

GAO Highlights

Highlights of [GAO-14-76](#), a report to the Subcommittee on Airland, Committee on Armed Services, United States Senate

Why GAO Did This Study

As part of its plan to reduce its active duty force by 80,000 personnel by 2017, the Army will be inactivating 10 BCTs currently stationed in the United States and reorganizing the remaining BCTs. The Army conducted analyses of different stationing options, which included the use of its military value analysis model to compare installations based on their ability to support BCTs. GAO was asked to review the decision making process the Army used for its BCT stationing decision, including its military value analysis model. This report (1) describes the analyses the Army conducted to make its BCT decision and (2) evaluates the extent to which the Army has established guidance and processes related to the use of the military value analysis model as a part of its stationing decisions. GAO reviewed the Army's stationing guidance, current and previous versions of the military value analysis model, documents on the BCT decision, and spoke with cognizant officials.

What GAO Recommends

GAO recommends the Army develop and implement guidance related to when community input should be obtained for stationing decisions, and related to the use of its military value analysis model, such as when it should be used, the level of approval required for changes to the model, and how certain training areas should be considered, as well as processes for updating and reviewing the model. The Army concurred with GAO's recommendations and explained how they will be implemented.

View [GAO-14-76](#). For more information, contact Brian J. Lepore at (202) 512-4523 or leporeb@gao.gov

December 2013

DEFENSE INFRASTRUCTURE

Army Brigade Combat Team Inactivations Informed by Analyses, but Actions Needed to Improve Stationing Process

What GAO Found

To make decisions regarding the installations at which to inactivate 10 Brigade Combat Teams (BCTs) and reorganize others, the Army conducted quantitative and qualitative analyses and obtained community input. Specifically, in 2012 the Army established a BCT Reorganization Operational Planning Team to assess factors such as strategic considerations, military construction costs, and environmental and socioeconomic impacts, among others, and develop stationing options for decision makers. The Army also considered other factors, or attributes—such as training ranges, geographic distribution, and proximity to embarkation points—in its military value analysis model. In addition, the Army conducted community input sessions at installations with 5,000 or more military and civilian personnel, including the 15 under consideration for inactivation of a BCT. Several Army officials said that the sessions were valuable and could serve as a tool for future stationing decisions. However, the Army's stationing regulation does not include guidance on obtaining community input beyond what may be required in the context of environmental analysis. An Army official said that he is developing proposed guidelines for when such input should be considered, but was uncertain how they will be incorporated into formal guidance. Effective stakeholder involvement includes actively soliciting ongoing stakeholder input and fostering communication between stakeholders and decision makers. Incorporating this type of communication with external stakeholders into its stationing guidance for future decisions could lead to potentially greater buy-in from local communities for Army stationing decisions.

The Army expects to continue using its military value analysis model for major stationing decisions and has taken steps to validate the model, but has not established guidance and consistent formal processes related to its use, including when the model should be used or how it should be reviewed, updated, and approved. Standards for internal control state that control activities, such as established and consistent processes or policies, can help to ensure actions to mitigate risks are carried out. Army officials said that the model has generally been used for large-impact stationing decisions and may not be appropriate for minor decisions. However, the Army's stationing regulation does not discuss the model or provide guidance on the circumstances when the model should be used. Also, the Army has not established consistent processes for reviewing and updating attributes and attribute definitions within the model or for collecting and validating data, nor has it established guidance related to the level of input or approval required for changes to the model or how geographically distant training areas should be treated in the model. For instance, subject matter experts noted that the definitions of a couple of attributes should be updated or reviewed, but GAO found that there is no consistent process in place for addressing such issues. Army officials told GAO that the attributes and weighting of the attributes within the model may also change depending on the type of stationing decision, but there is no guidance on when revisions should be approved by Army leaders. Without consistent formal processes for updating and reviewing the model and data used, and guidance related to the level of approval required for changes to the model, the Army risks potential decline in the rigor and consistency of the model over time.