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MILITARY TRAINING

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



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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.

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United States Government Accountability Office
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Congressional Committees

Recent operations in Iraq and Afghanistan have highlighted the challenges facing U.S. forces as they conduct military operations in urban environments, typically referred to as urban operations. These challenges include the presence of large numbers of noncombatants, a high density of buildings that complicate the coordination of firing weapons, a diminished effectiveness of communications equipment, and an increased ability of insurgents or guerrilla fighters to conceal their whereabouts. Based on ongoing operations, which often require U.S. forces to conduct urban operations, military commanders have increasingly called for more training in this area. In response, the Department of Defense (DOD) and the military services have begun placing a higher priority on urban operations training. DOD has also increasingly emphasized the importance of joint training, including exercises to prepare U.S. forces to conduct joint urban operations. DOD defines a joint exercise as the interaction of joint forces or joint staffs conducted under a joint headquarters according to joint doctrine that prepares forces/staffs to respond to operational requirements. DOD has designated the Joint Forces Command as the command responsible for joint training, and in particular, to act as the executive agent, for urban operations training.

As the military services continue to develop plans for urban operations training and to construct or upgrade training facilities, and submit related funding requests, the Senate Armed Services Committee has directed DOD to develop requirements to guide the services' plans. Specifically, in May 2002, Senate Report 107-151, accompanying the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2003, directed DOD to establish facility requirements and, in May 2005, Senate Report 109-69, accompanying the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2006, directed DOD to complete its efforts and provide a requirements baseline for measuring training capabilities within each service and across DOD by November 1, 2005. In the latter report, the Senate Armed Services Committee noted the services will continue to address urban operations training requirements and expend resources independently with minimal coordination and cooperation until a comprehensive joint training plan and investment strategy are approved and implemented within the department. In response, the Joint Forces Command has been working with the military services to develop an overall training strategy that addresses the need for troops to train jointly for urban operations, and related facility and training

requirements. According to Joint Forces Command, this strategy and the related requirements, once complete, is intended to satisfy the baseline required by Senate Report 109-69.

Because of DOD's focus on joint urban operations and congressional interest in synchronizing service training and facility plans, we, 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.

To address these objectives, we interviewed knowledgeable DOD officials, and analyzed relevant documents including DOD training doctrine, the draft urban operations training strategy, and the results of joint urban operations working group meetings. Additionally, we visited several service training installations and combat training centers in the United States as well as overseas, observed exercises, and analyzed training documents to identify the extent of joint participation in exercises and improvements made to urban operations training as a result of lessons learned from ongoing operations. We also conducted interviews with training personnel and troops recently returned from Iraq and Afghanistan to obtain their views on the type of urban operations training needed to realistically train troops as they will fight. We determined that the data we analyzed were sufficiently reliable for the purposes of this review. We performed our work in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards from January 2005 through September 2005. More details on our scope and methodology are presented in appendix I.

Results in Brief

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, the Joint Forces Command contracted for a study, completed in early 2005, to identify facility and training requirements. In May 2005, the Joint Forces Command began working with the services to review the study's results and develop the detailed facility and training requirements needed to form the basis for a joint training strategy. While the services have identified some facility needs, Joint Forces Command and service representatives have been unable to reach consensus on the level or types of joint training necessary to prepare troops for urban operations. As a result, Joint Forces 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 by November 1, 2005, and instead plan to provide criteria for the Congress to use in evaluating service facility plans. Until Joint Forces 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 facility and training plans, and related funding requests. As a result, we are recommending that DOD finalize development of its joint urban operations training strategy, including development of training and facility requirements, before approving service plans to construct or upgrade training facilities to support urban operations training.

Despite DOD's increased emphasis on the importance of training for joint urban operations before deployment, few opportunities currently exist for joint urban operations 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 as a joint team across the full range of military operations. Furthermore, DOD guidance calls for transforming military training to better enable joint force operations by increasing the level of joint context in military training. Many existing urban operations training exercises include some joint aspects, such as training on coordination between ground forces and the Air Force, and a few exercises have also incorporated the use of a joint headquarters to train its battle staff on joint command and control. However, most urban operations training events fall short of the definition of a joint exercise as articulated in DOD's joint training policy—the interaction of joint forces or joint staffs conducted under a joint headquarters in a manner that prepares forces/staffs to respond to operational requirements. Various factors account for the lack of joint urban operations training opportunities, such as the services' focus on service-specific skills, and the lack of an overall strategy requiring joint urban operations training, specific joint urban operations training requirements, and a formal mechanism for the services to schedule joint urban operations training at each other's 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. To increase the opportunities for joint urban operations training, we are recommending that DOD establish a mechanism for joint scheduling of joint urban operations training at major training centers.

While DOD has taken steps to incorporate lessons learned from ongoing operations into its training program, training and troop personnel we 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. On the basis of feedback from ongoing operations, DOD has made several adjustments to its urban operations training, including expanding and upgrading its urban training structures to more closely reflect urban conditions that troops can expect to face in current operations, using civilian role players to a greater extent to simulate the presence of urban populations, building convoy operations training courses, and training troops in techniques to counter emerging enemy tactics such as the use of improvised explosive devices. Discussions held with troops and training personnel revealed additional items that they believed could further enhance training, such as the need for additional live-fire capability, a larger number of civilian role players and more cultural awareness training to prepare troops for the required interaction with a large civilian populace once in theater, and training with newly fielded equipment such as the High-Mobility Multipurpose Wheeled Vehicle, the Advanced Combat Optical Gunsight, and the Blue Force Tracker. While DOD plans additional improvements to current training, until it develops specific training requirements, it will lack a solid basis to evaluate suggestions and make improvements and investment decisions.

DOD concurred with our recommendation on finalizing the joint urban operations training strategy and related requirements. DOD did not concur with our recommendation for establishing a mechanism to schedule joint urban operations training at major training centers. Our report shows that the lack of a formal mechanism for scheduling joint urban operations training at major training centers is one of the key factors accounting for the limited number of joint urban operations training opportunities. Our recommendation is intended to facilitate increased multi-service participation in urban operations training events. Without implementing this recommendation, DOD will continue to rely on the current service-centric scheduling systems that have resulted in few joint urban operations training opportunities that meet DOD's definition of a joint exercise. Therefore, we continue to believe our recommendation has merit. The department also provided technical clarifications, which we incorporated as appropriate.

Background

Half the world's population lives in urban areas, and the trend towards global urbanization is continuing. Within the last 40 years, the United States

military has conducted urban operations in locations such as Saigon, Hue, Beirut, Panama City, Kuwait City, Mogadishu, and the villages of the Balkans. Recent operations in Iraq and Afghanistan have highlighted the trend towards urban operations and the many challenges they present U.S. forces. Military planners recognize this trend and acknowledge the likelihood that enemies will continue to draw U.S. forces into cities to degrade U.S. military advantages. According to DOD, in the future, U.S. forces will likely conduct military operations in urban areas, which are characterized by multiple structures, numerous noncombatants, and complex infrastructure. These areas are also political, cultural, and economic centers, as well as hubs for transportation, information, and manufacturing. Thus, the urban environment constrains many of the advantages that U.S. forces currently enjoy in open environments, increasing the risks of high casualties to friendly forces and noncombatants, and extensive collateral damage.

Moreover, once deployed, forces generally find themselves part of joint operations. In testimony the Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Readiness reiterated comments made earlier by the Secretary of Defense:

“The wars and the conflicts of the 21st century will not be fought by individual services. Rather, they will be fought by joint forces, and more often than not, by combined forces. Therefore, we will have to think, train, and exercise jointly and combined, because let there be no doubt that is the way that we will fight.”¹

As part of its Training Transformation Program, DOD is attempting to provide more of a joint context to its training.² DOD defines a joint exercise as the interaction of joint forces and/or joint staffs conducted under a joint headquarters according to joint doctrine that prepares forces/staffs to respond to operational requirements. To develop a stronger program of joint training, DOD designated the Joint Forces Command as the joint trainer for DOD to support the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff as well as senior commanders worldwide in meeting joint training objectives. In

¹Testimony of Dr. Paul W. Mayberry, Deputy Under Secretary of Defense (Readiness), before the Subcommittee on Readiness and the Subcommittee on Terrorism, Unconventional Threats and Capabilities, House Armed Services Committee, regarding Joint National Training Capability (Mar. 18, 2004).

²This program is intended to enhance training to better enable joint force operations in the new strategic environment, calling for dynamic, capabilities-based training in support of national security requirements across the full spectrum of service, joint, interagency, intergovernmental, and multinational operations.

2002, DOD published its Doctrine for Joint Urban Operations³ and, recognizing the need to place a stronger emphasis on urban operations training, assigned the role of joint urban operations executive agent for training to Joint Forces Command. While the Office of the Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness has overall responsibility for training policies, Joint Forces Command, as DOD's executive agent, is the "primary DOD point of contact and proponent for joint urban operations doctrine, training, and equipment," and is to lead, coordinate, and integrate the activities of the other DOD components on such matters. In this role, Joint Forces Command has conducted experiments on concepts of operations for joint urban operations and monitored lessons learned from ongoing urban operations.

The training of U.S. forces for urban operations is primarily the responsibility of the services. Both the Army and Marine Corps, the services that conduct most urban operations, have developed fairly robust urban operations training programs for their ground forces. Figure 1 shows an Army training facility at Fort Campbell, Kentucky, with structures built to train troops in conducting urban operations.

³Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Publication 3-06, *Doctrine for Joint Urban Operations* (Sept. 16, 2002).

Figure 1: Army Urban Operations Training Site at Fort Campbell, Kentucky



Source: U.S. Army.

The services train ground forces for urban operations based on a building-block approach beginning with specialty-focused individual training at their assigned installation, which normally focuses on individual basic skills needed to successfully conduct operations in urban terrain. Then they progress through collective training that sometimes includes other services on a limited basis. Training ends with a culminating exercise at a major training center, such as the Joint Readiness Training Center or Twenty-Nine Palms, and is based on real-time scenarios that troops may encounter in the urban environment. The Army and Marine Corps currently have plans to construct new or upgrade existing facilities to support urban operations training.

Consensus Has Not Been Reached on DOD's Joint Urban Operations Training Strategy

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 direction from the Senate Armed Services Committee in May 2002, 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 committee directed DOD to establish joint urban operations facility requirements and a training requirements baseline by November 1, 2005. In May 2005, Joint Forces Command began working with the services to review the study's results and develop the detailed facility and training requirements needed to form the basis for a joint training strategy. While the services have identified some facility needs, Joint Forces Command and service representatives have been unable to reach consensus on the level or types of joint training necessary to prepare troops for urban operations. As a result, Joint Forces 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 baseline as required by November 1, 2005, and instead plan to provide criteria for the Congress to use in evaluating service facility plans. Until Joint Forces 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 facility and training plans, and related funding requests.

DOD Directed to Develop Urban Operations Training and Facility Requirements

In the committee report accompanying the Fiscal Year 2003 National Defense Authorization Act,⁴ the Senate Armed Services Committee required a report by the Secretary of Defense that would establish requirements for facilities that support urban operations training within DOD. In response to the committee's direction, the Office of the Secretary of Defense and the joint urban operations executive agent, Joint Forces Command, contracted for a study that would examine urban operations training requirements and the resulting facilities that would be needed to conduct the necessary training.

The study was completed in early 2005. According to DOD officials, while the study results have helped to inform the process, the detailed training

⁴S. Rep. No. 107-151, at 427-28 (2002).

and facility requirements contained in the study have not been formally adopted because there was not enough agreement among the services as to the usefulness or veracity of the identified urban operations training requirements in that study. Consequently, in May 2005 Joint Forces Command convened a working group to develop joint urban operations training and facilities requirements on which to base a joint urban operations training strategy.

In the committee report accompanying the Fiscal Year 2006 National Defense Authorization Act,⁵ the Senate Armed Services committee directed DOD to complete its efforts to establish the requirements for facilities and also directed it to establish, by November 1, 2005, a training requirements baseline against which the ability to train for urban operations within the services and across DOD could be measured. In the report, the committee expressed concern that the services would otherwise continue to address urban operations training requirements and expend resources independently with minimal coordination and that a critical opportunity to develop capabilities for joint training in urban operations was not being effectively pursued. In response to congressional direction, Joint Forces Command began working with the services to develop an overall strategy for joint urban operations and related facility and training requirements. According to DOD, this effort is intended to meet the congressional directive for a requirements baseline.

Current Strategy Focuses on Need for Facilities

To date, the draft Joint Urban Operations Training Strategy, as currently drafted, primarily focuses on the need to enhance training facilities to accommodate larger, more realistic joint urban operations training events. The current draft strategy's focus is to identify the necessary locations for joint urban operations training for two audiences: (1) troops executing urban operations at the tactical level and (2) officers serving on the staffs of commanders conducting urban operations. As envisioned, the troops that execute the operations would undergo training that places members of different services together to learn to operate together and to overcome differences in standard practices, terms, and organizational cultures that can limit the effectiveness of operations. The draft strategy also envisions using three training range complexes comprised of existing training

⁵S. Rep. No. 109-69, at 456 (2005).

facilities in the western, central, and eastern United States, as well as improvements and expansions planned for some of these training facilities.

For its second audience, the strategy suggested building new facilities in order to train staff officers in the skills associated with serving on a joint staff of a commander conducting urban operations. According to DOD, officers serving on a joint staff rarely receive significant and realistic training for this complex role in which they are called upon to make recommendations to the joint task force commander based on a myriad of facts and assumptions in a limited time frame. The draft strategy notes that many officers often spend more time in the course of their careers working on command staffs than they do in command of troops. In order to establish staff training, the strategy proposes building four new joint staff training centers large enough to handle battalion or combatant-command-level staffs to replicate the sort of command and control arrangements and joint staff processes they will encounter while serving as staff officers under a joint force commander. According to a Joint Forces Command official, these centers can provide adequate throughput for staff training if used in conjunction with the current Joint Operations Centers in Grafenwoehr, Germany, and at Joint Forces Command in Suffolk, Virginia.

Lack of Consensus on Joint Training Requirements Stalls Strategy

The services have identified their respective facility needs to support urban operations training. However, the Joint Forces Command has not been able to finalize a draft joint urban operations training strategy because command officials and service representatives have not been able to agree upon joint urban operations training requirements. Specifically, there is a lack of agreement on the need for joint urban operations training events that place significant numbers of troops from different services together in urban settings. As Joint Forces Command officials continue to develop the draft strategy, they have pledged to continue working with the services and combatant commands to develop the joint urban operations training requirements through the working group process. To date, Joint Forces Command has provided only a very broad, overarching statement of the tasks that are unique to or significantly challenged by urban environments, with a focus on conducting joint urban operations at the operational level.

Representatives from the Army and Marine Corps in attendance at the second session of the joint urban operations training strategy working group in August 2005 repeatedly emphasized the need for more specifically defined training requirements for joint urban operations before they could evaluate the draft joint urban operations training strategy and assess their

services' commitment to it. Given the key role the services and combatant commands play in training forces—both troops on the ground and staff personnel—consensus on joint urban operations training requirements is necessary for the implementation of a joint urban operations training strategy.

Because of the lack of consensus in the draft joint urban operations training strategy and related requirements, DOD has not yet developed joint training requirements to use as a baseline against which to measure capabilities within and across the services. As a result, DOD officials told us they will not be able to deliver the requirements baseline to the Congress by the November 1, 2005, deadline. DOD officials stated that, instead, they plan to provide a set of questions for the Congress to use as interim criteria in considering service funding requests for urban operations training facilities. These questions are intended to assist the Congress in evaluating the potential for joint usage of proposed facilities. Until Joint Forces 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 facility and training plans, and related funding requests.

Despite DOD's Goals, Few Opportunities Exist for Forces to Train Together for Joint Urban Operations

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

Few Urban Operations Training Opportunities Exist that Meet DOD's Definition of Joint Training

DOD's Joint Training Policy, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Instruction 3500.01B, defines a joint exercise as a joint military maneuver, simulated wartime operation, or other Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff/combatant commander-designated event involving planning, preparation, execution, and evaluation in which forces of two or more

services interact as joint forces and/or joint staffs and the event is conducted based on approved joint doctrine that prepares joint forces or staffs to respond to operational requirements established by the combatant commander. Although there is often some level of jointness incorporated into Marine Corps and Army urban operations training events, these efforts fall short of DOD's definition of a joint training event because they do not include a joint headquarters and focus on service, rather than joint, training objectives. Marine Corps officials said that the Marine Corps includes some joint scenarios in its events and incorporates to some extent other service participation in performing certain specialty roles, such as air-ground coordination. The Army simulates some of the joint aspects of a battlefield in its training as well, such as the joint command and control structures troops are expected to encounter in theater, and it incorporates special operations forces when possible. According to Joint Forces Command officials, the Joint Operations Center at Joint Forces Command in Suffolk, Virginia, and the Joint Multinational Training Center in Grafenwoehr, Germany,⁶ are used to provide some officers with the type of joint staff officer training called for in the draft strategy. We observed the Joint Operations Center, which is used to provide officers with command and control training, at the Joint Multinational Training Center. Officers we spoke with stated that this was a great addition that increased the level of joint urban operations training.

Although the services are taking these actions to increase jointness, training exercises are still primarily focused on service-derived, rather than joint, training objectives and for the most part do not include a joint headquarters to command the exercise. For example, an Air Force representative who was involved in supporting the Army's Air Warrior II training exercise at Fort Polk, Louisiana, which was designed to prepare troops for urban operations before they deployed, stated that the value of the training was limited for the Air Force because the training was designed around the accomplishment of Army training objectives. Additionally, an Air Force representative in Germany experienced similar difficulties in getting Air Force training objectives added to Army exercises. Furthermore, the troops and training personnel we interviewed, many of whom had recent operational experience in ongoing operations, emphasized the importance of training jointly for urban operations in order to maximize familiarity with the services' respective ways of operating and overall interoperability.

⁶This facility was formerly known as the Combat Maneuver Training Center.

Several Factors Contribute to the Lack of Joint Urban Operations Training

One important factor contributing to the lack of joint urban operations training is the services' focus on service-specific skills training. The two services that perform the bulk of urban operations training, the Army and Marine Corps, are proactively working to ensure that their troops are trained in the individual skills needed for operations in urban terrain. Soldiers and Marines are exposed to individual urban tasks in their basic training and specialty schools. The Army and Marine Corps primarily concentrate their urban operations training on enhancing the capabilities of individual soldiers and small units—primarily squads, platoons, and companies. As noted in our June 2005 report,⁷ historically, service training has focused on individual service competencies or mission-essential tasks, with less emphasis on joint operations. While this has allowed the services to meet their core training responsibilities, it has also contributed to the problem of forces often entering combat without prior experience or training in joint urban operations.

Second, in the absence of a joint urban operations training strategy, there is currently no specific requirement for the services to train jointly for urban operations. While it is not urban-specific, the DOD Directive 1322.18, which advocates joint training, states: “To the maximum extent possible, the DOD components shall conduct joint training in accredited events at certified facilities, and shall synchronize schedules to integrate training events.” However, the directive does not define what is meant by “to the maximum extent possible” and therefore provides the services much leeway in how much they participate in joint training. Absent a directive requiring the services to train for joint urban operations tasks at a specified level and specific joint urban operations training requirements, the services are likely to continue to focus their training on service-specific skills and tasks for which they are held accountable. As discussed earlier, Joint Forces Command expects the joint urban operations training strategy it is developing to include such requirements.

Lastly, the services own the facilities used to conduct urban operations training and are currently using them primarily for service-specific training requirements. While the services agree that joint urban operations training is needed, there is no formal mechanism in place to ensure that joint training requirements are incorporated into the different services' training

⁷GAO, *Military Training: Actions Needed to Enhance DOD's Program to Transform Joint Training*, GAO-05-548, (Washington, D.C.: June 21, 2005).

schedules. Urban training that involves placing two or more battalions together is usually reserved for the combat training centers and these training centers are limited in throughput capacity. For example, the Joint Readiness Training Center normally sponsors 10 training rotations per year and is limited in its ability to expand the amount of rotations it can host per year to increase joint usage. Even though Joint Forces Command is the executive agent for joint urban operations, it does not have the authority to direct the services or combatant commands to modify their training plans to accommodate joint urban operations training. It is the Office of the Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness that has overall authority over DOD training policies. Table 1 lists those facilities that can currently support large joint urban operations training exercises and staff officer training.

Table 1: Current Training Facilities that Can Support Joint Urban Operations Training

Facility	Location	Facilitates joint urban operations training for troops (battalions from different services)	Facilitates urban operations training for officers on joint staffs
Joint Readiness Training Center	Fort Polk, Louisiana	Yes	Yes
Twenty-Nine Palms	Twenty-Nine Palms, California	Yes	Yes
National Training Center	Fort Irwin, California	Yes	Yes
Joint Multinational Training Center	Grafenwoehr/Hohenfels, Germany	Yes	Yes
Joint Warfighting Center	Suffolk, Virginia	No	Yes
Sites with ability to link into Joint Training and Experimentation Network	Various service installations	No	Yes

Source: Joint Forces Command.

Note: We are using the definition of Joint Training from DOD's joint training policy—the training event includes two or more forces and/or joint staffs, is conducted according to joint doctrine, and is run by a joint headquarters.

In a June 2002 report,⁸ we recommended that DOD create a database that identifies all ranges available to the department and what they offer, regardless of service ownership, so that commanders can schedule the best

⁸GAO, Military Training: DOD Lacks a Comprehensive Plan to Manage Encroachment on Training Ranges, [GAO-02-614](#), (Washington D.C.: June 11, 2002).

available resources to provide required training. Without a mechanism to schedule joint urban operations training at each other's facilities, DOD cannot be assured that joint urban operations training will occur or that DOD will maximize the joint usage of urban operations training facilities.

While DOD Has Incorporated Lessons Learned, Troops and Training Personnel Suggested Further Training Enhancements

While DOD has taken steps to incorporate lessons learned from ongoing operations into its training program, training and troop personnel we 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. The services have been using both formal and informal means to collect and disseminate lessons learned from ongoing operations to be incorporated into their training events. Based on this feedback, during the site visits we made, we observed that the services have made many improvements in their urban operations training such as: expanding and upgrading their urban training structures, using role players to a greater extent to simulate the presence of urban populations, building convoy operations training courses, and training troops in techniques to counter emerging enemy tactics such as the use of improvised explosive devices. Our discussions held with troops and training personnel revealed additional items that they believed could further enhance training to better reflect current operating conditions such as the need for additional live-fire capability, adding larger numbers of role players and providing more cultural awareness training to adequately prepare troops for the required interaction with a large civilian populace once in theater, and training with newly fielded equipment. While DOD plans additional improvements to current training, until it develops a strategy and specific facility and training requirements as discussed previously, it will lack a solid basis to guide its improvement efforts.

The Services Use Both Formal and Informal Means to Collect and Disseminate Lessons Learned from Ongoing Operations

The Army and Marine Corps utilize both formal and informal means for capturing and disseminating lessons learned. According to service officials, to obtain information from ongoing operations, they send subject matter experts into theater with deploying units and capture lessons learned from troops returning from recent ongoing operations. Both services maintain databases, which are used to disseminate lessons learned information within and among the services. These databases include numerous lessons learned related to ongoing urban operations. For example, the Marine Corps database contains lessons learned on urban operations including basic Arabic language training, information on convoy operations tactics,

and search techniques. Additionally, Joint Forces Command also sends subject matter experts into theater and its Joint Center for Operational Analysis maintains a database of lessons learned and helps facilitate the sharing of joint lessons among the services. Both the Army and Marine Corps formally disseminated the information collected through publications such as handbooks, newsletters, and official Web sites. For example, the Army's Center for Lessons Learned issued a tactical convoy operations handbook that was also used by the Marine Corps and the Special Operations Command, according to Army Center for Lessons Learned officials. Another formal method the Army uses to disseminate information is the "smart card," which is a compact card that easily fits in a soldier's pocket, thus providing quick access to information. The Army recently issued a smart card that served as a guide for knowledge about Iraqi culture.

The services also utilize informal mechanisms for capturing and disseminating lessons learned. Officials we spoke with from the Army's Joint Multinational Training Center in Germany indicated that they rely more heavily on informal mechanisms, such as electronic messages from troops in the field and the "right seat/left seat" transition program. Under this program, incoming commanders learn the latest urban tactics by shadowing outbound individuals conducting urban operations. For example, incoming company commanders shadow outgoing commanders to learn about the intricacies of the local operating area and what practices have proved useful in conducting missions. Further, training center officials and troops we talked with indicated that they shared information on ongoing operations via available DOD databases.

Integration of Lessons Learned Is Improving Urban Operations Training

The Army and the Marine Corps have recently made significant improvements in urban operations training curriculum and facilities based on lessons learned from ongoing operations and training events. Specifically, these services have adjusted their training curriculum to place greater emphasis on urban operations. While the Marine Corps introduced its revised combined arms exercise and security and stabilization operations training in 2003, it was not mandatory predeployment training until the summer of 2005, according to Marine Corps officials. The Army recently incorporated urban operations tasks into its Advanced Individual Training Program to ensure that soldiers receive predeployment training on warrior tasks and battle drills regardless of their occupational specialties, according to officials from the Army's Collective Training Directorate. Further, in June 2004, the Army issued guidance stating that it intends to

provide all deploying brigade and battalion commanders and staff training on urban stability and support operations through its Battle Command Training Program.

At training sites in Germany we visited, we found that Army trainers incorporated real-time scenarios from ongoing operations in their exercises to provide troops with training that realistically reflects the urban environment. For example, they incorporated Iraqi elections into the mission rehearsal exercise in July 2005 in anticipation of the conditions they would face once deployed. Other examples of curriculum changes that services had made to provide troops with more of the skills necessary to effectively face urban challenges included:

- developing mobile training teams that deploy to training sites to provide instruction to Marines on the handling of detainees at detention operations;
- placing more emphasis on search procedures related to dwellings, caves, and vehicles to locate insurgents or weapons;
- delivering training on how to respond to improvised explosive device incidents;⁹ and
- training troops on how to conduct convoy operations.

During our visits to training sites, we also observed that the facilities used for urban operations training had been expanded and upgraded to more closely reflect urban conditions troops can expect to face in current operations. For example, we observed small towns that had been enhanced to replicate urban terrain by including mosques, open markets, and flat-roofed dwellings. Figure 2 depicts Marines practicing raid procedures on flat-top roofs to simulate the type of buildings they would encounter in current urban operational environments.

⁹This issue had received attention from all services and the Joint Improvised Explosive Device Defeat task force was formed to identify enemy tactics for explosive devices and recommend servicewide solutions. The task force, in addition to fielding detection and disabling equipment, also established mobile training teams to provide training on how to respond to ever-changing enemy tactics, techniques, and procedures related to improvised explosive devices.

Figure 2: Marines Execute a Helicopter-Borne Raid Exercise Using Flat-Top Roofs



Source: U. S. Marine Corps.

Both services have populated these urban training facilities with role players that portray government officials, tribal leaders, religious leaders, and officials from interagency organizations. For example, the Joint Multinational Training Center has increased the total number of civilian role players to up to 600 participants, though not all are used in each training event. Our discussions with soldiers who had returned from operations in Iraq, however, stated that exercises need to include a larger number of role players to more realistically represent the urban environment. We noted that the Joint Readiness Training Center replicates the media and incorporates nongovernmental organizations and civilian role players in its training. Figure 3 shows an Army exercise that incorporates civilian role players to simulate local inhabitants in a Middle Eastern environment.

Figure 3: Army Troops Practice Communicating with Role Players as Part of Their Training Exercise in Hohenfels, Germany



Source: U.S. Army.

Furthermore, we observed that the Marine Corps and Army have included newly built live-fire or simulated convoy courses in some of their urban operations facilities. Those with live-fire courses are emphasizing the importance of training troops on them at night and in adverse weather. Figure 4 shows training on a live-fire convoy operations training course in Germany. The services are also updating training to reflect changes to enemy tactics such as the use of improvised explosive devices. We saw incorporation of simulated improvised explosive devices at Fort Campbell, Kentucky, and observed the newly developed training site for explosive devices at the Joint Multinational Training Center in Germany.

Figure 4: Army Live-Fire Convoy Training Exercise in Germany



Source: U.S. Army.

In addition to recent improvements, the services are currently planning further enhancements to existing training facilities. For instance, the Marine Corps is requesting funds to construct a large-scale urban training facility at Twenty-Nine Palms, California. The new facility will have up to 1,500 buildings, including live-fire capability, and outlying components such as an airfield, port, and villages. According to Marine officials, the facility will be large enough to accommodate joint training exercises with the Army. It is also expected to provide a venue from which to experiment, develop, and exercise joint/interagency urban operations with the Joint National Training Capability. The Marine Corps also plans to add a night driving course to pre-deployment training. Additionally, the Marines plan to add shoot houses at Camp Pendleton, Camp Lejeune, and Marine Corps Base Quantico. Likewise, the Army is in the process of improving its combat training centers by adding more buildings and instrumentation, and its major installations by providing shoot houses, urban assault courses, breach facilities, and combined arms collective training facilities. Army officials at the Joint Multinational Training Center have initiated an effort to enhance training through the development of an Expeditionary

Instrumentation System, which is a new mobile instrumentation capability that provides feedback to the battalion at any training site that lacks instrumentation. According to its developers, the mobile nature of the system will also help alleviate capacity concerns throughout the Army, turning any location into an instrumented range. See appendix II for a description of major ongoing and planned urban operations training facility enhancements.

Troops and Training Personnel Identified Further Training Enhancements That They Believe Would Better Reflect Current Operating Conditions

One of DOD's training goals is to train as it expects to fight and discussions held with troops and training personnel revealed additional items that they believe could further enhance training to better reflect current operating conditions. Personnel identified enhancements such as the need for additional live-fire capability, adding more civilian role players in exercises and providing additional information gathering and cultural awareness training, and having newly fielded equipment available to train with at the training centers.

Additional Live-Fire Training

The troops we spoke with stated that the live-fire training they received prior to deployment was infrequent and did not sufficiently prepare them to use their weapons in an urban setting. Training personnel at facilities we visited stated that the facilities' live-fire capability is limited due to environmental issues and concerns about safety when training in urban operations training sites with role players. In lieu of live-fire training, urban operations facilities have simulated shooting drills, including video and target instrumentation, to provide the experience of live-fire urban operations.

More Role Players and Greater Emphasis on Cultural Awareness Training

Further, although we observed role players included in the training exercises we visited, troops noted that more were needed and additional cultural awareness training would be beneficial. They noted operating in an urban environment, against an elusive enemy with the ability to hide among the civilian population, requires troops to be able to work more closely with local people, in many cases on an individual basis, to conduct stability and support operations, peacekeeping, humanitarian missions, and the gathering of information. Troops we spoke with indicated that the number of role players included in exercises is not sufficient to adequately prepare them for the density and level of persistent contact that is typical of noncombatants in the urban environment. In addition, troops and training personnel we interviewed wanted the role players to more actively engage the troops during the exercises to better replicate operational conditions.

The troops and trainers also indicated that more cultural awareness training, which would include basic language training, would be helpful to establish and maintain communication with local civilians so that they could better interact with civilians and minimize civilian interference with military operations. Currently, training exercises contain some level of cultural awareness and civil affairs training by including role players that interact with troops, and exercises that we observed emphasized the use of translators when working with the local population. However, access to translators in training is limited, and officials and troops agreed that translators were not often available for everyday interaction with civilians and so further training would be beneficial. Both the Marine Corps and Army have taken steps to improve this training; the Marine Corps has established an advanced cultural awareness center and according to an Army official, the Army continually updates its cultural awareness training to reflect conditions in current operations.

New Equipment Available for Training Prior to Deployment

Troops and training personnel identified a third area for further enhancement: the ability to train with newly fielded equipment prior to deployment. Troops we interviewed who had returned from ongoing operations stated that there were several pieces of equipment that they used in theater that had not been available to train with prior to deployment. These items had been developed to help alleviate the difficulties of conducting urban operations by addressing the adversaries' tactics, such as improvised explosive devices, and the adversaries' ability to conceal themselves in an urban environment. According to training personnel and DOD officials, limited production quantities and the need for the items in theater to respond to rapidly changing operational environments makes it difficult for the training centers to initially have the items. Some examples of newly fielded equipment that are in limited supply but DOD believes will improve troops' ability to conduct urban operations include the following.

- Up-armored High-Mobility Multipurpose Wheeled Vehicles (HMMWV). These vehicles are not available at some training facilities and only the soft-top HMMWVs were on hand for training exercises, according to officials at the Joint Multinational Training Center in Hohenfels and Twenty-Nine Palms. Traveling in the up-armored HMMWVs provides greater protection from improvised explosive devices while maintaining transport mobility for forces, civil affairs teams, and engineers operating in urban areas. However, Army and Marine Corps officials and troops that we interviewed stated that the up-armored HMMWVs used in

theater were top-heavy, difficult to maneuver, and required different tactical procedures from the soft-top HMMWVs when used in combat.

- The Advanced Combat Optical Gunsight. This gunsight is another piece of equipment used in conducting urban operations that has been quickly fielded into theater, but limited quantities prevented its use in training prior to deployment. Officials stated that this item greatly enhanced troops' ability to precisely target long-distance hostile forces in all lighting conditions, which is critical to an urban setting where lighting plays a key role.
- New improvised explosive device detection and disabling equipment. These devices were not at some training facilities we visited, and some troops noted that their absence hampered the troops' use of the items in theater because the instructions were difficult to understand. Officials at the Joint Readiness Training Center, Joint Multinational Training Center, and Camp Lejeune stated that more specific training on the use of improvised explosive device detection equipment would facilitate its use in theater.
- Force XXI Battle Command, Brigade and Below System, also known as Blue Force Tracker. Blue Force Tracker is a satellite-based tracking and communication system that gives an all-weather, near real-time picture of the battlefield. Troops we interviewed stated that they were not exposed to Blue Force Tracker in training, although it has been essential in conducting urban operations in Iraq because of its ability to distinguish friendly forces from adversaries.

Officials and troops agreed that exposure to these items before arriving in theater would have better prepared them to operate in the urban environment. Training center and other DOD officials stated that they would like to see a greater priority given to placing high-demand items like the ones mentioned at the training centers to increase the troops' level of exposure to this equipment before deployment. While DOD plans additional improvements, until it develops a strategy and specific facility and training requirements, it will lack a solid basis to evaluate suggestions and make improvements and investment decisions.

Conclusions

DOD has continually emphasized the importance of joint training, including to prepare U.S. forces to conduct joint military operations in urban environments. The inherent complexities of operating in urban

environments, DOD's expectation that urban environments will play a significant role in future military operations, and that most of these operations will be conducted jointly, coupled with the combatant commanders' interest in ensuring U.S. forces are sufficiently prepared, are significant incentives for Joint Forces Command and services to develop and implement an overall joint training strategy and related requirements. In addition, the fact that U.S. forces are currently involved in urban operations adds a tangible sense of urgency for joint training. Notwithstanding these incentives, current training exercises offer few opportunities for U.S. forces to train jointly for urban operations. An overall strategy requiring joint urban operations training and clearly defined facility and training requirements, and a mechanism for scheduling joint training at training facilities, would provide a framework to assign accountability, synchronize the services' training efforts to ensure they include joint training, and maximize the joint usage of training facilities. In the absence of this framework, DOD risks that the services will continue to pursue their respective service-specific training and facility plans. Until DOD 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. To its credit, DOD and the services have actively sought to incorporate lessons learned during ongoing operations and made several adjustments to make the training environment more reflective of operational conditions. To further enhance training, the troops and training personnel we interviewed identified several additional adjustments that they believed would further enhance urban operations training. However, until DOD develops a strategy and related requirements, it lacks a solid basis to evaluate suggestions, and make improvements and investment decisions.

Recommendations for Executive Action

To improve DOD's approach to joint urban operations training, we are recommending that the Secretary of Defense direct the Commander, Joint Forces Command to:

- Finalize development of the joint urban operations training strategy and related requirements including joint training tasks and standards, level and types of joint training exercises to be conducted, and facility needs. Once established, we envision this framework would be used to guide the review and approval of service training and facility plans, and to guide efforts to make additional improvements to existing urban

operations training curriculum, including evaluating any suggestions from training and troop personnel.

To increase opportunities for joint training and maximize the joint usage of training facilities, we are recommending that the Secretary of Defense

- direct the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness to establish a mechanism for scheduling joint urban operations training at major training centers to facilitate increased multiservice participation in urban operations training.

Agency Comments and Our Evaluation

In commenting on a draft of this report, DOD concurred with our first recommendation and did not concur with the second. DOD concurred with our first recommendation that the Secretary of Defense direct the Commander, Joint Forces Command, to finalize development of the joint urban operations training strategy and related requirements including joint training tasks and standards, levels, and types of joint training exercises to be conducted. DOD stated that current efforts, when completed, will adequately address this recommendation without further direction from the Secretary of Defense. DOD also noted its view that we seemed to blur the distinction between what it characterized as two separate actions—Joint Forces Command’s efforts to develop a joint training strategy for urban operations and DOD’s efforts to develop criteria for evaluating service plans to construct training facilities. We note that efforts to develop the joint strategy have been underway for some time and continue to believe that the lack of consensus within DOD regarding the draft strategy may delay the completion of this effort without further emphasis and monitoring from the Secretary of Defense. Furthermore, we believe that the strategy and evaluation criteria should not be viewed as separate actions, but rather must be clearly linked. As discussed in our report, until Joint Forces 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 facility and training plans, and related funding requests.

DOD did not concur with our second recommendation that the Secretary of Defense direct the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness to establish a mechanism for scheduling joint urban operations training at major training centers to facilitate increased multiservice participation in urban operations training. In its response, DOD stated that it remains strongly committed to a decentralized training ranges and

facilities management solution in supporting the services' Title 10 responsibilities. DOD also noted the Office of the Secretary of Defense is providing planning support, oversight, and policy guidance to ensure all its training resources support service, cross-service, and joint needs and goals. DOD further stated that it is committed to maximizing system integration, sharing of data, and facilitation of the services' scheduling processes to better leverage all assets for the full benefit of military readiness. However, we note that, to date, DOD has not given sufficient leadership attention to ensuring necessary coordinated action among the services to accomplish these goals. We believe the lack of progress is more an issue of leadership to ensure coordinated action among the key stakeholders than an issue of usurping the services' Title 10 responsibilities. Our report shows that the lack of a formal mechanism for scheduling joint urban operations training at major training centers is one of the key factors accounting for the limited number of joint urban operations training opportunities. Our recommendation is intended to facilitate increased multiservice participation in urban operations training events. Without focused leadership efforts on the part of DOD to ensure coordinated action among the services to establish a mechanism to schedule joint training, we believe that DOD will perpetuate the current situation in which few exercises are joint according to its definition. Therefore, we continue to believe our recommendation has merit.

DOD's comments are reprinted in appendix III. DOD also provided technical clarifications, which we incorporated as appropriate.

We are sending copies of this report to the Secretary of Defense, Undersecretary of Defense (Personnel and Readiness), and the Commander, U.S. Joint Forces Command. We will also make copies available to others upon request. In addition, the report will be available at no charge on the GAO Web site at <http://www.gao.gov>.

Should you or your staff have any questions regarding this report, please contact me at (202) 512-9619. Contact points for our Offices of

Congressional Relations and Public Affairs may be found on the last page of this report. Key contributors to this report are listed in appendix IV.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sharon L. Pickup". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped initial "S".

Sharon L. Pickup, Director
Defense Capabilities and Management

List of Congressional Committees

The Honorable John Warner
Chairman

The Honorable Carl Levin
Ranking Minority Member
Committee on Armed Services
United States Senate

The Honorable Duncan L. Hunter
Chairman

The Honorable Ike Skelton
Ranking Minority Member
Committee on Armed Services
House of Representatives

Scope and Methodology

To determine DOD's overall approach to training for urban operations, we reviewed relevant DOD plans, policies, and guidance, and other documentation related to urban operations training. We discussed urban operations training with a variety of officials from the Office of the Secretary of Defense, service headquarters, Joint Forces Command, operational units of the Army and Marine Corps, training organizations, and other related organizations. Specifically, we did the following:

- To determine the extent to which DOD has made progress in establishing a strategy for joint urban operations training, we discussed with officials at Joint Forces Command and the Office of the Secretary of Defense the process and associated timelines for strategy development and approval. We attended meetings of the joint urban operations training working group and reviewed the draft strategy as it evolved to monitor progress towards strategy development and gaining buy-in from the services and combatant commanders. Further, we analyzed DOD's draft strategy and assessed to what extent it included defined joint urban operations training requirements and identified who needed to accomplish the requirements. Lastly, we reviewed legislation pertaining to this issue and determined whether DOD's draft strategy would address the congressional directive that DOD establish joint urban operations facility requirements and a training requirements baseline by November 1, 2005.
- To determine the extent to which current exercises provide opportunities for joint urban operations training, we analyzed joint and service urban operations training doctrine and policy to determine how joint urban operations training exercises are defined, and the level of joint training that is required by those documents. We interviewed officials from Joint Forces Command and Office of the Secretary of Defense to determine the number of joint urban operations training exercises that have occurred this year. In addition, we interviewed troops who had returned from operations in Afghanistan and Iraq to determine how much joint urban training they receiving before deploying and how they felt the training prepared them for conducting urban operations they took part in. Lastly, we interviewed service trainers and observed some exercises to determine the level of joint urban operations training incorporated into current training events.
- To determine the extent to which DOD has incorporated lessons learned into its urban operations training to reflect current operational conditions, we observed Army and Marine Corps urban operations

training, reviewed changes made to course curriculum to incorporate real-time scenarios troops could expect to encounter in theater, discussed with officials from the Army and Marine Corps lessons learned offices and training centers the means of collecting and disseminating lessons learned, and obtained documentation on changes made to training curriculum and facilities based on these lessons. Further, we reviewed lessons learned publications and databases to assess the type and amount of information dealing with urban operations that are readily available to troops. Lastly, we interviewed troops who had returned from operations in Afghanistan and Iraq, many of whom were readying for a second deployment, to assess how lessons learned were shared in theater and the extent to which training had been updated since their first deployment.

Table 2: Organizations and Locations Included on This Assignment

Organizations	Locations
Army	Headquarters, U.S. Army, Washington, D.C.
	Joint Readiness Training Center, Fort Polk, LA
	Headquarters, Forces Command, Fort McPherson, GA
	Center for Army Lessons Learned, Fort Leavenworth, KS
	Combat Training Center Directorate, Fort Leavenworth, KS
	Battle Command Training Program, Fort Leavenworth, KS
	1 st Cavalry Division, Fort Hood, TX
	101 st Airborne Division, Fort Campbell, KY
	10 th Mountain Division, Fort Drum, NY
	Joint Multinational Command Training Center, Grafenwoehr, Germany
Joint Multinational Readiness Group, Hohenfels, Germany	
Marine Corps	Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps Training and Education Command, Quantico, VA
	Marine Corps Combat Development Command, Quantico, VA
	Marine Corps Warfighting Laboratory, Quantico, VA
	Marine Corps Center for Lessons Learned, Quantico, VA
	March Air Reserve Base, CA ^a
	Marine Corps Base, Twenty-Nine Palms, CA
Air Force	2 nd Marine Expeditionary Force, Camp Lejeune, NC
	Air Combat Command, Langley Air Force Base, VA

Appendix I
Scope and Methodology

(Continued From Previous Page)

Organizations	Locations
Joint Organizations	The Office of the Secretary of Defense, Programs and Readiness Joint Training and Ranges Office, Washington, D.C.
	Joint Forces Command, Suffolk, VA
	• Joint Urban Operations Office
	• Joint Warfighting Center, Capabilities Group
	• Joint Center for Operational Analysis and Lessons Learned

Source: GAO.

^aAs of September 2005, Marine Corps training at March Air Reserve Base was moved to Twenty-Nine Palms.

Major Ongoing and Planned Urban Operations Training Facility Enhancements

ARMY	
Enhancement	Description
Shoot house ^a	The shoot house is a single story, multiroom building with multiple points of entry designed for individual, squad, and platoon live-fire training.
Urban assault course ^a	The urban assault course is a five-station training facility that is designed to train individuals, squads, and platoons. It includes a two-story offense/defense building, grenadier gunnery, an underground trainer, and two individual-through-platoon task/technique training ranges.
Breach facility ^a	The breach facility includes wall, door, and window breach locations and provides training for individuals, teams, and squads in breaching techniques and procedures.
Combined arms collective training facility ^a	A complex of 20 - 26 buildings that provides combined arms collective training for platoon and company situational exercises and battalion task force field training exercises.
Instrumentation	Shoot houses and urban assault courses have limited video capture and targetry control capability for enhanced safety monitoring and rapid training feedback (after action reviews). Combined arms collective training facilities have limited exterior and interior video, targetry control, and a more comprehensive after action review capability.
Additional buildings	Installations plan to add structures (shanty towns) and debris (salvage cars) to the combined arms collective training facility for increased realism. These are added at little or no additional cost and require no sustainment. There is no dedicated funding for additional buildings at this time.

Source: U.S. Army.

^aThe Army plans to have these structures at every Brigade Combat Team home station, at the Combat Training Centers, and at installations identified as Power Projection Platforms and Power Support Platforms as prioritized by the Army Campaign Plan and the Army Training and Doctrine Command.

Appendix II
Major Ongoing and Planned Urban
Operations Training Facility Enhancements

Marine Corps

Enhancement	Description
Shoot houses	The Marine Corps is installing shoot houses to provide Marines with training on tactics, techniques, and procedures involved with urban shooting. The shoot houses will be installed at Camp Lejeune, Camp Pendleton, and Quantico Marine Corps bases.
Convoy operations range	The live-fire convoy operations range is designed to simulate and provide live-fire convoy and counter-ambush training. The Marine Corps has installed a live-fire convoy range at Twenty-Nine Palms and Camp Lejeune Marine Corps bases.
Non-live-fire urban operations training facilities	The non-live-fire urban operations training facilities are designed to support maneuver training, basic urban skills training, and security and stability training for battalion-sized units and below. The Marine Corps plans to install live-fire urban operations training facilities at Twenty-Nine Palms and Camp Lejeune Marine Corps bases.
Live-fire urban operations training facility	The live-fire urban operations training facility is designed to provide live-fire and maneuver training for company-sized units and below. The Marine Corps plans to install a live-fire urban operations training facility, consisting of 15 - 30 buildings, at Camp Lejeune Marine Corps base.
Instrumentation	Adding capability at training sites to capture and record training events and to use the data for after action reviews, enabling the review of training events and the capture of lessons learned.
Additional buildings	Increasing the number of buildings at training sites to more realistically replicate the urban environment where density of buildings complicates military maneuver.

Source: U.S. Marine Corps.

Comments from the Department of Defense



PERSONNEL AND
READINESS

OFFICE OF THE UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
4000 DEFENSE PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301-4000

DEC 01 2005

Ms. Sharon L. Pickup
Director, Defense Capabilities and Management
U.S. Government Accountability Office
441 G Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20548

Dear Ms. Pickup:

This is the Department of Defense (DoD) response to the Government Accountability Office Draft Report, "MILITARY TRAINING: Funding Request for Joint Urban Operations Training and Facilities Should be Based on a Sound Strategy and Requirements," dated October 31, 2005 (GAO Code 350617/GAO-06-193).

The Department appreciates the opportunity to comment on this draft. We agree with GAO's first recommendation to complete the Joint Urban Operations study in order to identify Joint requirements for Urban Operations. Given Service Title 10 responsibilities, we non-concur with the GAO's recommendation to develop a centralized scheduling capability for Joint Urban Operations facilities. The Department's comments to the GAO draft recommendations are enclosed.

Sincerely,

Paul W. Mayberry
Deputy Under Secretary of Defense
(Readiness)

Enclosure:
As stated

GAO DRAFT REPORT - DATED OCTOBER 31, 2005
GAO CODE 350617/GAO-06-193

**“MILITARY TRAINING: Funding Request for Joint Urban Operations
Training and Facilities Should Be Based on a Sound Strategy and Requirements”**

**DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE COMMENTS
TO THE RECOMMENDATIONS**

RECOMMENDATION 1: The GAO recommended that the Secretary of Defense direct the Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff to direct Joint Forces Command to finalize development of the joint urban operations training strategy and related requirements including joint training tasks and standards, level and types of joint training exercises to be conducted, and facility needs. (Page 27/GAO Draft Report)

DOD RESPONSE: Concur with comment. Current efforts, when complete, should adequately address this recommendation and will include facility capacity and location, as well as training content, without further direction from the Secretary of Defense. GAO's report seems to blur the distinction between two separate DoD actions. The first is Joint Forces Command's Joint Urban Operations strategy, and the second is the Office of the Secretary of Defense's (OSD's) effort to establish evaluation criteria to apply to the Services Joint Urban Operations training facility military construction (MILCON) submissions.

RECOMMENDATION 2: The GAO recommended that the Secretary of Defense direct the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness to establish a mechanism for scheduling joint urban operations training at major training centers to facilitate increased multi-service participation in urban operations training. (Page 28/GAO Draft Report)

DOD RESPONSE: Non-concur. DoD remains strongly committed to a decentralized training ranges/facilities management solution in supporting Service Title 10 responsibilities. OSD is providing planning support, oversight and policy guidance to ensure all DoD training resources support service, cross-service and joint needs and goals. We are, however, committed to maximizing system integration, sharing of data, and facilitation of the Services' scheduling processes to better leverage all assets for the full benefit of military readiness.

GAO Contact and Staff Acknowledgments

Contact

Sharon Pickup (202) 512-9619

Acknowledgments

In addition to the person named above, Laura Durland, Assistant Director, John Beauchamp, Jonathan Clark, Gina Ruidera, Susan Tindall, Cheryl A. Weissman, and Tracy Whitaker made key contributions to this report.

Related GAO Products

Military Training: Some Improvements Have Been Made in DOD's Annual Training Range Reporting but It Still Fails to Fully Address Congressional Requirements. [GAO-06-29R](#). Washington, D.C.: October 25, 2005.

Military Training: Actions Needed to Enhance DOD's Program to Transform Joint Training. [GAO-05-548](#). Washington, D.C.: June 21, 2005.

Defense Infrastructure: Issues Need to Be Addressed in Managing and Funding Base Operations and Facilities Support. [GAO-05-556](#). Washington, D.C.: June 15, 2005.

Military Training: Better Planning and Funding Priority Needed to Improve Conditions of Military Training Ranges. [GAO-05-534](#). Washington, D.C.: June 10, 2005.

Chemical and Biological Defense: Army and Marine Corps Need to Establish Minimum Training Tasks and Improve Reporting for Combat Training Centers. [GAO-05-8](#). Washington, D.C.: January 28, 2005.

Military Transformation: Clear Leadership, Accountability, and Management Tools Are Needed to Enhance DOD's Efforts to Transform Military Capabilities. [GAO-05-70](#). Washington, D.C.: December 17, 2004.

Combating Terrorism: DOD Efforts to Improve Installation Preparedness Can Be Enhanced with Clarified Responsibilities and Comprehensive Planning. [GAO-04-855](#). Washington, D.C.: August 12, 2004.

Military Training: DOD Report on Training Ranges Does Not Fully Address Congressional Reporting Requirements. [GAO-04-608](#). Washington, D.C.: June 4, 2004.

Military Training: DOD Lacks a Comprehensive Plan to Manage Encroachment on Training Ranges. [GAO-02-614](#). Washington, D.C.: June 11, 2002.

Military Capabilities: Focused Attention Needed to Prepare U.S. Forces for Combat in Urban Areas. [GAO/NSIAD-00-63NI](#). Washington, D.C.: February 25, 2000.

Related GAO Products

Military Training: Potential to Use Lessons Learned to Avoid Past Mistakes is Largely Untapped. [GAO/NSIAD-95-152](#). Washington, D.C.: August 9, 1995.

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