that a variety of factors have been involved in this reduction over time including troop and equipment shortages, budgetary constraints, as well as the Army’s desire to protect funding for modernization - namely the Future Combat System. Similar reductions in the Army National Guard and Reserve have also reportedly occurred. Army officials also suggest that this reduction was also in part necessitated out of need to adequately staff and equip modular support brigades and headquarters after the BCTs had been filled with required personnel and equipment - often times taken from divisional and higher level support units and headquarters.⁷³ Given this decreasing number of BCTs, Congress may wish to explore the circumstances that compelled the Army to decrease its numbers of BCTs - both active and reserve - as well as what risks are associated with having a smaller combat force than originally intended.

Modularity “Lessons Learned” From Deployments

It is possible that Congress might explore with DOD and the Army the initial “lessons learned” from the 2005 deployment to Iraq of 3rd Infantry Division and the 101st Airborne Division — the Army’s first two modularized divisions. The performance of these two restructured divisions that participated in the March 2003 ground invasion of Iraq in the traditional divisional structure, will likely be closely scrutinized and hopefully extensively documented. The Army has suggested that the operational and combat lessons learned from the current rotation of these two new units will help the Army to refine not only tactics and operational procedures for modular forces, but also force structure as well as unit manning, two areas of considerable congressional interest. Congressional exposure to these lessons learned could potentially provide valuable insight as it performs its oversight and budgetary roles regarding the Army’s transformation to a modular force.

Personnel and Equipment Shortages

Congress may decide to examine the impact of personnel and equipment shortages on modularization of the active Army and National Guard in greater detail. Some contend that personnel, in particular, and equipment shortages could result in the Army not achieving its goals in terms of both timelines for conversion, as well as total number of additional brigade combat teams and support brigades created. Such an examination could focus on individual units, and identify not only current and projected equipment and personnel shortfalls in those units, but perhaps trends throughout both the active Army and National Guard. Given the National Guard’s more pronounced personnel shortfalls and its historic equipment shortages, Congress

⁷³ Information in this section is taken from discussions with and briefings from the Army Staff in December 2005 and February 2006.

may opt for a much more detailed examination of these shortages as well as the Army's overall timeline and possibly unfulfilled budgetary requirements to fully convert Guard and Reserve units to a modular force.

Counterinsurgency and Stabilization Operations

Congress might review the adequacy of the Army's current modular force structure design in terms of counterinsurgency and stabilization operations. Concerns have been raised that the new BCTs will not have as many infantry soldiers as previous divisional combat brigades and that fewer infantry soldiers could possibly mean that these new BCTs might not have the ability to exert adequate presence to provide security as well as to conduct counterinsurgency operations. Another issue that might be examined is how effective the Army's current modular force structure is in addressing the demands of stabilization operations. While the modular force may be optimally designed to conduct rapid, decisive combat operations, it may not have the appropriate command and control formations or the right mix of support units such as engineers, logistics units, and military police to successfully conduct stabilization operations. Recent history suggests that it is no longer sufficient to simply defeat an adversary on the battlefield and that combat operations must be able to rapidly and successfully transition to security and stabilization operations in order to reduce the possibility of an ensuing civil war or insurgency. Given DOD's emphasis on the importance of stabilization operations, Congress might choose to revisit the Army's modular force structure to determine if it is properly configured to conduct stabilization operations.

Rebalancing and Stabilizing the Force

Congress might act to review, in greater detail, the Army's rebalancing and stabilization initiatives. The Army has characterized these initiatives as "critical" to the modular transformation of the Army, but little is publically known as to how well they are progressing in terms of new units that have been created or how stabilization is affecting unit cohesion or family life for soldiers. Given that these two initiatives involve significant structural and cultural change for the Army, they also likely have significant budgetary implications that some feel are not adequately discussed as part of Army modularity.

Cyclical Readiness

Congress may decide to examine the Army's Force Generation Model of cyclical readiness in greater detail. This new model - a departure from the long-standing tiered readiness system - will supposedly provide the Army with a trained and ready force pool of 20 active and reserve BCTs at all times. Such a change will likely have a significant impact on how the active and reserve Army staffs, equips, and trains its units and will almost certainly have budgetary and resource implications that Congress might decide to review.

Additional Reading

CRS Report RL32888, *The Army's Future Combat System (FCS): Background and Issues for Congress*, by Andrew Feickert.

CRS Report RL32965, *Recruiting and Retention: An Overview of FY2005 and FY2006 Results for Active and Reserve Component Enlisted Personnel*, by Lawrence Kapp.

CRS Report RL32238, *Defense Transformation: Background and Oversight Issues for Congress*, by Ronald O'Rourke.

CRS Report RS20787, *Army Transformation and Modernization: Overview and Issues for Congress*, by Edward F. Bruner.

CRS Report RS21754, *Military Forces: What is the Appropriate Size for the United States?*, by Edward F. Bruner.

CRS Report RS20649, *U.S. Military Dispositions: Fact Sheet*, by Edward F. Bruner.

CRS Report RL32924, *Defense: FY2006 Authorization and Appropriations*, by Stephen Daggett and Amy Belasco.