



Highlights of [GAO-06-193](#), a report to congressional committees

Why GAO Did This Study

DOD emphasizes the need for joint training to prepare U.S. forces to conduct joint operations in urban terrain. It defines joint training as exercises involving the interaction of joint forces and/or joint staffs under a joint headquarters. To guide the services' plans to train forces for urban operations and construct related facilities, in May 2002, the Senate Armed Services Committee directed DOD to establish facility requirements and, in May 2005, the committee directed DOD to complete its efforts and provide a requirements baseline for measuring training capabilities within the services and across DOD by November 1, 2005. Due to DOD's focus on joint urban operations and congressional interest in synchronizing service training and facility plans, GAO, on the authority of the Comptroller General, reviewed the extent to which (1) DOD has developed a joint urban operations training strategy and related requirements, (2) exercises offer opportunities for joint urban operations training, and (3) DOD has incorporated lessons learned from ongoing operations into its training.

What GAO Recommends

GAO is making recommendations to improve DOD's approach to joint urban operations training. In written comments on a draft report, DOD did not concur with one of GAO's two recommendations. After reviewing DOD's comments, GAO continues to believe that both its recommendations are still valid.

www.gao.gov/cgi-bin/getrpt?GAO-06-193.

To view the full product, including the scope and methodology, click on the link above. For more information, contact Sharon Pickup at (202) 512-9619 or PickupS@gao.gov.

MILITARY TRAINING

Funding Requests for Joint Urban Operations Training and Facilities Should Be Based on a Sound Strategy and Requirements

What GAO Found

Since 2002, DOD has made limited progress in developing an overall joint strategy for urban operations training and related facility and training requirements. In response to congressional direction, Joint Forces Command, designated as DOD's executive agent for urban operations training, contracted for a study, completed in early 2005, to identify facility and training requirements. In May 2005, the Command began working with the services to review the study's results and to develop the detailed facility and training requirements needed to form the basis for a joint training strategy. While the draft strategy identifies some facility needs, as of October 2005, the Command and services have not reached consensus on the level or types of joint training exercises needed to prepare troops for urban operations. As a result, the Command has been unable to finalize the strategy or the facility and joint training requirements that will form the baseline for measuring capabilities within each service and across DOD. DOD officials told us they will not be able to deliver the required baseline on time and instead plan to provide criteria for the Congress to use in evaluating service facility plans. Until the Command develops an overall strategy for joint urban operations training and related requirements, neither the Secretary of Defense nor the Congress will have a sound basis for evaluating service training and facility plans, and related funding requests.

Despite DOD's increasing emphasis on the importance of training for joint urban operations before deployment, few opportunities currently exist for training that places troops from different services on the ground working under a joint headquarters. Joint and service doctrine both require forces to be prepared to operate jointly across the full range of military operations. Various factors account for the lack of joint training opportunities, such as the services' focus on service-specific skills, and the lack of an overall strategy requiring joint urban operations training, specific training requirements, and a formal mechanism to schedule joint training at service facilities. Without a strategy, defined requirements, and a joint scheduling mechanism, DOD cannot be assured that joint urban operations training will occur or that it will maximize the joint usage of training facilities.

While DOD has taken steps to incorporate lessons learned from ongoing operations into its training program, training and troop personnel GAO interviewed offered suggestions, based on their own operational experience, for further enhancing training. One of DOD's training goals is to train as it expects to fight. Based on feedback from ongoing operations, DOD has made several adjustments, including constructing urban structures, using civilian role players, and adding training on techniques to counter emerging enemy tactics. Persons GAO interviewed cited the need for more live-fire capability, larger numbers of role players, information gathering and cultural awareness training, and training with newly fielded equipment. While DOD plans more improvements, until it develops a strategy and specific requirements as discussed above, it lacks a solid basis to evaluate suggestions, and guide its improvement efforts and investment decisions.