Security Assistance

Guidance Needed for Completing Required Impact Assessments Prior to Presidential Drawdowns

What GAO Found

In fiscal years 2011 through 2015, the President authorized 13 drawdowns to provide security assistance and build foreign partner capacity to France, Iraq, Syria, Libya, Ukraine, and countries in West and Central Africa (see fig.). According to Department of Defense (DOD) and Department of State (State) data, the total value of articles and services authorized for these drawdowns was $321.5 million.

Authorized Recipients of Presidential Drawdowns, Fiscal Years 2011-2015

Source: GAO analysis of Departments of State and Defense data, MapArt (map). | GAO-17-26

State and DOD implemented some, but not all, steps in their stated processes for planning and implementing drawdowns, but the military departments did not conduct required impact assessments. State implemented three steps in the process for which it was responsible, such as preparing justification packages for planned drawdowns, worked with the military departments to identify resources for the drawdowns from fiscal years 2011 through 2015. However, the Army and Air Force—which together delivered about 96 percent of the dollar amount of drawdown aid during that time—did not conduct required impact assessments. Specifically, the two military departments had not assessed the potential impact of drawdowns on military readiness and budgets during drawdown planning, as required by DOD guidance. Neither of the military departments has assigned responsibility for conducting the assessments, and DSCA did not determine whether the assessments had been completed. Without these assessments, DOD is not in a position to identify and, if needed, mitigate potential negative impacts of a drawdown on military readiness.