



Highlights of [GAO-10-720](#), a report to congressional committees

Why GAO Did This Study

The Army's and Marine Corps' major training facilities—Army and Marine Corps combat training centers and Army mobilization training centers—have focused on training units for counterinsurgency missions in Iraq and Afghanistan. As troop levels decrease in Iraq and increase in Afghanistan, larger numbers of forces will be training for Afghanistan. To meet future requirements, the services plan to adjust training to train forces on a fuller range of missions. The House report to the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2010 directed GAO to report on any challenges the Department of Defense faces as it adjusts training capacities. GAO assessed the extent to which the Army and Marine Corps have (1) made adjustments at their major training facilities to support larger deployments to Afghanistan; and (2) developed plans to adjust training capacity to meet future requirements. GAO analyzed service training guidance, future training requirements, and related plans, and interviewed headquarters officials and personnel from the services' major training facilities.

What GAO Recommends

GAO recommends the Army develop a risk-assessment and mitigation plan to address gaps in training capacity, and assess how it can maximize existing resources to conduct reserve-component training called for under its force generation model. DOD generally agreed with our recommendations.

[View GAO-10-720 or key components.](#)
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MILITARY TRAINING

Army and Marine Corps Face Challenges to Address Projected Future Requirements

What GAO Found

Due to similarities in training requirements, the Army and Marine Corps did not need to make significant adjustments at their major training facilities to support the shift in operational priority from Iraq to Afghanistan. While the Army had to adapt training scenarios to more closely resemble the operating environment in Afghanistan, it did not have to adjust trainers, training ranges, and mock towns and villages as these are the same regardless of whether forces are preparing for missions in either Iraq or Afghanistan. Since the summer of 2009, the Marine Corps had withdrawn most of its forces from Iraq and shifted the focus of training at its combat training center to exclusively train forces for missions in Afghanistan. Like the Army, the Marine Corps noted that, because of similarities in training requirements, it had to make few adjustments beyond changing some cultural role players and signs in mock towns and villages to support its shift in focus from Iraq to Afghanistan.

The Army and Marine Corps face several challenges as they plan to broaden the scope and size of training rotations to meet future training requirements. The Army projects capacity shortfalls at its combat training centers as it seeks to train brigade combat teams to meet future requirements for both ongoing operations and full-spectrum operations—offensive, defensive, and stability operations. The Army has identified the need to conduct 36 to 37 annual training rotations for its brigade combat teams by fiscal year 2011; the centers can currently conduct 28 rotations a year. The Army is developing an exportable capability, expected to increase its capacity by 6 rotations each year when it reaches full operational capability in 2013. However, this will not be sufficient to meet the total projected requirements. To address the gap, the Army plans to give priority to deploying units. The Army has not completed an assessment to determine its full range of options for meeting future brigade combat team training requirements, or the risks associated with not conducting the desired number of training rotations. The Army's force generation model calls for smaller reserve-component units to train for both ongoing and full-spectrum operations, but the Army has not finalized its training strategy for these reserve-component forces. The Army has identified training requirements and locations where deploying forces will train for ongoing operations, but it has not determined where or when it will train its reserve-component contingency forces for full spectrum operations. The Army has the capacity to train 86,000 reserve-component personnel at its seven mobilization training centers each year. It is also conducting enhanced training at other locations, which could expand capacity. Until the Army finalizes its reserve-component training strategy it will not be able to determine whether it can leverage existing resources to meet future training requirements, or whether any excess reserve-component training capacity exists. In the future, the Marine Corps plans to expand training to allow larger numbers of forces to train together, but it lacks sufficient space at its combat training center. It is considering alternatives for acquiring land, ranging in size from approximately 131,000 to 200,000 acres, and expects to reach a decision by fiscal year 2012.