



Highlights of [GAO-05-548](#), a report to congressional committees

Why GAO Did This Study

U.S. forces are conducting more complex operations, requiring increased interoperability between the military commands, services, and other organizations. Department of Defense (DOD) planning guidance calls for transforming military training by increasing the jointness in training. The overall intent of DOD's Training Transformation Program is to assure commanders that forces deployed to their theater are not experiencing joint operations for the first time. Therefore, the program's strategic goals focus on providing joint training that meets commanders' needs and links to readiness assessments. Given the significant investment planned in the program and the impact it will have on the military, this report provides a program overview, including (1) DOD's overall management approach and status of key initiatives, and (2) some significant management challenges that have emerged early in the program's implementation.

What GAO Recommends

GAO recommends that DOD assess its efforts to communicate and coordinate with stakeholders, and elevate outreach efforts to include the senior leadership of non-DOD organizations. GAO also recommends that DOD use its established Joint Training System process to determine all joint training requirements. In written comments, DOD generally agreed with GAO's recommendations.

www.gao.gov/cgi-bin/getrpt?GAO-05-548.

To view the full product, including the scope and methodology, click on the link above. For more information, contact Janet St. Laurent at (202) 512-4402 or stlaurentj@gao.gov.

MILITARY TRAINING

Actions Needed to Enhance DOD's Program to Transform Joint Training

What GAO Found

Currently in its early implementation stages, DOD expects its Training Transformation Program to be fully operational by 2009, when it has established a robust network of training capabilities that are integrated throughout the department to provide enhanced joint individual and unit training focused on combatant commanders' needs and linked to readiness assessments. Thus far, the department has established program accountability and authority by assigning senior leadership management and oversight roles and responsibilities. DOD has also established three training transformation initiatives designed to prepare individuals, units, and staffs for joint operations and to provide enabling tools and processes to carry out missions. The initiatives are being developed incrementally, wherein each initiative matures through the "build a little, test a little" philosophy. DOD plans to complete its first program assessment later this year.

Two significant challenges that have emerged early and will require continued focus include:

- (1) Establishing effective partnerships with program stakeholders via comprehensive communication and coordination to gain their full participation and buy-in to achieve training transformation goals. DOD has taken positive steps to communicate and coordinate with these stakeholders, which include DOD's combatant commanders, services, and training commands, as well as representatives from the Federal departments, agencies, and organizations that comprise the national security interagency community. However, GAO found an inconsistent understanding among some DOD stakeholders of the strategic vision and rationale behind the implementation and development pace of the initiatives. DOD has not assessed its communication and coordination efforts to determine why some stakeholders may not fully understand the overall vision. Similarly, DOD officials have been proactive in engaging external stakeholders in identifying potential joint training opportunities. However, DOD's outreach to the senior-level leadership of external organizations has been limited to date, thus risking their full commitment to future planning and implementation of joint training.
- (2) Developing joint training requirements—and the specific training tasks that support the requirements—that meet combatant command mission needs. Rather than identifying joint training tasks through DOD's established process called the "Joint Training System" that is used to translate combatant command needs into training requirements, the department is developing some joint tasks through a working group process that does not ensure widespread participation by the combatant commands' and services' representatives. As a result, the department risks developing joint training requirements that combatant commands and services may not fully support.

Both these challenges, if left unaddressed, have the potential for eroding support among program stakeholders, which in turn places the goals of the Training Transformation Program at risk.