ARMY MODULAR FORCE STRUCTURE

Annual Report Generally Met Requirements, but Challenges in Estimating Costs and Assessing Capability Remain

Why GAO Did This Study

The Army considers its modular force transformation, which began in 2004, to be its most extensive restructuring since World War II. The Army expanded the number of deployable units and incorporated advanced equipment and specialized personnel, but removed a maneuver battalion from its brigades. Throughout the transformation, GAO reported, testified, and made recommendations on associated challenges the Army faced. In 2013, the Army stated it had completed its transformation and submitted its last required report to Congress on its modular progress. It also announced plans to restore a maneuver battalion to most brigades.

Congress mandated that GAO report annually on the Army’s modular force. For this report, GAO (1) evaluates whether the Army addressed the legislative requirements in its modular force report and (2) provides an overview of any challenges that the Army faced in its modular force transformation and describes how the Army is addressing these challenges as it implements further changes in its force structure. GAO analyzed the Army’s report against the legislative requirements, reviewed key Army reports, and spoke to Army officials.

What GAO Found

The Army’s annual report on its modular force either fully or partially addressed all of the requirements mandated by law. GAO’s analysis showed that of the 14 legislative requirements, the report fully addressed 9 and partially addressed 5. The requirements that were fully addressed included an assessment of the modular force capabilities and the status of doctrine for the modular force, among others. Some of the requirements that were partially addressed included information related to risks and mitigation strategies associated with shortfalls; scheduling for repairing, recapitalizing, and replacing equipment; and itemizing information by active-duty and reserve components. The 2013 report provided more thorough information to congressional decision makers on the Army’s progress in its modular force transformation than previous reports.

GAO’s body of work since 2005 on the Army’s modular restructuring found that the Army faced challenges in creating a results-oriented plan, developing realistic cost estimates, and planning comprehensive assessments. GAO made 20 recommendations from 2005 through 2008 to help address these challenges; the Army generally agreed with 18 of the recommendations but so far has implemented only 3. As the Army plans to restructure its modular force it has made some progress in creating a results-oriented plan, but more work remains in developing realistic cost estimates and planning comprehensive assessments.

What GAO Recommends

GAO is not making new recommendations, but this analysis provides additional support for past recommendations to develop realistic cost estimates and to create a comprehensive assessment plan to measure achievement of desired benefits. In oral comments on a draft of this report, the Army concurred with the report.

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