



Evaluating the Army's Ability to Regenerate

History and Future Options

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This analysis modeled the Army's ability to increase ("regenerate") its active component (AC) end strength over a five-year period in two scenarios—starting from a Total Army of 980,000 (450,000 AC) and starting from a Total Army of 920,000 (420,000 AC)—so that the Army could provide the number of deployable troops available at the end of the last conflict in 2010



RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- Would the Army be able to expand its active component in a relatively short time so that it could supply deployable troops at a level equal to those supplied to meet the demands of the recent large, protracted contingency operations in Afghanistan and Iraq?
- Can the Total Army force be sustained and the active component expanded while maintaining current high standards for recruits?
- What kinds of policy levers might be available to enable such a regeneration of the active component?



KEY FINDINGS

Current Policy Levers Will Probably Suffice to Enable Regeneration

- Relatively quick regeneration of the active component would carry a number of risks, particularly when expanding from a Total Army of 920,000.
- Potentially the most critical risk revolves around the fact that while the Regular Army is expanding, the Army as a whole will still need to meet operational demands.

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External Conditions Can Substantially Affect the Difficulty of Recruiting

- A good civilian labor market is generally bad for Army recruiting, and vice versa.
- Public support for the conflict is also likely to affect the difficulty of recruiting.

Regeneration Would Stress the RC, Especially When Starting from 920,000

- All regeneration scenarios we considered would require the RC to rotate above a 1:3 mobilization-to-dwell ratio for a number of years.



RECOMMENDATIONS

- Develop and resource specific capabilities to enable regeneration of the active component.
- Assess alternative ways to posture the Army for regeneration of the active component.
- Prepare the RC for rapid and high-frequency deployment while the Army is focused on quickly expanding the active component.
- Maintain certain critical skills that have a long lead time for training to reduce the stress placed on the Army during regeneration of the active component.
- Maintain Army capacity for contingency contracting, as the need to contract out support and sustainment capacity may well increase as Army operating forces decrease.
- Develop contingency plans that, for example, include greater mobilization of the RC if active component regeneration falters.
- A decision to regenerate should be made as early as possible during a conflict so that policy levers can be put in place quickly. A decision to go to war should be a decision to expand the Army's active component.



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