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How the Army Planned for Three New Divisions and How This Can Be Improved (Unclassified Digest of Classified Report). LCD-76-454. August 4, 1977.

Report to the Congress; by Elmer B. Staats, Comptroller General.

Issue Area: Facilities and Material Management (700).

Contact: Logistics and Communications Div.

Budget Function: General Government: Central Personnel Management (805).

Organization Concerned: Department of the Army.

Congressional Relevance: House Committee on Armed Services; Senate Committee on Armed Services; Congress.

The Army did not prepare a comprehensive plan detailing how it was going to put into operation, coordinate, and supervise the reorganization of its forces following the reduction in combat forces after the Vietnam War. As a result, the Army has had numerous problems, and further changes may be needed to set up the combat capability the Army seeks.

Findings/Conclusions: Planning was not adequate for accomplishing the reorganization and subsequent changes. The Army may have activated too many units too soon, and units activated over a year ago still do not have the proper mix of personnel and equipment to conduct effective training.

Recommendations: The Secretary of Defense should require the Secretary of the Army to: improve the Army's planning process to correct existing problems; provide the Congress with an updated, inclusive estimated cost of the reorganization to bring about full combat readiness; upgrade the level of organization of round out brigades so an entire division can proceed toward a comparable readiness goal; make provisions to provide the missing air defense batteries needed; apprise the Congress of whether or not the new reduced support forces can provide adequate support; give the 7th Infantry Division priority over the other new divisions for noncommissioned officers with combat skills and equipment; establish a priority system so that each unit of each division receives necessary personnel and equipment, according to its priority, to conduct training and become combat ready as soon as possible; and establish a system assuring coordination between the Military Personnel Center, the Army Forces Command, and the Recruiting Command in planning the assignment of personnel to new units. (SC)

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COMPTROLLER GENERAL'S  
REPORT TO THE CONGRESS

HOW THE ARMY PLANNED  
FOR THREE NEW DIVISIONS  
AND HOW THIS CAN BE IMPROVED  
Department of Defense

### D I G E S T

After reducing its combat forces after the Vietnam war, the Army had more personnel in support functions--supply and maintenance--than needed. Partly on its own initiative and partly because of congressional pressure and a congressional mandate the Army began to consider ways to reduce the numbers in its ranks known as "military support spaces."

However, with the Warsaw Pact forces increasing in strength, the Army converted its military support spaces to combat spaces rather than drop them from its total, or "force," structure. The Army reasoned that it could increase its combat power with the same 785,000 manpower.

Accordingly, the bulk of the additional combat spaces was assigned to three new divisions--the 5th Infantry Division, 7th Infantry Division, and the 24th Infantry Division. The remaining spaces were assigned to other combat units, including two brigades dispatched to Europe. Establishing and operating the divisions and other units from fiscal year 1976 through 1980 was estimated by the Army to cost \$2.5 billion, with \$1.9 billion being attributed to the three new divisions.

### PLANNING FOR THE CHANGE

The Army gave much thought and study to this reorganization. However, the planning was not adequate for accomplishing the reorganization and the subsequent changes. The Army did not prepare a comprehensive plan setting forth how it was going to put into operation, coordinate, and watch the reorganization so that additional fire power could be developed in the most economical and effective manner. (See p. 10.)

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As a result, the Army has had numerous problems, and further changes may be needed to step up the combat capability the Army seeks. For example:

- Recently, the Army has become concerned about whether too many support personnel and functions have been traded for combat forces and whether this might seriously degrade its capability for sustained combat. (See p. 16.)
- The new divisions have been organized at less than full combat strength because of lack of personnel and equipment. (See p. 18.)
- Two of the new divisions were activated as regular infantry divisions, rather than the desired mechanized infantry divisions, because of a shortage of tanks and other equipment. (See p. 20.)
- The cost of the increased combat power was understated. (See p. 23.)

#### THE EFFECT ON PERSONNEL AND EQUIPMENT

The Army may have activated too many units too soon. This has hampered efforts to develop additional combat power efficiently and effectively. Units activated about 1-1/2 years ago still do not have the proper mix of personnel and equipment to conduct effective training, yet more units are scheduled for activation in fiscal year 1977. (See p. 33.)

This happened because:

- The Army did not establish a program to retrain noncommissioned officers with necessary combat skills until January 1976--about 1-1/2 years after the first units were activated. (See pp. 36 and 39.) Consequently, effective meaningful training could not be conducted. (See p. 41.)

--The Army did not establish a priority system so that each division received necessary personnel and equipment at the right time to conduct training. (See pp. 43 and 50.)

--Procedures were not established to mesh personnel and equipment in a coordinated manner. (See pp. 42 and 50.)

Also, the Army assigned the new divisions additional responsibilities before allowing them to conduct their own training. This is expected to delay achieving combat readiness. (See p. 43.)

The Army expects to divert noncommissioned officers from other active divisions to the new divisions to enable them to be combat ready by the dates promised the Congress. (See p. 45.)

#### EXTENSIVE DEVELOPMENT OF POSTS

Extensive construction programs are underway and more are anticipated at each division's base to provide the types of facilities needed with the all-volunteer Army. Excluding family housing, construction costs are estimated to be about \$573 million from fiscal years 1976 through 1980. This is about \$164 million more than the \$409 million reported to the Congress for the same period. (See p. 55.)

The Army has done an economic analysis of alternative methods for delivering health care at the 24th Division's Hunter Army Airfield/Fort Stewart, Georgia, complex since the proposed new \$43.5 million hospital came under scrutiny. Full consideration should be given to existing facilities or modifications of them, including a nearby hospital at Hunter Army Airfield, in deciding whether to construct a new building. (See pp. 62 and 63.)

The policy guidance for military hospital planning the Congress provided the Department of Defense in its House Conference Report No. 94-1314 of June 29, 1976, on military construction appropriations for fiscal year 1977, should be followed in determining the size of hospital facilities at Fort Stewart. (See p. 63.)

There is an acute shortage of adequate family housing in the area where each division is based. The Army may be forced to build a considerable amount of family housing unless existing legislation can be amended to encourage private construction. Section 318 of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974 is intended to stimulate construction by the private sector to meet these needs. This legislation has not been implemented, because the Department of Housing and Urban Development had problems with its language. The Department introduced proposed amendments to the law, but the amendments were not passed. Failure to provide adequate housing could affect the morale of soldiers. (See p. 57.)

#### IMPACT OF REORGANIZATION

This reorganization has raised additional concerns as to its impact on Reserve forces, readiness of the new divisions, U.S. wartime capability in Europe, other military services, and the defense budget.

Following are aspects of the reorganization needing further analysis:

- The reorganization requires earlier delivery of Reserve units to areas of possible friction and places special reliance on them at a time when they are experiencing recruiting difficulty. (See p. 67.)
- The new divisions may not be as combat ready as others because of the questionable capability of their Reserve Component Brigades to mobilize, deploy, and fight with active brigades. (See p. 68.)

- Because the Warsaw Pact forces have a geographical advantage, enabling them to move reinforcements and support units to the central European area rapidly, there are questions as to the readiness and timely deployability of both active and Reserve component units to Europe. (See p. 69.)
- This situation adds further demands on air-lift capability to move extensive amounts of combat material to Europe in the event of hostilities. (See p. 71.)
- The Air Force intends to purchase additional tactical aircraft, justified in part, to support the new divisions. (See p. 70.)
- More combat power means higher budgets. (See p. 71.)

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

The Secretary of Defense should require the Secretary of the Army to:

- Improve the Army's planning process to correct the problems previously enumerated. (See p. 29.)
- Provide the Congress with an updated, inclusive estimated cost of the reorganization to bring about full combat readiness. (See p. 29.)
- Upgrade the level of organization of round out brigades so an entire division can proceed toward a comparable readiness goal. (See p. 29.)
- Make provisions to provide the missing air defense batteries needed. (See p. 29.)
- Apprise the Congress of whether or not the new reduced support forces can provide adequate support. (See p. 29.)

- Give the 7th Infantry Division priority over other new divisions for noncommissioned officers with combat skills and equipment. (See p. 52.)
- Establish a priority system so that each unit of each division receives necessary personnel and equipment, according to its priority, to conduct training and become combat ready as soon as possible. (See p. 52.)
- Defer assigning support and training missions to new divisional units in the formative stage to avoid delay in achieving combat readiness. (See p. 52.)
- Establish a system assuring coordination between the Military Personnel Center, the Army Forces Command, and the Recruiting Command in planning the assignment of personnel to new units. (See p. 52.)
- Give full consideration to existing hospital facilities in determining what facilities can be used in providing health care. (See p. 65.)
- Comply with the Department of Defense's instructions that are being developed to implement the congressional policy guidance for determining acute care bed needs for military hospitals. (See p. 65.)

As to the housing problem at the new divisions, the Secretary of the Department of Housing and Urban Development should seek legislation to amend Section 318 of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974 so it is workable. (See p. 64.)

#### AGENCY COMMENTS AND GAO'S EVALUATION

The agencies agreed with most of our findings and recommendations. Detailed comments provided by the Army, the Air Force, and the Department of Housing and Urban Development

are discussed on pages 29, 52, and 65, and are included as appendixes beginning on page 89. Comments on the more important recommendations are shown below.

#### Adequacy of the Army's plans

The Army said that GAO's evaluation did not give the Army credit for being aware of the risks involved in its program to establish three new divisions or with developing courses of action to minimize the disruption. Although the Army may have been aware of the risks, GAO found that the Army had not developed an overall plan for the reorganization, and had not considered, early in its planning, many serious problems which later developed. More thorough planning would have enabled the Army to anticipate many of these problems and develop measures to avoid them.

#### Cost of the reorganization

The Army stated that updated cost estimates are being prepared and will be made available to the Congress. The Air Force said that new aircraft are not being acquired solely to support the three new divisions, and, therefore, these costs should not be included. However, GAO believes the Congress should be told about all direct and indirect costs associated with creating the three new divisions. Since the Air Force acknowledged that the new aircraft were justified in part to support the new divisions, some of their cost should be recognized.

#### Adequacy of reduced support forces

The Army said it may have reached the proper balance between combat and support units and it is continuing to evaluate the situation. GAO believes it is important for the Army to fully evaluate its ability to support its combat elements properly, and that the Congress should be promptly informed.