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## THE ARMY'S NEW DIVISION: A FORCE CUT BY ANY OTHER NAME

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General William Hartzog, then Commander of the U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command, announced on June 9 that the Army is restructuring its six armored and mechanized ("heavy") divisions to increase their combat effectiveness. However, the Army's plan is far more than a simple restructuring of these divisions. It is a force reduction that shrinks manpower levels in these divisions by 15 percent and reduces the number of tanks and armored personnel carriers by 22 percent.

General Hartzog claims that reductions in the organization of each division, with the deployment of new technologies to improve battlefield control of Army forces, will increase their combat effectiveness. Yet the plan he outlined would reduce the Army's force structure even below the level recommended by the Clinton Administration in its May 1997 Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) report. In the QDR, the Administration affirmed its commitment to retain 10 active Army divisions. This commitment now appears to be hollow, since the Administration is abandoning the definition of a division that was commonly accepted at the time.

Whether reorganizing the structure of the Army's heavy divisions truly will improve their combat effectiveness remains to be seen. But no effort to create smaller, more effective divisions should be used as a smoke-screen to create a smaller force. Members of Congress should take a closer look at the Army's new plan to determine whether the Army's attempt at innovation is mere political cover

for the Administration to reduce the overall size of the force from levels it recommended in 1997.

### THE ARMY'S OLD VS. NEW DIVISIONS

Currently, each Army heavy division, when committed to combat, consists of more than 18,000 soldiers. Under General Hartzog's plan, each division would retain about 15,300 soldiers, for a personnel reduction of roughly 15 percent. In addition, each division would reduce the number of combat vehicles from 232 Abrams tanks and 290 Bradley Fighting Vehicles to 180 tanks and 225 Bradley Fighting Vehicles: a 22 percent reduction.

The Pentagon attempts to justify this reduction by claiming that each new division will perform better during combat operations. Each new division would be expected to:

1. Control a battlefield area of 24,000 square kilometers, which is an area 2.4 times larger than that controlled by today's larger division;

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2. Conduct offensive operations to defeat an enemy division rather than an enemy brigade, as is the case today; and
3. Initiate offensive military operations after rebuffing an attack by a three-division enemy force without the type of interruption in operations that is expected today.

These new expectations represent a significant change in the assumed capabilities of Army forces in combat. The “new” Army would be leaner but spread thinner and under greater duress—troubling byproducts of a “restructuring” effort that the Army believes would be offset by new technologies to allow for more effective troop deployment. Clearly, no such change should be attempted without a thorough analysis by the staff of the House National Security Committee or the Senate Armed Services Committee.

If the announced restructuring plan for the Army’s heavy divisions is applied to all ten active divisions, each new division will be one-fifth smaller than a division is today, and the Army’s active force will contain only the equivalent of eight or nine divisions today. Such a reduction implies that the restructuring effort is designed to shrink overall force structure, not improve combat effectiveness. This would go below the force structure to which the Administration committed in the 1993

Bottom-Up Review (BUR)—a commitment reaffirmed four years later in the QDR.

If the Army truly wants to create a better combat organization, it should preserve its current force structure. If the smaller division can be shown to be more effective in combat, the number of divisions should be increased. The personnel and combat vehicles cut from each restructured division could be used to create up to two additional divisions. Clearly, 11 or 12 divisions under General Hartzog’s new division structure would be more capable in combat than ten.

**CONCLUSION**

Now that the 105th Congress has adjourned, Members should use the time before convening the next session to examine the Army’s restructuring plan and to gear up for the debate on force structure that is likely to occur. Congress should consider only two options: (1) restructuring the Army division as General Hartzog proposed but increasing the number of divisions, or (2) retaining the current number of divisions at their current size. Congress should weigh the merits of the Army’s plan to improve combat effectiveness, but it should not fall for this transparent attempt to cut the size of the Army.

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