



U.S. Army Capacity: A Strategic Choice



Reductions in the Army to levels unseen since before World War II are increasing risk to national security and weakening the Joint Force's ability to deter conflict and, if necessary, to fight and win against increasingly capable enemies. Decisions about the size of the Army should be informed by a consideration of those forces **committed** to missions and foundational responsibilities, **surge** forces for contingencies, and organizations required to **generate** and maintain a strong and ready Joint Force.

The Army's committed forces:

- Defend the homeland and conduct operations around the world: more than 177,000 active duty Soldiers (over 36% of the active force) in over 150 locations.
- Engage regionally to ensure interoperability, build relationships, enhance situational awareness, assure partners, and deter adversaries.
- Provide foundational capabilities to the Joint Force such as communications, intelligence, rotary wing aviation, missile defense, logistics and engineering: over 9,000 active duty Soldiers are committed to theater missile defense alone.
- Serve as Executive Agents for forty-two Department of Defense activities, equal to all the other services and agencies combined.
- Integrate and synchronize the efforts of multiple partners: nine active duty division headquarters deployed or committed to missions around the world in locations such as Afghanistan, Iraq, Jordan, Korea, Germany, and the Pacific Region.
- Provide critical support to U.S. civil authorities: one active duty brigade and thirteen National Guard brigades; and special capabilities such as the 20th Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear, and Explosive (CBRNE) Command and fifty-eight Civil Support Teams (CST).

The Nation requires Army intervention and surge capacity because:

- The desire for control over territory, populations, and resources is a frequent cause of war; the Army's ability to deny enemy control of the land domain is foundational to preventing aggression and prevailing in armed conflict.
- The location, scale, and duration of future conflicts are impossible to predict.
- War plans call for Army forces to play foundational roles in the conduct of joint operations in the homeland and overseas.
- Dangers are increasing - Russia has invaded Crimea and Ukraine, the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) established a proto-state in Syria and Iraq, Yemen collapsed and the security environment in Africa and the Middle East has worsened.
- National security will continue to demand Army forces prepared to intervene and surge to respond to and resolve crises. Across the last three decades, Army forces were committed to more than fifty missions.
- Sufficient capacity in ready land forces reassures allies and convinces adversaries they are unable to accomplish objectives through the use of force.



The Army's Generating Force:

- Stands at 155,000 when combined with the more than 63,000 Soldiers from the Total Force in trainee, transfer, or student status (TTHS).
- Services, supplies, contracts for, and equips the operating force in addition to interfacing with the commercial sector.
- Trains and educates not only our Army, but also members of each service, our allies, and international military partners (e.g., all U.S. Marine Corps tankers and field artillerymen).
- Is proportionally smaller than all other services. A recent RAND Arroyo Center study concluded that reducing the institutional Army below 88,000 (not including TTHS) would fracture core institutional capabilities.

Mounting risk -- an Army too small to protect the nation due to flawed assumptions:

- Assumption: Ready land forces do not play an important role in preventing conflict. Reality: Deterrence depends on the demonstrated ability to deny the enemy the accomplishment of his objectives.
- Assumption: Army forces can be rapidly regenerated. Reality: Growing the Army is difficult, costly and time consuming. Policy decisions to do so often come too late. Sophisticated systems and complex missions place a premium on a trained and well-led teams.
- Assumption: Future conflicts will not require significant landpower; enemy forces can be defeated through precision strikes or raids. Reality: Challenges to US dominance in the maritime, air, space, and cyberspace domains increase the importance of ready land forces fighting as part of joint teams. The human aspects and political aspects of war require landpower to achieve sustainable outcomes.
- Assumption: Allies and partners can provide capable land forces in sufficient scale to accomplish future missions. Reality: U.S. allies are cutting land forces. Partners often lack the will or the capability to fight consistent with U.S. interests.
- Assumption: Reserve Component forces can compensate adequately for risk in Active Component intervention and surge forces. Reality: While the Army Reserve and National Guard provide invaluable depth to national defense, the lack of time and resources to maintain a high level of readiness in combined arms units renders them incapable of responding rapidly. Considerable time and resources are needed to generate readiness after mobilization.

Conclusion:

- The National Defense Panel Review of the 2014 Quadrennial Defense Review stated, "The 2014 QDR's contemplated **reduction in Army end strength goes too far.**"
- The recent cut announced July 9, 2015 reduces active forces available for surge from 158,000 to 118,000 Soldiers. This cut alone represents a 25% loss in the Army's active component surge capacity.
- Due to increasing commitments overseas and reductions in the size of the Army, the pool of ready land forces prepared to deploy rapidly and transition quickly into operations is at a historic low even as threats to national and international security are increasing.