
March 1995

Military Operations and Capabilities Issue Area Plan

Fiscal Years 1995-97



Foreword

The Military Operations and Capabilities issue area is one of 35 issue areas for which GAO periodically develops multiyear strategic plans. Relying heavily on input from congressional committees, as well as with industry, academia, and agency officials and other experts, GAO develops issue area plans to ensure that our resources are focused on the most important concerns of the Congress. The Military Operations and Capabilities issue area reviews programs in the Department of Defense (DOD), the individual military services, and other supporting defense agencies.

GAO's goal is to serve as a source of timely, accurate information and unbiased analysis for decisionmakers in the Congress and executive agencies. For each issue area, GAO's strategic plan describes the significance of the issues, our objectives, and the focus of our work. Our work results in such products as reports, briefings, and testimonies.

GAO's work in the Military Operations and Capabilities issue area focuses on military planning activities; DOD's budgeting for its operation and maintenance account; the capability, performance, readiness, and sustainability of military forces and weapons; and initiatives aimed at maintaining a quality force. The principal issues we cover are

- the adequacy of DOD's strategic, operational, and contingency plans for military operations and the completeness of its mobilization and deployment plans;
- the accuracy of budget estimates for DOD's operation and maintenance account;
- the capability of military forces and weapon systems to carry out their expected roles in the national military strategy and their performance in actual operations;
- the readiness and sustainability of military forces to perform their assigned missions; and
- the effectiveness of DOD's efforts to maintain a quality force concurrent with a substantial downsizing program.

In the pages that follow, we describe our key planned work on these issues.

Foreword

Because events may significantly affect even the best of plans, our planning process allows for updating the plan and responding quickly to emerging issues. If you have any questions or suggestions about this plan, please call me at (202) 512-5140.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mark E. Gebicke". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent "M" and "G".

Mark E. Gebicke
Director
Military Operations and Capabilities Issues

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Table I: Key Issues

Issue	Significance
Planning and budgeting: Has DOD adequately planned for military operations and prepared an accurate operation and maintenance (O&M) budget?	With a smaller military, sound operational and contingency planning takes on increased importance. Mobilization and deployment plans are crucial if DOD is to respond quickly. The Congress is concerned that DOD has overbudgeted for some items when these funds might be better spent to achieve readiness. Our O&M budget review can interject more accountability into the process.
Capabilities and performance: Are DOD forces capable of performing as expected?	Each functional element of DOD's forces plays a role in the national military strategy. Successful military operations are predicated on whether each is capable of achieving its mission. By assessing whether the selected forces exist in sufficient numbers, are sufficiently modernized and ready, and can be sustained in combat, we hope to assist future decisions on force structure, training, and capital investments.
Readiness and sustainability: Is DOD prepared to effectively carry out military operations?	The Congress wants to avoid a return to a "hollow" force, unprepared to fight the nation's wars. Readiness problems, however, may in fact reflect poor resource allocation decisions rather than insufficient funding. Better management of defense resources may be the key to improved readiness.
Quality of the force: Is DOD ensuring that a quality force is maintained?	A smaller military must emphasize quality, continuity, and high morale. Sound recruiting efforts, meaningful training, career development opportunities, and maintenance of a balanced force are essential if DOD is to retain a quality force.

Table I: Key Issues

Objectives	Focus of Work
<p>—Assess adequacy of DOD’s strategic, operational, and contingency planning.</p> <p>—Evaluate DOD efforts to adjust its mobilization and deployment plans to its downsized force.</p> <p>—Identify excesses and shortfalls in DOD’s O&M budget requests.</p> <p>—Assess whether forces in selected military functions are capable of achieving their expected missions.</p> <p>—Alert Congress and DOD to shortfalls and excesses in operational capabilities.</p> <p>—Evaluate adequacy of DOD actions to correct identified operational deficiencies.</p>	<p>—Evaluations of DOD strategic, operational, and contingency planning efforts.</p> <p>—Assessments of mobilization and deployment planning.</p> <p>—Critical review of DOD’s annual O&M budget requests to identify potential savings.</p> <p>—Reviews of selected military functions in terms of the adequacy of their force structure, modernization, readiness, and sustainment to meet their anticipated mission.</p> <p>—Reviews of the performance of selected forces in recent operations. Those most critical to successful operations will be assessed.</p> <p>—Reviews of the adequacy of actions taken to correct identified capability shortfalls.</p>
<p>—Provide objective information about the potential return to a “hollow” force.</p> <p>—Determine if DOD training is efficiently and effectively preparing forces for military operations.</p> <p>—Assess whether maintenance, supply, facility, and other support systems effectively and efficiently ensure the readiness of weapons and equipment.</p>	<p>—Measurement of selected readiness indicators to address concerns about declining readiness.</p> <p>—Reviews of training and exercises aimed at preparing forces for combat.</p> <p>—Assessments of Guard and Reserve readiness.</p> <p>—Reviews of sustainment functions to identify excesses that divert funds from more productive uses and shortages that hamper readiness.</p>
<p>—Assess DOD efforts to provide the necessary incentives and operating environment to recruit and retain a quality force.</p> <p>—Determine if DOD’s drawdown is achieving a balanced active, reserve, and civilian workforce.</p>	<p>—Evaluations of DOD efforts to retain a quality force, such as actions to reduce attrition and improve quality of life.</p> <p>—Assessments of the force balance achieved through downsizing.</p>

Table II: Planned Major Work

Issue	Planned Major Job Starts
Planning and budgeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none">—Evaluation of DOD's FY 1996 Operation and Maintenance budget request^a—Review of DOD force mobilization plans—Review of DOD training infrastructure to identify possible consolidations impacting the O&M budget
Capabilities and performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">—Assessment of selected functional capabilities (e.g., medical, combat engineering)—DOD's experience with and plans for joint force packaging—Chemical and biological warfare capability^a
Readiness and sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none">—Continuing evaluation of readiness for a cross-section of DOD forces^a—Impacts of high operating tempo on readiness^a—Readiness and sustainability of selected combat and support aircraft^a—Impact of frequent reassignments on readiness—Accessibility of Guard and Reserve forces in recent operations^a
Quality of the force	<ul style="list-style-type: none">—DOD efforts to minimize undesirable attrition—Review of alternatives for housing military personnel

^aOngoing assignments

Table III: GAO Contacts

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