

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Input for GAO Report on ARI Stemming from the NDAA

Why the California National Guard Did This Study

The California National Guard (CNG) is submitting this report to the GAO to ensure that it has the most accurate picture of the issues pertinent to the Active Army's Aviation Restructuring Initiative (ARI). The 2015 NDAA drives a GAO inquiry of ARI and its alternatives and report its findings to the defense committees of Congress.

The Active Component (AC) of the Army created ARI in response to a \$10.5B budget reduction and an uncertain security environment. The AC argues that their plan to consolidate combat aviation assets in the Active Component saves money and would help fill the capability gap created by retiring the OH-58 Kiowa Attack Reconnaissance aircraft. Because ARI has implications to force structure and generation, combat and domestic capabilities, policies and authorities, the National Guard Bureau and the States' National Guard have each provided alternative proposals.

This study analyzes ARI, the Chief of the National Guard Bureau's proposal, DoD reports and an alternative restructuring proposal for compliance with policy and U.S. Code, costs and mission-effectiveness. This study also reviews data and factors bearing on Army Aviation deployments, performance and costs.

The Army National Guard (ARNG) is challenging this attempt at redistribution of aviation capabilities and capacities across the components because it views ARI as a precursor to additional inter-component conflicts in competition for roles and missions. Per the NDAA, a commission will study issues relevant to the Army's force structure and it is in the components' and nation's interests that more deliberate, standardized and collaborative approaches come as a result.

Findings

ARI is one of the many latest disputes over how to meet service obligations with limited resources. The recent Budget Control Act (BCA) and the threat of sequestration have highlighted the challenges associated with balancing the Army's force structure, arraying its major equipment, and remaining a lethal, ready and sustainable land combat force for the future. There is constant tension among the inputs to this process; doctrine, technology, security threats, fiscal constraints and component loyalties all shape the Army.

The fundamental authorities and legal codes that determine roles, missions, force mix and requirements were not the basis of ARI. NGB countered with a proposal and subsequent analysis that implied consensus among the states. The states created their own alternative that accounts for the above authorities and provides ready and sustainable combat capability in a cost-effective manner. In addition, this study

identified several differences between the sources, data and methods used to create ARI and the NGB proposal.

Recommendations

This study recommends that DoD (1) pursues an alternative to both ARI and the Chief of the National Guard Bureau's proposal; this third option, referenced in this document as the States' Alternative Proposal, would reduce the overall size of the aviation fleet, address the Active Component's requirements for its operational fleet and reduce the number of Combat Aviation Brigades (CAB) in the Army National Guard, while still providing a strategic reserve; (2) include Combatant Commander requirements for Combat Arms as a factor in evaluating combat force structure and the Active/Reserve component mix. Congress should consider assessing the authorities for determining roles and missions among the components and ensure that they are accounted for in force structure changes. Congress should also consider appointing a non-DoD/non-Guard agency to validate the cost models and accuracy of data sources for estimating costs associated with force restructuring initiatives.