



Updated September 22, 2022

The Army's Regionally Aligned Readiness and Modernization Model

Why Is Army Readiness Important to Congress?

The Army defines readiness as the capability of its forces to conduct the full range of military operations and defeat all enemies regardless of the threats they pose. Readiness is generally considered a function of how well units are manned, equipped, trained, and led. Congress, in its lawmaking, oversight, and authorization and appropriations roles, plays a vital role in ensuring the Army is capable of conducting its full range of military operations.

The Army's Regionally Aligned Readiness and Modernization Model (ReARMM)

In the past, the Army has claimed it has suffered from poor readiness due to a number of factors, including personnel, equipment, training, a high operational tempo (generally defined as a soldier's and/or unit's time away from home station for training or operations), and lack of funding. In October 2020, the Army announced its new Regionally Aligned Readiness and Modernization Model (ReARMM), which it hoped to have in place by 2022. This model was intended to better balance operational tempo (OPTEMPO) with dedicated periods for conducting missions, training, and modernization. The Army maintained that to correct its readiness problems, it had invested significant resources and leadership to improve readiness and equipment modernization so units would have the most up-to-date equipment.

The Army admitted its past "readiness focus resulted in an unsustainable OPTEMPO and placed significant demands on units, leaders, and soldiers and families and stress on the force." The Army expects ReARMM will not only improve readiness and modernization but also ease the stress on both soldiers and their families.

The Readiness and Modernization Challenge

Lieutenant General Leopoldo Quintas, then-Deputy Commander of Army Forces Command (FORSCOM), described the Army's current readiness and modernization challenge:

Army units operate in an environment of unpredictability, and arguably even instability. Units are placed on rotational missions based on their availability, and these missions vary in location, length, manning, readiness requirements and equipment just to name a few. Modernization today occurs when we can find a window to fit it in, or simultaneous with other activities. Every week, month and year is filled with constant change and

high tempo for soldiers. Our soldiers and families can deal with a lot of tempo, but unpredictability results in an incredible amount of stress on the force.

Past and Current Army Readiness Models

The term "Readiness Models" refers to a process by which the Army generates ready forces that are made available to Combatant Commanders for operations. From the 1980s until 2006, the Army employed a *Tiered Readiness Model* with units manned, equipped, and trained at different levels or tiers (often referred to as "C" ratings or levels) focused on fighting potential overseas adversaries. Reserve Components (RC) (Army National Guard [ARNG] and U.S. Army Reserve [USAR]) were largely relegated to the role of strategic reserve (i.e., to be employed in the event of a crisis or emergency exceeding the Regular Army's [RA's] capacity). In 2006 in the aftermath of September 11, 2001, and the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, the Army adopted the *Army Force Generation Model (ARFORGEN)*, designed to provide fully manned, equipped, and trained forces for rotational deployment for those conflicts. ARFORGEN consisted of three distinct annual cycles (a postdeployment *Reset* cycle, a *Train and Ready* cycle; and a *Deploy* cycle) through which all units progressed in order to achieve a prescribed level of readiness. Under ARFORGEN, most RA units operated on a three-year cycle and RC units were on a five-year cycle (RA: two years preparation, one year deployed; RC: four years preparation, one year deployed).

In 2014, as the United States began to decrease troop levels in Iraq and Afghanistan and refocused on threats from Russia, China, North Korea, and Iran, the Army determined ARFORGEN was no longer adequate for its needs. The Army began implementing the *Sustainable Readiness Model (SRM)* in FY2017. The Army's goal under SRM was to achieve two-thirds (66%) combat readiness of RA and ARNG brigade combat teams (BCTs) by 2023. Unlike ARFORGEN, under SRM, there were no fixed progressive cycles for RA units, and the RC was to remain on a five-year train up and deployment cycle.

How ReARMM Is Intended to Work

As originally envisioned, ReARMM was intended to allocate Army units to different theaters for approximately one year to assist units in developing expertise in the parts of the world to which they might deploy during a conflict. Units would also acquire new and theater-specific equipment for potential operations. The model also intended to provide soldiers more predictability so units would have time to refine doctrine, and reorganize, if necessary, based on theater-specific requirements.

According to the Army, some of ReARMM's advantages are said to include

- aligning units against regional priorities;
- optimizing time available to plan, train, and modernize;
- creating predictable windows to field capabilities to units;
- enabling the Army to transform into a multi-domain force and provide a predictable supply of ready units for the Army and the Joint Force; and
- building predictability for the RC, equippers, and personnel managers.

The Army has claimed ReARMM was designed to facilitate consistent, manageable OPTEMPO, increase predictability for training and force employment, and prioritize modernization efforts. Originally under ReARMM, the Army intended to create predictable six-month cycles to field new equipment to units as opposed to the current practice of delivering equipment to units during their training cycle. Also as part of ReARMM, the Army intended to have at least three units of the same size, type, and modernization level aligned against known Joint Staff requirements for forces. It was also to provide rotational forces, with no overlap between rotating units, for Combatant Commands. Army units aligned under a Combatant Command were to have had the same assigned modernization level to ensure commonality of equipment and weapon systems. The Army also noted ReARMM would not create additional forward stationing of units or immediate changes to existing regional alignment of Army forces.

October 2021 ReARMM Implementation

In October 2021, the Army adopted ReARMM for use and plans for its Full Operational Capability by January 2023. Active forces are now to cycle through eight-month phases of modernization, training, and mission eligibility instead of the six-month cycles originally planned for. Guard and Reserve units will have extended phases, though the time lengths were not provided by Army officials. The Army contends that regional alignment:

Enables units to develop additional knowledge of the terrain, culture, and people where they are most likely to operate. Joint Force commanders also gain by leveraging habitual, trusted relationships between Army formations and Allies and partners. It takes care of people by reducing operational tempo and maximizing predictability and stability to commanders, soldiers, and families.

Potential Issues for Congress

While the Army has publicly stated expectations for and perceived benefits of ReARMM, little has been discussed about how the model actually functions. Furthermore, a

change of this magnitude for the Total Army raises a number of potential issues for congressional oversight, including, but not limited to, the following:

- Why is the Army now using eight-month cycles for Active forces as opposed to the previously planned six-month cycles?
- ReARMM represents the Army's third readiness model in 15 years. Because these models significantly influence the manning, equipping, and training of Army units, is it possible changing readiness models every four to five years, in and of itself, has also contributed to stress on Army forces, soldiers, and families?
- As a result of Russia's February 2022 invasion of Ukraine, the Army initially deployed elements of the 82nd Airborne Division, the 1st Infantry Division, and the 3rd Infantry Division, and is presently replacing those units with other forces. Were these deployments in accordance with the ReARMM model or did the urgency and scale of required forces necessitate another readiness approach? If past and current deployments are in accordance with ReARMM, what lessons have been learned as to the model's practicality and utility? Does the Army plan to modify ReARMM based on this deployment, or has the experience deploying Army forces to reinforce NATO validated ReARMM's original intent?
- Does ReARMM align with or support the other Service's readiness models, and how does this affect the readiness of the Joint Force?
- The Reserves are a major source of Army forces and capabilities. What role did the Reserves play in developing ReARMM? ARFORGEN and SRM had different "rules" and processes for the Reserves. Will this also be the case with ReARMM?
- How does ReARMM intend to better manage and potentially reduce OPTEMPO for soldiers and units? How does this differ from previous readiness/force generation models?
- In 2020, then-Secretary of the Army Ryan McCarthy noted the Army's readiness focus is on individual, squad, platoon, and company-level training. The goal is to build unit-cohesion at lower-levels to address spikes in suicide, sexual assault, and potential racism/extremism issues. How specifically does ReARMM intend to address these issues?

Related CRS Product

CRS In Focus IF11409, *Defense Primer: Army Multi-Domain Operations (MDO)*, by Andrew Feickert.

Andrew Feickert, Specialist in Military Ground Forces

IF11670

Disclaimer

This document was prepared by the Congressional Research Service (CRS). CRS serves as nonpartisan shared staff to congressional committees and Members of Congress. It operates solely at the behest of and under the direction of Congress. Information in a CRS Report should not be relied upon for purposes other than public understanding of information that has been provided by CRS to Members of Congress in connection with CRS's institutional role. CRS Reports, as a work of the United States Government, are not subject to copyright protection in the United States. Any CRS Report may be reproduced and distributed in its entirety without permission from CRS. However, as a CRS Report may include copyrighted images or material from a third party, you may need to obtain the permission of the copyright holder if you wish to copy or otherwise use copyrighted material.