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SUMMARY

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2025 Army Transformation Initiative (ATI) Force Structure and Organizational Proposals: Background and Issues for Congress

On April 30, 2025, Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth issued a memorandum, "Army Transformation and Acquisition Reform," directing the Secretary of the Army to

> implement a comprehensive transformation strategy, streamline its force structure, eliminate wasteful spending, reform the acquisition process, modernize inefficient defense contracts, and overcome parochial interests to rebuild our Army, restore the warrior ethos, and reestablish deterrence.

Among other things, this directive requires the Army to restructure Army forces; downsize, consolidate, or close what is described as redundant headquarters; end procurement of what is described as obsolete systems; and cancel or scale back what is described as ineffective or redundant programs. This report addresses actions taken by the Army in response to the Secretary of Defense's directive as they pertain to force structure, headquarters and associated organizations, and selected weapon systems.

The Secretary of Defense's directive has national security implications that Congress may consider as part of its oversight and authorizations and appropriations roles. For example, in terms of force size and organization, Congress sets the end strength for both the Active and Reserve components of the Army. Congress also authorizes and appropriates funds for Army restructuring, pay and benefits, training, equipment, basing, and infrastructure.

On May 1, 2025, in response to the Secretary of Defense's directive, Secretary of the Army Dan Driscoll and General Randy George, Chief of Staff of the Army published a "Letter to the Force: Army Transformation Initiative" to implement "a comprehensive transformation strategy," referred to as the Army Transformation Initiative, or ATI.

The ATI could have a range of national security implications of concern to Congress. Some of these could include the availability of Army forces to support Combatant Command requirements and the effectiveness of Army ground operations, as well as the effectiveness of ATI-proposed changes to existing headquarters units.

Furthermore, the directive to transform Army force structure could have an impact on Army bases located in Members' districts or states, and it may have economic ramifications for communities around or near affected bases. Planned ATI proposals may also have an impact on local and state defense-related industries, including those involved with ATI-proposed weapons systems cancellations or procurement quantity modifications.

Because of the scope and complexity of ATI-directed actions, this report focuses exclusively on ATI's potential impact on Army force structure, headquarters and commands, and selected weapons systems.

Potential issues for Congress related to ATI could include

- the Army's ability to meet Combatant Command requirements,
- ATI and changes to Army capabilities,
- the Army implementation plan for ATI,
- ATI measures of effectiveness, and
- the impact of Golden Dome homeland missile defense requirements on ATI.

Contents

Contacts

Background

On April 30, 2025, Secretary of Defense (SECDEF) Pete Hegseth issued a memorandum, "Army Transformation and Acquisition Reform," to senior Pentagon leadership directing the Secretary of the Army to

> implement a comprehensive transformation strategy, streamline its force structure, eliminate wasteful spending, reform the acquisition process, modernize inefficient defense contracts, and overcome parochial interests to rebuild our Army, restore the warrior ethos, and reestablish deterrence.[1]

This memorandum directed actions to be taken related to

- transforming the Army now for future warfare,
- eliminating what is described as wasteful programs and outdated equipment,
- optimizing force structure and workforce, and
- reforming and optimizing acquisition and budget operations.

Although the memorandum established completion dates for selected "war winning capabilities" ranging from 2026 to 2028, many of the directed actions were not assigned specific completion dates.

A Brief History of Army Force Structure Actions

Since Congress established the Army in 1775, it has reorganized or transformed its forces many times. These changes have occurred for various reasons, such as shifting security requirements; to fight the nation's wars and conflicts; the introduction of new weapons, such as tanks and nuclear weapons; and budgetary considerations. After World War II and the Korean War, the Army transformed and reorganized to meet the growing Soviet and Warsaw Pact threat. The Army transformed again after the Cold War ended in 1991. In a more contemporary context, the Army has transformed its force structure on five major occasions since 2000, as briefly described in the following sections.

2003: The Modular Army[2]

In 2003, with the Active and Reserve Components of the Army involved in long-term combat operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, the Army initiated a total force modular reorganization to "better meet the challenges of the 21st century security environment and, specifically, jointly fight and win the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT)."[3] The Association of the Army described the modular force initiative as a "major transformational effort that involves the total redesign of the operational Army (all components) into a larger, more powerful, more flexible and more rapidly

[1] Department of Defense, Secretary of Defense Memorandum for Senior Pentagon Leadership, "Army Transformation and Acquisition Reform," April 30, 2025, https://media.defense.gov/2025/May/01/2003702281/-1/-1/1/ARMY-TRANSFORMATION-AND-ACQUISITION-REFORM.PDF.

[2] For additional information on Army Modularity, see CRS Report RL32476, *U.S. Army's Modular Redesign: Issues for Congress*, by Andrew Feickert.

[3] Department of the Army, *Army Strategic Planning Guidance 2005*, January 15, 2005, p. 9.

deployable force while moving the Army from a division-centric structure to one structured around a brigade combat team (BCT)."[4]

2012: Army Drawdown and Restructuring[5]

In January 2012, the Department of Defense (DOD) unveiled defense strategy guidance based on a review of potential future security challenges and budgetary constraints.[6] The guidance was intended to rebalance the Army's global posture and presence, emphasizing where potential problems were likely to arise, such as the Asia-Pacific region and the Middle East. As part of this strategy, Active Component Army end strength was to shrink from 570,000 to 490,000 by the end of 2017. In June 2013, the Army announced it would cut 12 BCTs from the Army's 35 Active Component (AC) BCTs, as well as a number of unspecified support and headquarters units. In addition, Army National Guard (ARNG) BCTs were to be restructured in a similar fashion. As part of the drawdown of 12 active duty BCTs, two armored BCTs were removed from Europe.

2017: Army Force Structure Decisions[7]

The National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2017 (P.L. 114-328) authorized the Army to maintain an end strength of 1.018 million Active and Reserve Component soldiers, an increase over previous programmed plans to reduce the total Army to 980,000. The end strength increase was intended to "address and reduce the capabilities gap against near-peer, high-end adversaries; reduce modernization gaps; and improve readiness in existing units."[8] With this increase in total Army end strength, the Army initiated a series of force structure changes, including retaining a number of units previously slated for deactivation.

2018: Army's AimPoint Force Structure Initiative[9]

In 2018, the Army unveiled the Multi-Domain Operations (MDO) concept, shifting from the previous focus on countering violent extremists worldwide to confronting revisionist powers—primarily Russia and China.[10] The Army intended to build MDO capability through what it called the AimPoint Force Structure Initiative. AimPoint was to be a flexible force structure, with little change expected at the brigade level and below but with major changes at higher echelons—division, corps, and theater command. As part of AimPoint, the Army announced the activation of a new corps headquarters, designated Fifth Corps (V Corps), located at Fort Knox, KY, with a

[4] Association of the U.S. Army, "Torchbearer National Security Report - A Modular Force for the 21st Century," March 15, 2005, p. 3.

[5] Information in this section is taken from CRS Report R42493, *Army Drawdown and Restructuring: Background and Issues for Congress*, by Andrew Feickert.

[6] Department of Defense, *Sustaining U.S. Global Leadership: Priorities for 21st Century Defense*, January 2012.

[7] Information in this section is taken from CRS In Focus IF10678, *Army FY2017 Force Structure Decisions*, by Andrew Feickert.

[8] Department of the Army, U.S. Army Public Affairs, "Department of the Army Announces Force Structure Decisions for Fiscal Year 2017," June 15, 2017.

[9] Information in this section is taken from CRS In Focus IF11542, *The Army's AimPoint and Army 2030 Force Structure Initiatives*, by Andrew Feickert.

[10] For additional information on Multi-Domain Operations (MDO), see CRS In Focus IF11409, *Defense Primer: Army Multi-Domain Operations (MDO)*, by Andrew Feickert.

rotational forward presence[11] in Poland, meaning some soldiers from the unit deploy to the country on a rotating basis.

2024: Army Force Structure Transformation Initiative[12]

In February 2024, the Army announced "changes to its force structure that will modernize and continue to transform the service to better face future threats."[13] In conjunction with this announcement, the Army published *Army White Paper: Army Force Structure Transformation*. As part of this transformation, the Army planned to develop new

- Multi-Domain Task Forces (MDTFs),
- Indirect Fire Protection Capability (IFPC) battalions,
- Counter-Small Unmanned Aerial Systems (C-sUAS) batteries, and
- Maneuver Short-Range Air Defense (M-SHORAD) battalions.

The Army also planned to make force structure changes to its Combat Aviation Brigades (CABs).

2025 DOD-Directed Army Force Structure, Organizational, and Weapons Systems Actions[14]

The SECDEF's April 30, 2025, Army Transformation and Acquisition Reform directive to the Secretary of the Army requires the Army, among other actions, to

- field long-range missiles capable of striking moving land and maritime targets by 2027;
- achieve electromagnetic and air-littoral dominance by 2027;
- field Unmanned Systems (UMS) and ground/air launched effects in every division by the end of 2026;
- improve counter-UAS mobility and affordability, integrating capabilities into maneuver platoons by 2026 and maneuver companies by 2027;
- enable Artificial Intelligence (AI)-driven command and control at theater, corps, and division headquarters by 2027;
- end procurement of what is described as obsolete systems and cancel or scale back what is described as ineffective or redundant programs, including manned aircraft, excess ground vehicles (e.g., High Mobility, Multi-Wheeled Vehicles [HMMWV], and outdated UAVs);
- reduce spending on legacy sustainment, including what is described as outdated weapons systems and unnecessary climate-related initiatives;

[11] Rotational forward presence is an operational concept where instead of permanently stationing a unit overseas, U.S.-based units are sent overseas on a temporary basis (usually for six to nine months) to fulfill the requirement.

[12] Information in this section is taken from CRS Report R47985, *The 2024 Army Force Structure Transformation Initiative*, by Andrew Feickert.

[13] Department of the Army, U.S. Army Public Affairs, "Army Changes Force Structure for Future Warfighting Operations," February 27, 2024, https://www.army.mil/article/274003/army_changes_force_structure_for_future_warfighting_operations.

[14] Information in this section is taken from Department of Defense, Secretary of Defense Memorandum for Senior Pentagon Leadership, "Army Transformation and Acquisition Reform."

- merge headquarters to generate combat power capable of synchronizing kinetic and nonkinetic fires, spaced-based capabilities, and unmanned systems;
- reduce and restructure manned attack helicopter formations and augment them with inexpensive drone swarms capable of overwhelming adversaries;
- divest what is described as outdated formations, including select armor and aviation units across all components;
- merge Army Futures Command (AFC) and Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) into one command:
- merge Forces Command, U.S. Army North, and U.S. Army South into a single headquarters focused on homeland defense and partnership with Western Hemisphere allies; and
- consolidate and realign headquarters and units within Army Material Command (AMC), including the integration of the Joint Munitions Command and Army Sustainment Command, to optimize operational efficiency and streamline support capabilities.

Army Letter to the Force: Army Transformation Initiative (ATI)[15]

On May 1, 2025, in response to the SECDEF's Army Transformation and Acquisition Reform directive, the Secretary of the Army and Chief of Staff of the Army published a "Letter to the Force: Army Transformation Initiative" to implement "a comprehensive transformation strategy," referred to as the Army Transformation Initiative, or ATI. The "Letter to the Force" on ATI outlined first steps related to the Army's force structure, organization, and weapons systems, including

- introducing long-range missiles and modernized UAS[16] into formations;
- fielding the M-lE3 tank;[17]
- developing the Future Long-Range Assault Aircraft (FLRAA);[18]
- closing the C-sUAS[19] capability gap;
- integrating command and control nodes with AI to accelerate decisionmaking and preserve the initiative;
- eliminate 1,000 staff positions at Headquarters, Department of the Army (HQDA);

[15] Information in this section is taken from Secretary of the Army Dan Driscoll, Chief of Staff of the Army and General Randy A. George, "Letter to the Force: Army Transformation Initiative," May 1, 2025, https://api.army.mil/e2/c/downloads/2025/05/01/c4c9539c/letter-to-the-force-army-transformation-initiative.pdf.

[16] For additional information on Army Unmanned Aerial Systems, see CRS In Focus IF12668, *The U.S. Army's Small Uncrewed Aircraft Systems*, by Daniel M. Gettinger.

[17] For additional information on the M-1E3, see CRS In Focus IF12495, *The Army's M-1E3 Abrams Tank Modernization Program*, by Andrew Feickert.

[18] For additional information on the Future Long-Range Assault Aircraft, see CRS In Focus IF12771, *Future Long-Range Assault Aircraft (FLRAA)*, by Jennifer DiMascio.

[19] For additional information on Counter Small Unmanned Aerial Systems, see CRS Report R48477, *Department of Defense Counter Unmanned Aircraft Systems: Background and Issues for Congress*, by Daniel M. Gettinger.

- merge AFC and TRADOC into a single command that aligns force generation, force design, and force development under a single headquarters;
- transform Forces Command (FORSCOM) into Western Hemisphere Command through the consolidation of Army North and Army South;
- align Multi-Domain Task Forces (MDTFs)[20] with theater headquarters;
- trim general officer positions to streamline command structures;
- restructure Army aviation by reducing one Aerial Cavalry Squadron per Combat Aviation Brigade (CAB) in the Active Component;
- consolidate aviation sustainment requirements and increase operational readiness;
- convert all Infantry Brigade Combat Teams to Mobile Brigade Combat Teams to improve mobility and lethality in a leaner formation;
- cancel procurement of what is described as outdated crewed attack aircraft such as the AH-64D, excess ground vehicles like the HMMWV and Joint Light Tactical Vehicle (JLTV),[21] and obsolete UAVs like the Gray Eagle; and
- cancel programs that deliver what is described as dated, late-to-need, overpriced, or difficult-to-maintain capabilities.

Ongoing Changes to Army Force Structure Initiated in Previous Fiscal Years

Some changes to Army force structure initiated in previous fiscal years are planned to continue under ATI, while the Army Transformation Initiative letter provided some preliminary details on changes to Army units and organizations, Army officials testified on May 6, 2025, that they planned to increase the number of units, noting that such efforts were not a result of ATI but instead ongoing efforts from previous fiscal years.[22] Additional units from previous year's transformation plans to be added to Army force structure included

- one Maneuver Short-Range Air Defense Artillery (M-SHORAD) Battalion and three Division Air Defense Battalions by the fourth quarter of FY2025 (i.e., July 1-September 30);[23]
- nine Integrated Fire Protection Capability (IFPC) Battalions, a Patriot/IFPC Composite Battalion in Guam, and two additional Patriot Battalions;[24] and
- three additional Mid-Range Capability (MRC) Batteries already in production.[25]

[20] For additional information on Multi-Domain Task Forces, see CRS In Focus IF11797, *The Army's Multi-Domain Task Force (MDTF)*, by Andrew Feickert.

[21] For additional information on the Joint Light Tactical Vehicle, see CRS In Focus IF11729, *Joint Light Tactical Vehicle (JLTV)*, by Andrew Feickert.

[22] Statement of General James J. Mingus, Vice Chief of Staff United States Army, "On the Readiness of the United States Army, in U.S. Congress, House Committee on the Armed Services, Subcommittee on Readiness, May 6, 2025.

[23] For additional information on Mobile Short-Range Air Defense Artillery (M-SHORAD), see CRS In Focus IF12397, *U.S. Army's Maneuver Short-Range Air Defense (M-SHORAD) System*, by Andrew Feickert.

[24] For additional information on Integrated Fire Protection Capability (IFPC), see CRS In Focus IF12421, *The U.S. Army's Indirect Fire Protection Capability (IFPC) System*, by Andrew Feickert.

[25] For additional information on Mid-Range Capability (MRC) systems, see CRS In Focus IF12135, *The U.S. Army's Typhon Mid-Range Capability (MRC) System*, by Andrew Feickert.

The Army announced it would close the 1st Information Operations Command based on a 2024 decision.[26] The command was deactivated on May 8, 2025.[27] It was further noted that

> [i]n place of 1st Information Operations Command, the Army is creating region-specific Theater Information Advantage Detachments. These units are meant to focus on information and cyber warfare, and work closely with the similarly new Multi-Domain Task Forces, which are currently testing the use and integration of drones and other modern technology with current and new battlefield tactics.[28]

Another example of ongoing force structure changes from previous fiscal years are the Army's Combat Aviation Brigade (CAB) force structure changes announced in 2024.[29] ATI plans call for the reduction of one Aerial Cavalry Squadron per CAB in the Active Component and consolidation of aviation sustainment requirements.

Congressional Reaction to DOD Force Structure Proposals

Some Members have addressed potential DOD force structure changes and the role Congress expects to play in force structure debates. In response to March 2025 press reports[30] that the Administration was considering changes to Combatant Command structure, Senator Roger Wicker, Chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, and Representative Mike Rogers, Chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, issued the following joint statement:

> U.S. combatant commands are the tip of the American warfighting spear. Therefore, we are very concerned about reports that claim DOD is considering unilateral changes on major strategic issues, including significant reductions to U.S. forces stationed abroad, absent coordination with the White House and Congress. We support President Trump's efforts to ensure our allies and partners increase their contributions to strengthen our alliance structure, and we support continuing America's leadership abroad. As such, we will not accept significant changes to our warfighting structure that are made without a rigorous interagency process, coordination with combatant commanders and the Joint Staff, and collaboration with Congress. Such moves risk undermining American deterrence around the globe and detracting from our negotiating positions with America's adversaries.[31]

[26] Nicholas Slayton, "Army Shuts Down its Sole Active-Duty Information Operations Command," Task and Purpose, June 2, 2025, https://taskandpurpose.com/news/army-deactivates-1st-information-operations-command/.

[27] Slayton, "Army Shuts Down its Sole Active-Duty Information Operations Command."

[28] Slayton, "Army Shuts Down its Sole Active-Duty Information Operations Command."

[29] For additional information on Army Combat Aviation Brigade (CAB) force structure changes, see CRS Report R47985, *The 2024 Army Force Structure Transformation Initiative*, by Andrew Feickert.

[30] See Ellie Cook and John Fang, "Map Shows US Military Commands Targeted for DOGE Cuts," *Newsweek*, March 21, 2025, and Wyatt Olson, "Pentagon Proposal to Merge Combatant Commands Draws Criticism from GOP Lawmakers," *Stars and Stripes*, March 20, 2025, https://www.stripes.com/theaters/us/2025-03-19/combatant-commands-merge-plan-17201617.html.

[31] Senator Roger Wicker and Representative Mike Rogers, "Chairman Wicker, Chairman Rogers Joint Statement on Reports of Potential Combatant Command Changes," press release, March 19, 2025, https://www.wicker.senate.gov/2025/3/chairman-wicker-chairman-rogers-joint-statement-on-reports-of-potential-combatant-command-changes.

Given this statement and proposed report language accompanying draft FY2026 defense legislation,[32] the Senate and House Armed Services Committees may intend to play a central role in exercising oversight of ATI efforts.

Other Members have expressed concern about the impact of ATI on Army facilities in their districts. In a June 3, 2025, letter to the Secretary of the Army and Chief of Staff of the Army, the Virginia congressional delegation expressed their concerns with the Army's plans to merge AFC (located in Austin, TX) and TRADOC (located in Fort Eustis, VA).[33] The Virginia delegation requested the following by June 10, 2025:

- The full analysis that resulted in the proposed merger of TRADOC and AFC, to include cost savings, mission alignment and identified redundancies, facilities impacts, cost-of-living assessments, the justification for preserving the four-star at AFC, and any other information the Army considers relevant.
- An anticipated timeline for the proposed merger of TRADOC and AFC.
- A discussion of any associated risks that the Army identified in completing the analysis, to include how the Army decided what constituted an acceptable level of risk to mission for TRADOC and AFC.
- Identification of all relevant funding lines that will be used to execute the proposed merger of TRADOC and AFC, including the Army's current FY2025 budget, any budget line shifts that occur in the delivery of the President's budget request for FY2026, and a discussion of any anticipated budget growth.
- A timeline for delivering all additional relevant materials supporting the merger of TRADOC and AFC to the Armed Services Committees and Defense Appropriations Committees.[34]

It is not known to CRS if this information was provided to the Virginia delegation by June 10, 2025, as requested. Regarding the TRADOC/AFC merger, the Army Chief of Staff has reportedly said that "the new unified command will be known as 'Transformation and Training Command,' and will be headquartered in Austin, TX—currently home to AFC."[35] Representative Wittman reportedly said the Army is conducting an "internal review process" of the TRADOC/AFC merger, with results expected by the end of June 2025.[36] It is not known to CRS if this internal review was completed by the end of June 2025 and if the results were provided to Congress.

[32] See Abby Shepard, "Draft Defense Bill Would Authorize Procurement of Two Carriers, as Questions of Future Viability and Delays Surround Program," *Inside Defense*, July 8, 2025, https://insidedefense.com/sites/insidedefense.com/files/documents/2025/jul/07082025_ndaa.pdf, and H.Rept. 119-162, House of Representatives, Department of Defense Appropriations Act, 2026, June 16, 2025, pp. 8-9.

[33] Letter from Representative Robert J. Wittman et al. to Secretary of the Army Dan Driscoll and Chief of Staff of the Army and General Randy George, TRADOC and AFC Merger, June 3, 2025, https://wittman.house.gov/uploadedfiles/virginia_delegation_letter.pdf.

[34] Letter from Representative Robert J. Wittman et al., TRADOC and AFC Merger.

[35] Dan Schere, "Army Internal Review of AFC-TRADOC Merger Expected to be Done this Month," *Inside Defense*, June 20, 2025, https://insidedefense.com/insider/army-internal-review-afc-tradoc-merger-expected-be-done-month.

[36] Schere, "Army Internal Review of AFC-TRADOC Merger Expected to be Done this Month."

Congressional Concerns with the Army's FY2026 Budget Request

A number of Members have expressed concerns over the details of the Army's FY2026 budget request as it relates to ATI. On June 4, 2025, during the House Armed Services Committee (HASC) hearing on the Army's FY2026 budget request, Chairman Mike Rogers's opening remarks included the following:

> Today, we kick off our review of the Administration's FY26 budget request for the Department of Defense with the U.S. Army. Unfortunately, we still have not received any real information on the Army's budget request. Nor have we received any detailed information on the Army's Transformation Initiative, or ATI, the Secretary and the Chief announced over a month ago.
>
> I believe I speak for most of the members of this committee when I say that we share the goal of developing a more modern, agile, and well-equipped Army.
>
> And the broad structure of the ATI sounds encouraging:
>
> • Rapidly delivering modern warfighter capabilities.
>
> • Optimizing force structure.
>
> • And eliminating waste and obsolete programs.
>
> But we need to see your homework. An overhaul this significant should be based on a thorough assessment of requirements. And it should include a detailed blueprint of the specific changes being proposed and how the Army plans to implement them. We need to see those assessments and blueprints. We also need you to provide us a timeline for implementing ATI.
>
> These details will help Congress understand, evaluate, and ultimately fund, your transformation efforts.[37]

Rogers noted the Army's lack of an ATI "blueprint," and some other committee Members expressed similar concerns, for example, about the Army's lack of ATI supporting analysis.[38] Some Members expressed operational and capabilities-related concerns about merging Army Sustainment Command and the Joint Munitions Command and deactivating the 1st Assault Helicopter Battalion, 158th Aviation Regiment of the Army Reserve's 11th Theater Aviation Command, which operates UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters that have been used for disaster relief operations, particularly during hurricanes.[39] During the hearing, Representative Eric Sorenson stated to Army leadership,

[37] House Armed Services Committee, "Rogers: We Must Equip Our Soldiers for Tomorrow's Fight Today," opening statement, June 4, 2025, and U.S. Congress, House Committee on Armed Services, *Department of the Army Fiscal Year 2026 Posture*, hearings, 119th Cong., 1st sess., June 4, 2025, https://armedservices.house.gov/calendar/eventsingle.aspx?EventID=5170.

[38] CRS analysis of the HASC hearing: CQ Congressional Transcripts, "House Armed Services Committee Holds Hearing on the Fiscal Year 2026 Department of the Army Posture," June 4, 2025; and Ashley Roque, "Army Leaders Need to Show Their 'Homework' for Transformation Plans, Lawmakers Say," *Breaking Defense*, June 4, 2025, https://breakingdefense.com/2025/06/army-leaders-need-to-show-their-homework-for-transformation-plans-lawmakers-say/.

[39] CRS analysis of the Senate Armed Services Committee, "To receive testimony on the posture of the Department of the Army in review of the Defense Authorization Request for Fiscal Year 2026 and the Future Years Defense Program," hearing (and stenographic transcript), June 5, 2025; and Roque, "Army Leaders Need to Show Their 'Homework' for Transformation Plans, Lawmakers Say.

> We all want to make sure that the Army is lethal [and], is ready to meet the challenges of today and tomorrow. However, you chose to give us a plan with few details, with no budgeting, and a failure to answer a lot of our questions, and now we're hearing about how this plan will be implemented from my own constituents, not from leadership.[40]

During the June 5, 2025, Senate Armed Services Committee (SASC) hearing on the Army's FY2026 budget request, Chairman Roger Wicker cautioned Secretary of the Army Driscoll "against his plan to siphon funds from the organic industrial base into other initiatives," noting,

> We've read, Mr. Secretary, in your [Army Transformation Initiative] memo, about potential closure of Pine Bluff Arsenal, [AR]; Bluegrass Army Depot, [KY]; Red River Army Depot, [TX]. In light of the fact that we're going to be so focused on reindustrialization, I would caution that we'd be very careful about that.[41]

FY2026 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA): Congressional Reaction

A reported copy, obtained by *Inside Defense*, a trade publication, of a draft House Armed Services Committee report to accompany the proposed *H.R. 3838, Streamlining Procurement for Effective Execution and Delivery and National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2026: Chairman's Mark*, included the following language on the "Army Transformation Initiative":

> While the committee supports the Army's intent to divest of systems that are no longer relevant on the battlefield, and to more rapidly field new systems, the committee is concerned with the manner in which the Army presented its plans to Congress, the lack of supporting analysis, and the apparent lack of strategy and vision for what the Army should look like in 2030, 2035, and beyond. The Army has yet to provide complete budgetary details, tradeoffs, and risk assessments of proposed divestments and investments of capabilities and programs associated with its Army Transformation Initiative. Additionally, the committee must be informed of the Army's future force structure and end strength targets in its pursuit of eliminating waste and [of] optimization, as well as the details for planned unit inactivations or assignments of new missions, broken out by Active and Reserve Components.
>
> Therefore, the committee directs the Secretary of the Army to provide a briefing to the House Committee on Armed Services not later than October 1, 2025, that addresses fiscal year 2026 budgetary impacts and funding requirements across the Future Years Defense Program, capability-based requirements and identification of capability gaps as a result of planned divestments, and an implementation plan for the Army Transformation Initiative efforts.
>
> In addition, the committee directs the Secretary of the Army to inform the congressional defense committees, not later than 30 days prior to implementation, of any additional proposed changes taking place as part of the Army Transformation Initiative or broader transformation efforts.[42]

[40] Meghann Myers, "Congress Would Like the Army to Show Its Work on Transformation," *Defense One*, June 5, 2025, https://www.defenseone.com/policy/2025/06/congress-would-army-show-its-work-transformation/405857.

[41] Dominic Minadeo, "Senators Bare Teeth Over Potential Army Depot and Arsenal Closures," *Inside Defense*, June 6, 2025, https://insidedefense.com/daily-news/senators-bare-teeth-over-potential-army-depot-and-arsenal-closures.

[42] Abby Shepard, "Draft Defense Bill Would Authorize Procurement of Two Carriers, as Questions of Future Viability and Delays Surround Program," *Inside Defense*, July 8, 2025, https://insidedefense.com/sites/insidedefense.com/files/documents/2025/jul/07082025_ndaa.pdf.

FY2026 Defense Appropriations Act: Congressional Reaction

A committee report, H.Rept. 119-162, accompanying the House Appropriations Committee-reported version of the Department of Defense Appropriations Act, 2026 (H.R. 4016), included the following language on the "Army Transformation Initiative":

> In pursuit of transformation and acquisition reform, on April 30, 2025, the Secretary of Defense directed the Secretary of the Army to implement a comprehensive transformation strategy to accelerate delivery of critical capabilities, optimize force structure, and divest of programs deemed obsolete or inadequate to meet the requirements of future fights.
>
> While the Committee supports the Army's intent to become a leaner, more lethal, and adaptive force; the Committee is disconcerted by the manner in which the Army has chosen to present its plans and rationale to achieve the objectives set out in the Army Transformation Initiative (ATI) to the congressional defense committees. To date, the Army has yet to provide complete budgetary details, tradeoffs, and risk assessments of proposed divestments and investments of capabilities and programs associated with ATI. In addition, the Committee must be informed of the Army's future force structure and end strength targets in its pursuit of eliminating waste and optimization. Consequently, in drafting its recommendation, the Committee is unable to take the Army Transformation Initiative proposal into full consideration until further details have been provided.
>
> Therefore, the Committee directs the Secretary of the Army and the Chief of Staff of the Army to provide a briefing to the House and Senate Defense Appropriations Committees, not later than July 31, 2025, that addresses fiscal year 2026 budgetary impacts and funding requirements across the future years defense program, capability-based requirements and identification of capability gaps as a result of planned divestments, and an implementation plan for Army Transformation Initiative efforts. In addition, the Committee directs the Secretary of the Army to inform the congressional defense committees, not later than 30 days prior to implementation, of any additional proposed changes taking place as part of the Army Transformation Initiative or broader transformation efforts.[43]

Army Releases FY2026 Budget Request

On June 26, 2025, the Army began to publicly release parts of its FY2026 budget request. According to the *Army Fiscal Year 2026 Budget Overview*, the Army plans to initiate the following major force structure and organizational actions:

- Divest systems and equipment (actions planned for FY2026).
  - Eliminate what it described as old equipment and requirements:
    - Paladin Integrated Management (PIM),
    - Legacy Anti-Tank Missile,
    - Gray Eagle, and
    - High Mobility Multi-Wheeled Vehicle (HMMWV).

[43] U.S. Congress, House Committee on Appropriations, Department of Defense Appropriations Act, 2026, report to accompany H.R. 4016, 119th Cong., 1st sess., H.Rept. 119-162, June 16, 2025, pp. 8-9.

- Reduce funding for what it described as ineffective programs that were already under development or being fielded to Army units (actions planned for FY2026):
  - M10 Booker,
  - JLTV,
  - Improved Turbine Engine (ITEP), and
  - Future Tactical Aerial Unmanned System (FTUAS).
- Restructure units and headquarters (actions planned for FY2026):
  - Merge AFC and TRADOC and consolidate ARNORTH, ARSOUTH, and FORSCOM into Western Hemisphere Command.
- Rebuild the Army (actions planned for FY2026):
  - Convert five Infantry Brigade Combat Teams (IBCTs) to Mobile Brigade Combat Teams (MBCTs).
  - Provide Infantry Squad Vehicles (ISVs) to seven MBCTs.
  - Acquire five BCTs worth of Loitering Munitions.
  - Acquire Commercial off-the-Shelf Unmanned Aerial Systems (COTS UAS) for 10 BCTs.
  - Activate two additional High Mobility Artillery Rocket System (HIMARS) battalions and three additional HIMARs batteries.
  - Inactivate Air Cavalry squadrons and resize aerial medical evacuation (MEDEVAC) units.[44]

FY2026 Army Budget documents further note

> The budget supports 11 Armored Brigade Combat Teams (BCTs), 14 Infantry/Mobile Brigade Combat Teams, 6 Stryker Brigade Combat Teams (total of 31 Active Component BCTs), 2 Security Force Assistance Brigades, and 11 Combat Aviation Brigades. In FY 2026 the Army continues to develop and exercise Multi-Domain capabilities and posture in the Indo-Pacific Theater in support of competition against the pacing threat. Global Force Management remains a cornerstone, allowing for active and scalable Joint Force employment to meet operational demand, be it competitive or contingency. FY 2026 includes force structure changes through Army Transformation Initiative (ATI). Notably, the 14 Infantry Brigade Combat Teams convert to Mobile Brigade Combat Teams, in order to improve speed, mobility, and lethality in a leaner formation. Aviation restructures inactivate Air Cavalry Squadrons and resize Medical Evacuation units.[45]

The Army's FY2026 budget request states that it supports two Security Force Assistance Brigades (SFABs); currently the Army has five Active Component SFABs and one Army National Guard SFAB.[46] According to one report, the Army intends to deactivate the 4th SFAB in the Active Component and the 54th SFABs in the Army National Guard to "free up seasoned soldiers from

[44] Major General Mark S. Bennett, Director, *Army Budget, Army Fiscal Year 2026 Budget Overview*, June 26, 2025, pp. 5-6, 10.

[45] Department of the Army, *Fiscal Year (FY) 2026 Budget Estimates June 2025 Volume I, Operation and Maintenance, Army, Justification of Estimates*, p. 3.

[46] For additional information on Security Force Assistance Brigades (SFABs), see CRS In Focus IF10675, *Army Security Force Assistance Brigades (SFABs)*, by Andrew Feickert.

SFAB duty to be reassigned to traditional line units like infantry and armor."[47] That report does not reference the Army's apparent plan to deactivate two additional SFABs. The Army's FY2026 budget request does not specify which of the four SFABs could be deactivated under the proposed spending plan.

Potential Congressional Oversight Considerations

The Army's Ability to Meet Combatant Command Requirements

By means of U.S. Forces Command (FORSCOM), the Army provides "expeditionary, regionally engaged, campaign-capable land forces to combatant commanders."[48] While ATI emphasizes the intent to" deliver critical warfighting capabilities, optimize our force structure, and eliminate waste and obsolete programs,"[49] it is unclear whether and to what extent changes proposed under ATI are an improvement over current force structure and existing weapons programs. It also is not known if Combatant Commanders played any role in the development of ATI or had the opportunity to express their respective concerns over proposed ATI changes. The potential elimination of four of the Army's six SFABs, which primarily support Combatant Commander's security force assistance efforts, could have operational implications. Absent details about Combatant Commander involvement in ATI development and concerns over proposed changes, policymakers might decide to review with Army and Combatant Command leadership how ATI affects the Army's ability to meet Combatant Commander requirements.

ATI and Changes to Army Capabilities

As proposed, ATI could affect the capabilities of a number of Army units both positively and negatively. For example, ATI proposes to convert all IBCTs into smaller Mobile Brigade Combat Teams to improve mobility and lethality. This change would affect the Active Component's 14 IBCTs and the Army National Guard's 20 IBCTs with potential operational impacts in terms of organization and capabilities for Army infantry formations. One observer reports that another proposed change, reducing one Aerial Cavalry Squadron per CAB in the Active Component "removes half of each division's 48 AH-64E attack helicopters," which they characterize as "a massive reduction in combat power."[50] It also is not known how the proposed resizing of Army MEDEVAC units would affect casualty evacuation operations and patient survivability. While not mentioned as part of ATI, as previously discussed, the Army reportedly plans to eliminate SFABs[51] to assign experienced soldiers to line units.[52] Congress may consider whether the Army's proposed changes and resulting impacts on its capabilities are desirable and support the Army's mission to fight and win the nation's wars. To better understand potential changes to Army capabilities, Congress might consider whether to examine whether and how proposed ATI

[47] Patty Nieberg, "Army to Eliminate 2 Security Force Assistance Brigades, Reassign Experienced Soldiers," *Task & Purpose*, May 13, 2025, https://taskandpurpose.com/news/army-sfab-units-shuttered/.

[48] U.S. Army Forces Command (FORSCOM) is "the largest United States Army command and provider of expeditionary, regionally engaged, campaign-capable land forces to combatant commanders," https://www.army.mil/FORSCOM#org-about, accessed June 10, 2025.

[49] Secretary Driscoll and General George, "Letter to the Force: Army Transformation Initiative."

[50] R.D. Hooker, "The U.S. Army is Too Light to Win," *Defense One*, May 29, 2025, https://www.defenseone.com/ideas/2025/05/us-army-too-light-win/405669/.

[51] For additional information on Security Force Assistance Brigades (SFABs), see CRS In Focus IF10675, *Army Security Force Assistance Brigades (SFABs)*, by Andrew Feickert.

[52] Nieberg, "Army to Eliminate 2 Security Force Assistance Brigades, Reassign Experienced Soldiers."

changes affect the capabilities of specific Army units by type of unit and how these changes may collectively affect the Army's overall operational capability.

Army Implementation Plan for ATI

While the Army's FY2026 budget request provides some additional context and cost figures associated with ATI, some in Congress have characterized it as incomplete and not incorporating a detailed implementation plan. Such a plan could enhance congressional oversight in part by including timelines for headquarters and unit conversions, as well as for the divestment and termination of specific equipment and weapons systems programs cited in ATI. An implementation plan also might identify specific units and locations involved in unit conversions and headquarters mergers. Although the Army's FY2026 budget request contains some selected cost data on expected savings associated with cancelling or modifying selected weapon systems programs, it does not provide a detailed consolidated listing of costs and savings associated with ATI. Furthermore, the Secretary of the Army reportedly stated that ATI could result in a cost savings of $48 billion over five years, but in the Army's FY2026 budget request released to date, cost savings were not consolidated in a manner that could assist policymakers in their oversight of ATI.[53] While Congress has proposed legislative language requiring a detailed ATI implementation plan, it remains to be seen if the Army possesses such a plan, to include detailed cost and savings estimates, and whether and to what extent the Army intends to share such a plan with Congress.

ATI Measures of Effectiveness

DOD and Army leadership have stated that the intent of the ATI is to "deliver critical warfighting capabilities, optimize our force structure, and eliminate waste and obsolete programs."[54] As stated, this effort could involve widespread structural and capabilities changes for the Army, potentially requiring a number of years to achieve and the commitment of significant budgetary resources. If ATI progresses, Congress might consider whether to question the Army on what measures of effectiveness it intends to employ to determine if these changes are achieving the desired effect in relation to the resources being devoted to these efforts. For example, the Army plans to convert 14 IBCTs to MBCTs and inactivate Air Cavalry Squadrons. Potential oversight questions related to this effort include, Does the Army plan to evaluate these force structure changes to determine if they are achieving the desired effect? How will this information be provided to Congress? In a similar manner, the Army plans to merge AFC and TRADOC and consolidate ARNORTH, ARSOUTH, and FORSCOM into Western Hemisphere Command. Potential oversight questions related to this effort include, Does the Army intend to evaluate these changes to determine if they have provided any additional value, cost savings, or improved command and control and staffing and planning process efficiencies? How will this information be provided to Congress? Without establishing measures of effectiveness, developing a process to evaluate these changes, and reporting these findings, Congress may lack the means to determine whether or not ATI has met its original intent. Without measures of effectiveness and a subsequent evaluation, ATI might be viewed by some as transformation for the sake of transformation.

[53] Dan Schere, "Driscoll Estimates Army Could Save $48B Over Five Years From Restructure," *Inside Defense*, May 20, 2025, https://insidedefense.com/insider/driscoll-estimates-army-could-save-48b-over-five-years-restructure.

[54] Secretary Driscoll and General George, "Letter to the Force: Army Transformation Initiative."

Impact of Golden Dome Homeland Missile Defense Requirements on ATI

On January 27, 2025, President Donald J. Trump issued Executive Order (EO) 14186, titled "The Iron Dome for America," which expands the scope of the homeland missile defense mission and directs DOD to develop "a next generation missile defense shield."[55] Renamed Golden Dome, the scope and architecture of this effort are still under development by the Administration, DOD, and the armed services.

According to the U.S. Army Space and Missile Defense Command, the Army's 100th Missile Defense Brigade

> Operates the ground-based midcourse defense system and functions as a component of the missile defense enterprise of the U.S. Army Space and Missile Defense Command. It is a role they have fulfilled for more than 15 years. The [Ground-Based Missile Defense] GMD mission is the ultimate defense of the homeland, conducted in support of U.S. Northern Command and manned by U.S. Army National Guard and active-component soldiers in Colorado, Alaska and California. The 100th Missile Defense Brigade is tasked with conducting a presidentially directed national security mission to defend the United States against the threat of intercontinental ballistic missile attack.[56]

Given the Army's current role in homeland missile defense, Army weapons systems and air and missile defense units could play roles in the Golden Dome architecture. At present, ATI makes no mention of possible Golden Dome requirements for the Army and, as the Golden Dome effort matures, requirements for additional Army forces and weapon systems may become better defined. As ATI and Golden Dome development continue, Congress might consider whether to examine with DOD and the Army the impact of Golden Dome requirements on ATI. In particular, Congress may examine if there may be a potential need for new dedicated Army units to support the Golden Dome mission, personnel and equipment constraints for establishing new units, and additional budgetary resources to support Golden Dome.

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[55] Executive Order 14186 of January 27, 2025, "The Iron Dome for America," 90 *Federal Register* 8767, February 3, 2025, https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2025/02/03/2025-02182/the-iron-dome-for-america, accessed June 29, 2025.

[56] Department of the Army, U.S. Army Space and Missile Defense Command (USASMDC), 100th Missile Defense Brigade website, https://www.smdc.army.mil/ORGANIZATION/100thMDB/, accessed July 9, 2025.

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