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Report to the Chairman, Subcommittee on Readiness and Management Support, Committee on Armed Services, U.S. Senate

July 2000

CONTINGENCY OPERATIONS

Providing Critical Capabilities Poses Challenges

GAO

Accountability * Integrity * Reliability

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Contents

Abbreviations

AWACS	Airborne Warning and Control System
DOD	Department of Defense

GAO
Accountability * Integrity * Reliability

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National Security and
International Affairs Division

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The Honorable James Inhofe
Chairman, Subcommittee on Military
Readiness and Management Support
Committee on Armed Services
United States Senate

Dear Mr. Chairman:

Since the end of the Persian Gulf War in 1991, U.S. Armed Forces have been involved in more than 50 contingency operations abroad.[1] The two major operations currently under way are in the Balkans and in Southwest Asia. In the Balkans, U.S. forces are in their 5th year of peace enforcement in Bosnia and in their 2nd year of a long-term peace enforcement effort in Kosovo. In Southwest Asia, U.S. forces are in their 9th year of no-fly zone enforcement and related activities involving Iraq. Although the services have been able to provide the forces and assets necessary for contingency operations, some unique capabilities have been in high demand. To fulfill these missions, military personnel deploy on a rotational basis from their assigned home station. This has resulted in some personnel exceeding the services' deployment goals for the maximum number of days an individual should deploy in a 1-year period. Long deployments can adversely affect morale and retention.

Because of your concerns about the services' ability to continuously meet these operational needs, as agreed with your office, we examined six military assets that have been heavily used in contingency operations in a series of case studies. Each case study (1) describes the reasons the services are having difficulty in meeting requirements for contingency operations and staying within deployment goals and (2) assesses ongoing efforts to relieve these difficulties. We selected the case studies to provide a cross section of the military services and different types of assets. The

[1] The term contingency operations in this report refers to peacekeeping and peace enforcement operations such as those in Bosnia and Kosovo and all other operations other than war, including those enforcing the no-fly zones over Iraq.

assets we selected were (1) Army divisions;[2] (2) Army civil affairs units;[3] (3) EA-6B aircraft, which are used to suppress enemy air defenses and have the only available U.S. military capability to electronically jam enemy antiaircraft radar; (4) Airborne Warning and Control System (AWACS) aircraft, which provide airspace surveillance and battlefield management of all aircraft flying in an assigned area; (5) U-2 aircraft, which gather intelligence and provide surveillance; and (6) specialized F-16 aircraft, the CJ model, which are used to suppress enemy air defenses primarily by targeting air defense radar with sophisticated missiles. Except for Army divisions, these forces and assets exist in small numbers and comprise a small portion of overall U.S. military forces. Appendix I describes our scope and methodology in examining these assets and forces.

Results in Brief

The military assets we examined in the case studies continue to be in high demand relative to their numbers. This has resulted in deployments in excess of deployment goals. To ease the strain on these assets, the Department of Defense (DOD) and the military services are taking a number of actions, which are described below along with our assessment of them.

- Four of the Army's 10 active divisions and 1 of its 8 National Guard divisions were being affected by operations in the Balkans as of January 2000. The Army has begun to use National Guard divisions to relieve the strain on active divisions and allow them to focus on their primary mission of being prepared for major war. However, preparing the first Guard division that deployed to Bosnia required considerable effort, including the conversion of substantial numbers of Guard personnel to full-time status; extensive assistance from the active-duty Army; the borrowing of personnel from other National Guard divisions; and extra funding obtained from the National Guard Bureau, the Texas National Guard, and the Army. In addition to deploying other Guard units to Bosnia, the Army is considering the possibility of using Guard divisions in Kosovo beginning in mid-2001, but no decision had been made as of

[2] A division is a major Army war-fighting organizational unit. The Army has 10 active-duty divisions and 8 National Guard divisions (an Army division comprises about 10,000-15,000 soldiers).

[3] Civil affairs forces interact with civilians and provide the infrastructure needed to bring government services to the civilian population. The Army has 1 active-duty civil affairs unit with 208 personnel, and the U.S. Army Reserve has 36 units totaling about 4,900 personnel.

May 2000. The extent of preparations needed to prepare the Guard division now in Bosnia suggests that this will not be easy.

- The Army does not have enough active-duty civil affairs capability to meet current requirements with its one 208-person active-duty unit, and until recently, there were concerns about having enough reserve civil affairs personnel to meet requirements in the Balkans. However, smaller and more flexible force requirements in the Balkans, coupled with Army plans to increase its supply of civil affairs personnel, should ease the strain on these forces by fiscal year 2003.
- The Navy and the Marine Corps each have four land-based EA-6B squadrons; however, these squadrons together are unable to meet all requirements without exceeding their deployment goal of having twice as much time at home station as the amount of time deployed. Plans to create an additional squadron from existing aircraft by fiscal year 2003 will help reduce the time crews must be deployed. Some additional requirements for EA-6B squadrons could be filled if the Navy relaxed its policy of limiting the use of carrier-based EA-6B squadrons whose carriers are undergoing extended maintenance.
- The Air Force could meet current requirements for AWACS aircraft and crews without exceeding its 120-day annual deployment goal if all 40 of its staffed crews were fully trained and available for worldwide deployments. However, only 27 of its 40 crews are fully trained, and increasing this supply is problematic because of inadequate simulator training capabilities; a reduction in high-quality training events; and the loss of experienced crewmembers due to voluntary separation incentives and reductions in force in recent years. Moreover, six of the fully trained AWACS crews are based in the Pacific and, except for one instance in 1999, have been unavailable for worldwide deployments because the regional theater commander requires that they remain in the region in case of emergencies on the Korean peninsula. However, the Air Force could meet worldwide requirements for AWACS better if it used its Pacific-based crews selectively to augment the forces currently stressed in meeting worldwide missions outside the Pacific theater.
- The Air Force has only 40 of its 54 authorized U-2 pilots fully trained. This shortage of fully trained pilots has led to historically high deployment rates. The Air Force has relaxed certain requirements to attract and keep its U-2 pilots; however, challenges remain and continued careful management of the use of these aircraft will be needed.
- F-16CJ squadrons, particularly those stationed in the United States, have been one of the most utilized fighter squadrons for the past few years. The Air Force has nine active-duty F-16CJ squadrons and plans to field a

10th active squadron in fiscal year 2007 to keep deployments within its goal of 120 days in 1 year. In the interim, the Air Force has modified two squadrons of older, less capable aircraft and plans to augment current forces with a reserve component squadron. However, due to its part-time nature, this latter unit will be able to cover only about 30 days of the rotation.

We are recommending that the Army assess its experiences in readying the 49th National Guard Division for its current deployment to Bosnia before making a decision on using Guard divisions in Kosovo; that the Navy examine the feasibility of meeting land-based requirements by expanding the use of carrier-based EA-6B squadrons whose carriers are undergoing extended maintenance; and that DOD further examine employing Pacific-based AWACS crews in worldwide deployments.

In written comments on a draft of this report, DOD stated that on balance, our report was a fair and accurate assessment of critical military capabilities that will continue to demand close management. DOD generally agreed with our recommendations concerning the use of Guard divisions in Kosovo and the use of Pacific-based AWACS crews in worldwide deployments. DOD did not agree with our recommendation concerning the use of EA-6B squadrons to meet land-based requirements, stating that using carrier-based squadrons routinely to supplement land-based squadrons would adversely affect the Navy's capacity to surge the carrier squadrons in response to unanticipated contingencies. A more detailed discussion on its comments and our evaluation is contained in the body of this report.

Background

The United States has been providing forces to Bosnia since 1995 and to Kosovo since 1999. The Army provides almost all U.S. ground forces deployed in the Balkans. As of May 2000, the United States had about 4,300 military personnel in Bosnia and 5,500 in Kosovo. Although the Army's divisions each have over 10,000 troops that could theoretically be used to

meet these requirements, not all divisions are available for these missions.[4] Moreover, although the number of troops deployed may appear small in relationship to the divisions' size, their readiness to deploy for their wartime mission is disrupted by even these small deployments. In addition, we reported in May 1999 that participation in the Bosnia operation adversely affected the combat capability of units deployed there.[5] For example, soldiers deployed in contingency operations do more guard and policing actions than tasks associated with operating their M-1 tanks and Bradley Fighting Vehicles.

The major contingencies that the Air Force and, to a lesser extent, the Navy are supporting are enforcing the no-fly zones over Iraq and providing air support over the Balkans. Some key aircraft used in these operations include the EA-6B, AWACS, U-2, and F-16CJ. The Navy and the Marine Corps each have four land-based EA-6B squadrons, each with either four or five aircraft, and the Navy has a reserve squadron. The Air Force has 40 full 25-member AWACS crews, but only 27 crews were fully trained in January 2000. Trained pilots are the limiting factor with respect to the U-2. The aircraft has only one crew member: the pilot. As of January 2000, the Air Force had 44 of 54 authorized U-2 pilots, 40 of whom were fully trained. The Air Force has 9 active-duty F-16CJ squadrons, each with either 18 or 24 aircraft and 1 National Guard squadron with 15 aircraft.

We have previously reported that in some instances, there is a higher demand for some military capabilities during peacetime than the military services can meet without degrading readiness, losing training opportunities, and reducing the quality of life for personnel in the affected units. Some of these assets are managed under the Global Military Force Policy that the Joint Staff established in July 1996. This peacetime prioritization process allocates these capabilities among theater war-fighting commanders for use in crises, contingencies, and long-term joint task force operations. The military services identify assets to be included under the policy and determine the rate that these assets can be

[4] As of April 2000, the Army had not used the two divisions based in the Pacific region to support contingencies outside of their region because of the divisions' strategic importance. One division, based in Hawaii, is assigned to the Pacific region and for this report is not considered as U.S.-based. The two U.S.-based divisions whose usage is currently not planned for the Balkans include one that is held in strategic reserve and one that is undergoing modernization, which makes it currently undesirable for deployments.

[5] *Military Operations: Impact of Operations Other Than War on the Services Varies* (GAO/NSIAD-99-69, May 24, 1999).

deployed without adversely affecting readiness and quality of life. The policy's goal is to ensure that, while meeting the theater commanders' requirements, these service-specified assets are maintained at the highest possible level of readiness and are available to respond to crises.

The Joint Staff administers the policy, coordinating with the war-fighting commanders and services to (1) determine mission priorities, (2) establish or validate the capabilities' requirements, (3) assess their availability, and (4) develop allocation options for the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Secretary of Defense. Following the Kosovo air campaign, the Joint Staff determined that 10 of the 32 assets managed under the policy were exceeding service usage level recommendations. Appendix II contains the 10 assets on this list. Four of our case studies—the Army civil affairs units and the EA-6B, AWACS, and U-2 aircraft—were chosen from this list. We chose the other two case study assets—Army divisions and F16CJ aircraft—on the basis of their frequent deployments in support of ongoing contingency operations.

Balkan Operations Are Significantly Affecting Army Divisions

Because so many of the Army's active divisions are being affected by their participation in the contingency operations in Bosnia and Kosovo, the Army has turned to its National Guard divisions to shoulder some of the deployment burden. While this action will ease the frequency with which active divisions will be called upon, it is likely to pose substantial challenges to the National Guard's divisions.

Multiple Army Divisions Are Affected by Current Operations

Concerns about the Army's preparedness for war are based on the fact that so many active divisions required in the Army's war plans are affected by the current number and size of contingency operations. Units not only spend time deployed in operations but must also spend time preparing for their deployment, as well as "recovering" after the deployment by retraining to regain certain war-fighting skills (such as gunnery) and performing maintenance to bring equipment up to standards. We previously reported that depending on the type of unit, the recovery period could last from 4 months to more than 1 year. Because parts of two divisions are being deployed at any one time[6] (one to Bosnia and the other to Kosovo), parts of six of the Army's divisions could be affected simultaneously by

[6] Deployments include command staff personnel and a brigade-size combat unit. Active division participation varies, but close to 3,000 division personnel are usually deployed at one time.

operations in the Balkans: two deployed, two preparing to deploy, and two recovering from their deployments.

In January 2000, for example, four active divisions and one Guard division were affected by these operations. Among the active divisions, the 1st Cavalry Division was recovering from a 1-year deployment in Bosnia, the 10th Mountain Division was deployed there, and elements of the Guard's 49th Armored Division were preparing to deploy there. At the same time, the European-based 1st Infantry Division was deployed to Kosovo, and the 1st Armored Division was preparing to deploy there.[7] Although none of these divisions deployed in its entirety, deployment of key components—especially headquarters—makes these divisions unavailable for deployment elsewhere in case of a major war without a significant infusion of personnel and equipment.

The Army's Chief of Staff testified in February 2000 that although the Army's active divisions were ready for war, continuing to use them for peacekeeping operations will increase the risk and raise the price of meeting U.S. major theater war goals. Our analysis of 1999 readiness data from the Army division that deployed forces to Kosovo determined that the number of times that units reported high readiness levels during the second 6 months of the deployment declined 15 percentage points from the previous 6 months of the deployment. In May 1999, we reported that the readiness of divisions participating in contingency operations was being adversely affected. Our analysis showed that in fiscal years 1995-98, the period when European-based divisions were initially deployed to Bosnia, European-based division units reported high readiness levels 87 percent of the time in fiscal year 1995, but only 72 percent of the time in fiscal year 1998.[8] During that same period, division units outside of Europe that were not being used in these contingency operations were experiencing increases in the number of times they reported high readiness rates—from 80 percent in 1995 to 91 percent in 1998.

[7] Because the 1st Infantry Division was the first division deployed to the peacekeeping operation in Kosovo, there was no recovering division.

[8] This analysis was from DOD's Global Status of Resources and Training System, which is one measure DOD uses in assessing unit readiness. We considered units that reported C-1 or C-2 levels as having a high readiness level because they are considered able to undertake most or all of their wartime missions.

Using National Guard Divisions Will Reduce Frequency of Active-Duty Deployments but Will Also Pose Challenges

In an attempt to reduce the time active divisions spend in contingency operations, the Army has scheduled three of its eight National Guard divisions to provide the headquarters and other forces, such as signal and intelligence troops, for the Bosnia rotation between March 2000 and April 2003. Guard and active units will generally alternate in 6-month rotations in which they will command both active-duty and National Guard troops. Using these three National Guard divisions will almost double the supply of available divisions for Balkan operations and should relieve U.S.-based active divisions of a total of 18 months of Bosnia deployments between March 2000 and April 2003. Appendix III shows the schedule for these deployments. The Army also plans to use combat units from the National Guard enhanced brigades in the Balkans beginning in October 2000.

The Army is also considering using National Guard divisions to provide forces for the Kosovo mission after mid-2001 to ease the burden on the Army's European-based divisions.[9] However, the extent of preparations needed to ready the first deploying unit—the Texas National Guard's 49th Armored Division, which is currently in Bosnia—suggests that this will not be easy. For example, in our ongoing related work on the integration of Army active and reserve forces, Army officials stated that the 49th Armored Division needed 108 training days over an 18-month period to prepare for its deployment. Preparations included conversion of substantial numbers of Guard personnel to full-time status; extensive training assistance from its active-duty partner division (the 1st Cavalry Division at Fort Hood, Texas); borrowing of personnel from other National Guard divisions; loans of specialized equipment from other active-duty units; and extra funding from the National Guard Bureau, the Texas National Guard, and the Army. The same intensive preparation is expected to prepare subsequent National Guard divisions for deployment.

It is difficult to say whether using additional Guard divisions in Kosovo is viable. As was the case with the 49th Armored Division, other National Guard divisions have lower priority status for personnel and equipment than their active-duty counterparts. National Guard personnel and equipment levels and types also differ from those of their active counterparts. For example, the 49th Armored Division, like other National Guard divisions, did not have staff for some military intelligence occupational specialties positions that were needed for the mission and

[9] Army plans as of April 2000 do not identify which divisions will deploy to Kosovo after June 2001—that decision is pending.

had to borrow these personnel from other active and reserve units. Also, because the division did not have some specific equipment, such as intelligence workstations and communications equipment, it had to borrow these from the active Army. Moreover, since reserve personnel can only be used for up to 270 days for an operational mission, succeeding units may have difficulty borrowing such personnel with the necessary skills because the pool of eligible personnel will diminish as reserve personnel complete rotations and meet the 270-day limit.[10]

Reduced Requirements and Army Actions Should Ease the Strain on Army Civil Affairs Personnel

The Army does not have enough active-duty civil affairs capability to meet current requirements. (Civil affairs forces interact with civilians and provide the infrastructure needed to bring government services to the civilian population.) However, with the planned increase in the size of the Army's only active civil affairs unit,[11] there should be enough active civil affairs capability to meet the need for early deploying forces. Reduced personnel requirements for operations in the Balkans should relieve the burden on reserve civil affairs personnel, who have been responsible for sustaining operations over the long term.

Army Is Increasing the Size of Its Sole Active Civil Affairs Unit

Active-duty units are used to meet initial civil affairs requirements in new operations because it can take a month or more to mobilize and train reserve units. Nearly all theater commanders believe that they do not have enough active civil affairs forces to meet contingency requirements. A single active component unit of 208 people is currently meeting these needs. In a recently completed study of its civil affairs forces, the U.S. Special Operations Command, which is responsible for employing such forces, determined that it needs 48 teams, or 18 more than it currently can create with existing forces. As a result of this study, the Army has decided to increase the active civil affairs unit by 84 people, primarily to create the 18 teams. U.S. Special Operations Command officials stated that the increase is scheduled for fiscal year 2003 and that the Army has committed

[10] 10 U.S.C. □12304.

[11] The Army's sole active civil affairs unit provides an immediate response capability at the onset of a contingency or crisis. Its personnel have deployed frequently--an average of 138 days a year. About 97 percent of the Army's civil affairs personnel are in the reserves; however, their role has been limited to sustaining operations because the time needed to mobilize these forces precludes their immediate use in contingency operations. The reserves have been the predominant source of civil affairs personnel in the Balkans.

to provide at least $4.4 million per year in funding for these additional personnel. Army officials project that these additional personnel will be reallocated from other parts of the Army, although the specific units from which these personnel will be drawn have not been identified. The action that the Army is taking to increase civil affairs personnel, when completed, should reduce the impact of deployments on the active battalion.

Reserves Are Meeting Sustainment Needs

Reserve civil affairs units have been used heavily in the Balkans, but U.S. Special Operations Command officials believe that they have enough reserve civil affairs forces to meet current mission requirements. Although Command officials were initially concerned about having enough reserve civil affairs personnel to meet requirements in the Balkans, the numbers required were reduced from 468 in the early Bosnia deployments to 133 for both Bosnia and Kosovo as of April 2000. Also, as the requirements have become more flexible in terms of rank and skills needed, the Army should be able to provide enough reserve civil affairs personnel to meet the reduced requirements.

Theater Commanders' Peacetime Requirements Exceed EA-6B Assets

The Navy and the Marine Corps combined do not have enough land-based EA-6B squadrons, which are used to suppress enemy air defenses and electronically jam enemy antiaircraft radar, to cover all contingency operations, and the Navy has chosen to use its carrier-based EA-6B aircraft for these operations only by exception for various reasons. As a result, some squadrons from the Navy and the Marine Corps have been exceeding their goals for the maximum number of days personnel should be deployed each year. Plans to create an additional squadron from existing aircraft and recruit the associated crews will help reduce the time crews must be deployed to contingency operations, but this squadron will not be in place until 2003. Even after the additional squadron is in place, the number of squadrons will be insufficient to provide aircraft to all required sites without exceeding deployment goals.

EA-6B Squadrons Have Been Deployed Repeatedly

EA-6Bs have been used in support of operations over northern and southern Iraq since the early 1990s as well as at other locations. The Navy and the Marine Corps each have four land-based squadrons; however, these squadrons together are not enough to cover all peacetime requirements without exceeding the Navy and the Marine Corps' goals on the maximum number of days personnel should be deployed each year. The deployment

goal is to have twice the time at home station as time deployed. For example, based on current land-based deployments, which are typically 90 days for Navy squadrons, the goal is to have 180 days at home station after a 90-day deployment. According to a DOD readiness report, in the 1-year period ending November 1999, about 25 percent of land-based squadrons—or two of the eight squadrons—exceeded this goal. In contrast, a January 2000 DOD report stated that less than 2 percent of all Navy deployable units exceeded this goal in fiscal year 1999.

Planned Actions Will Not Completely Eliminate Stress on EA-6B Squadrons

To increase the supply of available land-based EA-6B aircraft squadrons, the Navy will create an additional land-based squadron from existing aircraft and plans to have it operational in 2003. This additional squadron will allow more operational sites to be covered within deployment goals. However, even after creating the ninth squadron, the Navy/Marine Corps still will not have enough squadrons to provide coverage to all operational sites while remaining within deployment goals. (The specific number of sites and the number of squadrons when associated with the number of sites are classified.)

The Joint Staff also limited the number of sites to which land-based EA-6B squadrons would deploy between December 1999 and December 2000.[12] To mitigate the risk of not having EA-6Bs at some sites where commanders have requested aircraft, the Joint Staff has temporarily placed some squadrons in an on-call status.[13] These squadrons conduct their normal home station training but must be prepared to go to a designated operational site within several days. While there are some acknowledged risks associated with not having the aircraft on-site, DOD believes accepting these risks is prudent when balanced against the negative effects that further deployments would cause on personnel and equipment. Through April 2000, no squadrons had to deploy while on call.

For the longer term, DOD is considering a replacement aircraft for the EA-6B. On the basis of a congressional directive, the services will begin analyzing the alternatives for a suitable replacement. The study is expected

[12] The number of sites covered are reviewed on an annual basis or as warranted by world events.

[13] The specific sites that are covered by on-call assets are classified.

to take about 2 years, and according to a DOD report, any new aircraft will not likely be available before 2010.

Limited Use of Carrier-Based Aircraft Might Help Ease Burden

The heavy use of EA-6B squadrons is not likely to subside unless the current level of contingency operations subsides. However, the Navy could reduce the burden slightly if it were to change its policy with respect to the use of carrier-based aircraft for land missions.

Although the Navy has 10 carrier-based EA-6B squadrons in addition to the land-based squadrons, it has been willing to use them to supplement land-based squadrons only by exception. For example, two carrier-based and one reserve squadron have been used to reduce deployment levels of land-based squadrons for deployments expected to last less than the usual 90 days. One squadron was used for this purpose in 1998, another in 1999, and a third (a naval reserve squadron) in 2000.[14] Navy officials told us that in the future, they would rather try to limit the use of the EA-6Bs to stay within deployment goals rather than permit carrier-based aircraft to share the burden. They said that using carrier-based squadrons to cover full 90-day land-based missions would detract from carrier training and undermine the effectiveness and integrity of the entire carrier air wing. Nevertheless, the Navy has approved the use of a carrier-based squadron to cover one such mission in the summer of 2000. Squadron officials from this unit said that they supported this deployment because it will ensure a higher priority for resources and keep the squadron at a higher readiness level, since the squadron would not deploy for 24 months—almost twice the normal period between deployments—because its carrier is to be undergoing extended maintenance. Moreover, squadron officials believe the squadron will still have sufficient time to retrain for its carrier mission.

[14] The Navy does not count deployment periods of less than 56 days as deployments. Therefore, these deployments are not counted when assessing unit deployment goals. However, one squadron deployment lasted 70 days to facilitate recovery from the Kosovo air campaign. The reserve squadron participated for 45 days.

Shortage of Trained Crews Affects Ability to Meet Theater Commanders' AWACS Requirements

The Air Force could meet current needs for AWACS aircraft and crews in contingency operations and other peacetime missions such as drug interdiction without exceeding its 120-day annual deployment goal if all 40 of its staffed crews were fully trained and available for worldwide deployments.[15] AWACS aircraft provide airspace surveillance and battlefield management of all aircraft flying in an assigned area. For a variety of reasons, the Air Force currently has only 27 fully trained crews, and 6 of those crews are based in the Pacific and do not routinely deploy outside that region because the regional theater commander requires that they remain in the region and be available in case of emergencies on the Korean peninsula. This places the burden of worldwide deployments on the 21 fully trained crews outside the Pacific. There are many challenges to increasing the supply of trained crews. Without using crews based in the Pacific region, it will likely be difficult for the Air Force to meet deployment goals, even if it increases the number of fully trained crews.

Shortage of Fully Trained Crews Increases Time Away From Home

As a result of the shortfall of fully trained crews, some AWACS squadron personnel have consistently exceeded the Air Force's goal of no more than 120 total days away from home station during the previous year. According to Air Force officials, the high deployment rate—between 20 and 25 percent of all AWACS personnel typically exceeded the Air Force deployment goal for most of 1997-99—has contributed to retention problems in the AWACS community, in turn exacerbating the stress on the remaining AWACS crews.[16] As noted above, the Air Force has about half the trained crews it needs to provide coverage for contingency operations and other peacetime missions while remaining within its deployment goals. A number of factors have contributed to the other crews not being fully trained. These include inadequate simulator training capabilities; a reduction in high quality training events in exercises involving various types of aircraft operating together as well as aircraft that act as an opposing force; and the loss of experienced crewmembers due to voluntary separation incentives and reductions in force in recent years.

[15] An AWACS crew consists of 25 officer and enlisted personnel in different specialties. The number of trained crews fluctuates.

[16] The Air Force considers a system or job category stressed when greater than 20 percent of its population exceeds the 120-day per year threshold.

The Air Force is taking a number of steps to increase the number of trained AWACS crews available for contingencies and has sought to reduce usage of these assets. It has plans to increase the number of trainees in critical positions—airborne battle managers, air weapons officers, and pilots—and to bring new simulator capabilities online that should make simulator training more valuable. However, these plans will not produce immediate improvements. An air staff official told us that it takes about 18 months to produce an AWACS crew capable of operating independently, and the anticipated simulators will not be in place until about 2002. As is the case with EA-6B aircraft, the Joint Staff is limiting the frequency with which AWACS aircraft deploy. It has denied some theater commanders' requests for AWACS aircraft for missions the staff considered lower priority, but in early 2000, it approved an additional AWACS deployment to a classified location. The Joint Staff also allowed, on an exception basis, some Pacific-based AWACS crews to deploy to Southwest Asia for the first time in 1999. According to a Pacific Air Forces' AWACS official, the key factor in the use of Pacific-based AWACS aircraft and crews outside that theater is a long-standing reluctance on the part of the commander of Pacific forces to allow Pacific-based AWACS to deploy outside the theater because of a concern that they will not be available quickly in the event of a crisis on the Korean peninsula.

If the Air Force can overcome the challenges it faces in increasing the number of trained AWACS crews, it can reduce the strain on the AWACS community. Our analysis shows that if its 40 staffed crews were fully trained and available, the Air Force could meet theater commanders' routine requirements without exceeding its 120-day annual deployment goal. However, given the factors affecting crew training, we believe that it is too early to determine whether the Air Force will be successful in achieving the goal of training all of its crews. Furthermore, unless the Air Force is able to use the 6 crews based in the Pacific region for deployments elsewhere, we believe that it will be difficult to meet deployment goals even if it fully trains all of its 40 staffed crews.

Shortage of U-2 Pilots Presents Challenges in Meeting Theater Commanders' Needs

The high demand for U-2 pilots relative to the number of pilots has contributed to historically high deployment rates for its pilots—175 days on average in 1999. The U-2 is used to gather intelligence and provide surveillance. The Air Force faces unique challenges in attracting and keeping U-2 pilots and has relaxed certain requirements to deal with this problem. However, the Air Force acknowledges that it faces challenges in

overcoming historical pilot shortages, and continued careful management of the use of these aircraft will be needed.

Success of Air Force and Joint Staff Actions to Relieve Strain on U-2 Pilots Is Uncertain

U-2 pilots have had some of the highest deployment rates in the Air Force. Deployment rates for its pilots were 175 days on average in 1999 or about 50 percent higher than the Air Force's overall 120-day deployment goal. Moreover, between 32 and 69 percent of U-2 personnel exceeded the deployment goal in the periods we reviewed from 1997 through January 2000. Air Force officials attribute the high rates to too few trained pilots and to the high demand for these pilots. The Air Force had only 40 of its 54 authorized pilots fully trained as of January 2000. The shortage of trained pilots reflects a drop in applicants to fly the U-2 and higher than expected attrition. The shortage has been further exacerbated over the last few years by the need to use some pilots from the operational squadron as instructors. As a result, U-2 representatives told us that the burden of contingency deployments falls disproportionately on the trained crews in the operational squadron. Air Force officials believe that high deployment rates have contributed to retention problems. Our analysis of DOD's 1999 survey of active-duty members found that satisfaction with military life decreased markedly among those who reported being away from home more than 5 months during the past year. We also found that retention and satisfaction with military life are closely linked.[17]

As is the case with EA-6B and AWACS aircraft, the Joint Staff has reduced the number of U-2 crews that deploy for contingencies. In the case of the U-2 and other similar intelligence and reconnaissance assets, the Joint Staff has initiated an additional process to manage these assets. This process first identifies theater commanders' requirements, then prioritizes them according to importance to military operations, regional interests, existing coalitions and alliances, and the value of the intelligence to be gained. This process requires commanders to describe what needs to be done over what period rather than just specifying a specific asset. Theater commanders can still request a specific asset, but the Joint Staff may substitute a different asset if the latter is deemed to provide the needed capability or if the one requested is not available. Requirements are filled according to established priorities. Joint Staff officials stated that in the future, the lowest priority requests will not be met if filling them would exceed the usage limits

[17] *Military Personnel: Preliminary Results of DOD's 1999 Survey of Active Duty Members* (GAO/T-NSIAD-00-110, Mar. 8, 2000).

agreed upon by the services and the Joint Staff unless there is a compelling need. This process will allow the Joint Staff not only to limit the use of capabilities in high demand, but also to identify any unmet requirements and the level of risk associated with not meeting these requirements.

The Air Force has taken several steps to increase the number of U-2 pilots. For example, it has reduced the commitment period for U-2 pilots from 5 to 3 years because officials believe a shorter period will attract more candidates to the program. It also plans to increase the capacity of its pilot school. The Air Force expects to increase the number of pilots it can train from 14 to 24 a year—an increase of about 70 percent. The Air Force believes that if these initiatives are successful, and if U-2 use is constrained, the U-2 could reach its authorized pilot goal within 2 years.

The Air Force faces unique challenges in attracting and keeping U-2 pilots. It has not met its historical average for recruiting new candidates into the program in recent years and projects a net loss in pilots by the end of fiscal year 2000. Unlike other aircraft communities, qualified pilots are drawn from other aircraft such as B-52 bombers and C-130 transporters. These pilots volunteer to be trained to fly the U-2 for a specified period. Because of the high altitude at which the U-2 flies, U-2 pilots must pass extensive flight physicals to allow them to operate at altitudes that can exceed 70,000 feet. They are also required to wear full pressure suits much like those that astronauts wear, and the aircraft can be difficult to fly. Air Force officials said these conditions, along with high deployment rates, have contributed to a decline in the number of applicants. Moreover, the number of applicants accepted has declined in recent years below the 50-percent historical average because it is difficult to find pilots with the aptitude required to master the difficult handling characteristics of the U-2.

F-16 Suppression Squadron Needs for Ongoing Operations Are Being Met With Existing Aircraft

The deployment strain on the Air Force's specialized suppression aircraft—the F-16CJ—experienced between 1997 and 1999 should be reduced by using all F-16CJ capability throughout the Air Force. The F-16CJ is used to suppress enemy air defenses primarily by targeting air defense radars with sophisticated missiles. Plans call for fielding a 10th active squadron in fiscal year 2007. In the interim, the Air Force has added capability by modifying two squadrons of an earlier version F-16 and plans to supplement current forces with a reserve component squadron. However, due to its part-time nature this latter unit will be able to cover only about 30 days of the rotation.

Past Strain Has Been Eliminated

F-16CJ squadrons, particularly those stationed in the United States, have been among the most utilized fighter squadrons for the past few years. Between 15 and 20 percent of personnel assigned to these aircraft exceeded the Air Force's 120-day deployment goal between May 1997 and May 1999. In October 1999, the Air Force began using a new scheduling process for most of its forces. For F-16CJ squadrons, this means that squadrons based in the Pacific and Europe are now scheduled equally with U.S.-based squadrons and that the reserve component F-16CJ squadron will also be used. However, that squadron will only be able to cover about 30 days of the rotation due to its part-time nature. The Air Force also modified two squadrons of an earlier version F-16 to give them a limited capability to perform the suppression mission. The more equitable scheduling of all F-16CJ squadrons should eliminate the stress experienced in the past.

The Air Force believes that it needs an additional active F-16CJ squadron to reduce usage of existing active squadrons. There are currently nine active-duty F-16CJ squadrons. The Secretary of Defense reported in his 1999 Annual Report to the Congress that operating nine such squadrons to meet deployment commitments would have kept them above desired deployment levels. The Air Force plans to purchase 30 F-16CJ aircraft, most of which will be used to field a 10th active F-16CJ suppression squadron. The Air Force has budgeted $262 million for 10 aircraft in fiscal year 2000 and another $567 million has been budgeted for 20 additional aircraft in fiscal years 2003-05. If the funding is approved as requested, the Air Force plans to field the 10th active squadron in fiscal year 2007.

Conclusions

DOD's planned actions to address the stress on the six assets we examined should reduce the level of stress being placed on these critical assets, but many of these actions will not be completed for at least 2 to 7 years. There are also additional actions DOD could take to further reduce the stresses.

The Army's move to integrate National Guard divisions into the Bosnia rotation is a bold step that should positively affect the readiness of active divisions by allowing them to spend more time training for their wartime mission. However, using the National Guard divisions could also create some stress on them and will pose challenges for the Army. Until the experiences in preparing the 49th Armored Division for its rotation are assessed, and it is clearer as to how the substantial support provided to the

49th can also be provided to another Guard unit, it may be premature to decide to use Guard forces to cover both the Bosnia and Kosovo rotations.

Despite plans to add an additional land-based EA-6B squadron, meeting existing EA-6B requirements without exceeding deployment goals will require the continued use of some non-deployed squadrons in an on-call status. The Navy could fill more commanders' requests for EA-6B units if it were to relax its policy against the use of non-deployed carrier-based EA-6B aircraft for land-based missions. Using carrier-based squadrons whose carriers are undergoing extended maintenance would appear to be feasible in selected instances. The Navy's current practice of allowing carrier-based squadrons to fill the need for shorter-term land-based deployments has also proven to be a workable solution. The Navy would need to carefully weigh the risks associated with using carrier-based aircraft for land missions and the impact that this would have on the time affected personnel would have at home.

The Air Force cannot eliminate the strain on its AWACS crews until all crews are fully trained and can participate in worldwide deployments. In both the long term and the interim, this will require using the fully trained crews in the Pacific in scheduling worldwide deployments. These crews currently account for over one-fifth of all fully trained AWACS crews, and deploying them worldwide could have a noticeable impact on the level of AWACS deployments. There has, however, been a long-standing reluctance on the part of the commander of Pacific forces to allow Pacific-based AWACS to deploy outside the theater because of a concern that they will not be available quickly in the event of a crisis on the Korean peninsula. Any decision to expand the use of Pacific-based AWACS crews will require careful study of both the benefits of reducing the level of deployments on AWACS crews based outside the Pacific and the risks of having Pacific-based AWACS crews deployed outside the theater should a crisis occur in Korea.

Recommendations

To alleviate some of the strain on the military forces and assets used in contingency operations, we recommend that the Secretary of Defense direct the following:

- The Secretary of the Army to carefully scrutinize the actions taken to ready the 49th Armored Division to deploy to Bosnia before deciding whether to expand the use of National Guard forces to cover the mission in Kosovo. In making this assessment, the Secretary should

consider the transfer of specialized personnel, equipment, training, and other resources that were necessary and whether the same level of support can be provided to cover both the Bosnia and Kosovo missions.
- The Secretary of the Navy to reexamine the Navy's policy of limiting the use of non-deployed carrier-based EA-6B aircraft to less than 90-day land missions in contingencies. Specifically, the Navy should consider the feasibility of expanding the use of squadrons for full 90-day land missions when their associated carriers are undergoing extended maintenance.

We further recommend that the Secretary of Defense reexamine using AWACS crews from the Pacific to cover worldwide missions within the context of the Global Military Force Policy.

Agency Comments and Our Evaluation

In written comments on a draft of this report, DOD stated that on balance, the report is a fair and accurate assessment of critical military capabilities that continue to demand close attention and management by DOD.

DOD generally agreed with our recommendation to assess the experience of the 49th Armored Division in Bosnia before deciding whether to expand the use of these forces in Kosovo. It said that it intends to incorporate the lessons learned from the 49th Armored Division's rotation to Bosnia in assisting other Army National Guard units, as well as active units preparing to deploy to Bosnia. However, DOD disagreed that an assessment of the experience of the current National Guard unit in Bosnia should be used to determine whether and how other National Guard units deploy to Kosovo. We did not intend to imply that the performance of the 49th in Bosnia should be assessed to decide whether the Guard should participate in Kosovo. Rather, we are suggesting that the Army examine closely what actions had to be taken to prepare the 49th for the mission and whether it would be possible to provide the same level of support to two separate missions. We have clarified the language of our recommendation to make our intent clearer.

DOD disagreed with our recommendation that the Secretary of the Navy reassess the policy of not using non-deployed carrier-based EA-6B aircraft to supplement land-based aircraft for land missions whenever possible. It stated that if the Navy were to use carrier-based squadrons routinely to supplement a steady-state level of use of land-based squadrons, such action would reduce and possibly eliminate the surge capacity the carrier squadrons can provide to unanticipated contingencies. DOD also restated

our point that the Navy supplements land-based EA-6B squadrons with carrier-based squadrons when carrier schedules permit and routinely uses the reserve squadron. The intent of our recommendation is not that the Navy establish a fixed schedule for carrier-based squadrons to participate in land deployments but rather that the Navy consider whether it could expand the use of carrier-based squadrons for 90-day land deployments whenever possible—primarily when its carrier is scheduled for extended maintenance. Such use would not appear to disrupt surge capacity for contingencies, since the carrier could not be deployed while under maintenance. We have revised our conclusion and recommendation to clarify our intentions.

DOD partially agreed with our recommendation that the Secretary of Defense direct that AWACS crews from the Pacific be employed to cover some missions. DOD stated that the Secretary of Defense manages the regional allocation of AWACS aircraft and crews through the Global Military Force Policy and that as a matter of policy, it has the flexibility to shift Pacific-based AWACS crews to other regions. It further stated that although the impact of basing AWACS crews in the Pacific may warrant further study, it would seem prudent to continue making AWACS basing and allocation decisions within the construct of the Global Military Force Policy, leaving the Department the flexibility to shift Pacific-based AWACS crews to other regions as a matter of policy. Our report recognizes that the use of Pacific-based AWACS crews to meet ongoing contingency requirements must be made in the context of balancing needs in the Pacific with those outside that region. In particular, we recognize that any decision to expand the use of Pacific-based AWACS crews must balance the risks of having such crews deployed outside the theater should a crisis occur in Korea with the benefits of reducing the level of deployments on AWACS crews based outside the Pacific. We also report that Pacific-based crews have been used occasionally to support operations outside the region. However, in view of the heavy day-to-day use of AWACS crews based outside the Pacific region, absent a reduction in requirements that would ease the deployment burden on non-Pacific AWACS crews, a decision to exclude Pacific-based AWACS crews from deployments would result in crews outside the Pacific region continuing to exceed deployment goals. We have modified our recommendation to suggest that the Secretary of Defense reexamine the use of Pacific-based AWACS crews outside the Pacific region within the context of the Global Military Force Policy, in light of DOD's recognition in its comments that this subject may warrant further study.

Appendix IV contains the full text of DOD's comments.

As agreed with your office, unless you publicly announce the contents of this report earlier, we plan no further distribution of this report until 15 days after its issue date. At that time, we will send copies to the Honorable William S. Cohen, Secretary of Defense, and the Honorable Jacob Lew, Director, Office of Management and Budget. We will also make copies available to appropriate congressional committees and to other interested parties on request. If you or your staff have any questions about this report, please call me at (202) 512-5140. An alternate contact and major contributors to this report are listed in appendix V.

Sincerely yours,

Carol R Schuster

Carol R. Schuster
Associate Director
National Security Preparedness Issues

Scope and Methodology

To detail the difficulties faced by the Army, the Navy, and the Air Force in providing capabilities that are in limited supply in support of future contingency operations, we obtained briefings, reviewed documents, and interviewed personnel at Army, Navy, and Air Force locations, at the Office of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and at unified command headquarters within the United States and Europe. To gain the perspectives of Air Force officials on the use of Pacific-based Airborne Warning and Control System (AWACS) aircraft crews for worldwide deployments we discussed the benefits and risks of using those crews with Air Force Air Combat Command and Pacific Air Force AWACS officials. Our efforts were primarily focused on current operations in the Balkans and Southwest Asia.

To document the services' proposals to address problems with these capabilities, we reviewed and discussed studies produced by the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Air Force Studies and Analysis Agency, the U.S. Special Operations Command, and the National Guard Bureau. We also met with weapon systems representatives to discuss the initiatives already implemented and their expected impacts. Furthermore, we obtained the Army's plans to provide forces in the Balkans and Southwest Asia and discussed these plans with cognizant officials at Army Headquarters and various Army Commands and units in the United States and Europe.

To evaluate service and Department of Defense (DOD) proposals, we discussed completed and ongoing studies related to low-density/high-demand capabilities with the appropriate service and DOD offices; compared the projected impact of proposals with the actual past performance of the services in areas such as personnel staffing, recruitment and retention, and demand management of low-density/high-demand capabilities; and used service and DOD data to assess the improvement offered by different proposals. We analyzed the Army's plans to determine how the Army was meeting its deployment requirements in the Balkans and Southwest Asia and whether those plans adequately mitigated the impacts of peacekeeping operations.

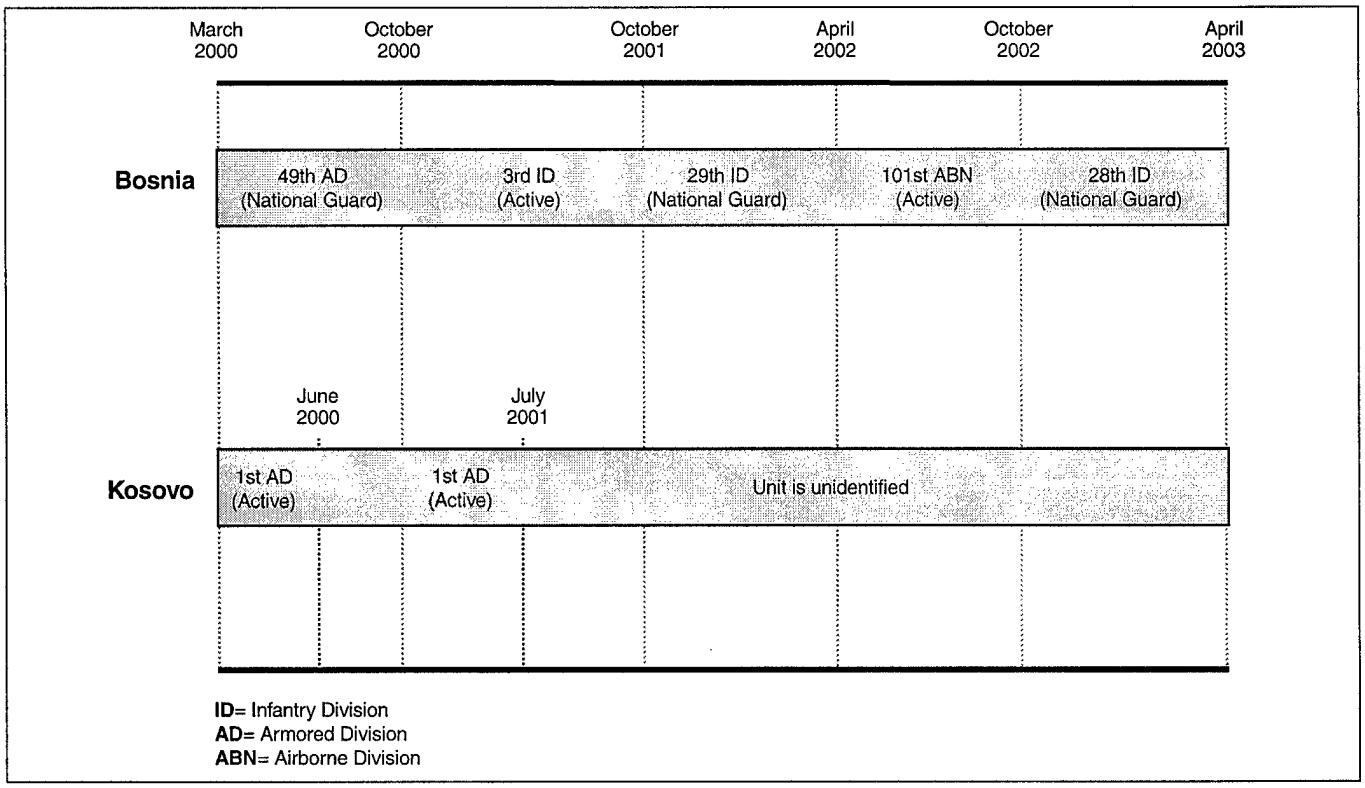
Assets Identified by the Joint Staff as Problem Areas

In the summer of 1999, the Joint Staff conducted a Joint War-fighting Capabilities study to determine which of the 32 assets being managed under the Global Military Force Policy were problematic. This review considered a number of factors, including recent usage levels, relative importance to theater commanders, and impacts of deployments on readiness. From this review, the following 10 assets were deemed problematic, and actions were taken to improve conditions. Six of the assets received fiscal year 1999 supplemental funds to improve their condition.

Table 1: Assets Identified by the Joint Staff as Problem Areas

U.S. Army	U.S. Navy	U.S. Air Force	Navy/Marine Corps
Civil Affairs	(classified)	Airborne Warning and Control System Airborne Command Control and Communications HC-130 (aerial refueling) HH-60 (search and rescue) Predator Unmanned Aerial Vehicle RC-135 (electronic intelligence) U-2 (intelligence and surveillance)	EA-6B (air defense suppression)

Deployment Schedules of Army Divisions to the Balkans



Comments From the Department of Defense

Note: GAO comments supplementing those in the report text appear at the end of this appendix.

ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
2900 DEFENSE PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, DC 20301-2900

STRATEGY AND
THREAT REDUCTION

JUN 21 2000

Ms. Carol R. Schuster
Associate Director
National Security Preparedness Issues
National Security and International Affairs Division
U.S. General Accounting Office
Washington, D.C. 20548

Dear Ms. Schuster:

This is the Department of Defense (DoD) response to the GAO draft report, "CONTINGENCY OPERATIONS: Providing Critical Capabilities Poses Challenges," dated May 22, 2000 (GAO Code 702005 OSD Case 2016). The Department has reviewed the subject draft and, on balance, judges it to be a fair and accurate assessment of critical military capabilities that continue to demand close attention and management by DoD. Accordingly, the Department has only two substantive comments on the central text of the report, the first of which pertains to the discussion of the wartime availability of Balkans-engaged Army divisions, and the other to the discussion of Army Civil Affairs personnel. In addition, attached to this letter, you will find the Department's responses to the report's three recommendations.

See comment 1.

The limiting factor for the availability of U.S. Army divisions engaged in the Balkans is time, rather than personnel or equipment. The Balkans-engaged Army divisions require *time* to refit, retrain and prepare for deployment to major theater war following disengagement from the Balkans. The actual length of this disengagement and reconstitution time would depend upon a number of factors, including the availability of strategic lift, the home station location (Europe or CONUS) of the engaged units, and the actual location of the division's "go to war" equipment. Still, for planning purposes, this time is never assumed to be more than 120 days for Active component units. To mitigate the impact of this factor, the Army substitutes like units (e.g., heavy division for heavy division) in its major theater war plans, moving Balkans-engaged forces to points later in the force flow, and non-engaged forces to points earlier in the force flow.

See comment 2.

The Department concurs with the report's treatment of the status of Active Component and Reserve Component civil affairs units; however, it is important to highlight differences between the two. Active Component civil affairs units and Reserve Component civil affairs units are configured differently, have different objectives, and are not interchangeable. Thus, the additional Active Component civil affairs teams discussed in the report are intended to address a long-standing shortfall in Active Component civil affairs capability to provide CINCs with a continuously available civil

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affairs capability. The additional Active Component civil affairs force structure supplements rather than replaces U.S. Army Reserve civil affairs capabilities.

The Active Component civil affairs battalion is tasked to be in the entering element of a contingency operation (although Army Reserve personnel often accompany it) and regularly operate with other special operations forces at a tactical level and in foreign internal defense and unconventional warfare environments. Reserve Component civil affairs is structured to provide sustainment forces for the duration of the operation and to operate with both conventional and other special operations forces and with civilian agencies. Although both Active and Reserve civil affairs are special operations forces, Active Component civil affairs has a number of special forces positions while Reserve Component civil affairs emphasizes sixteen professional specialties ranging from accountants to medical doctors.

In closing, DoD would like to thank the GAO for the opportunity to review and comment on this important report.

Sincerely,

Franklin C. Miller
Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for
Strategy and Threat Reduction

Attachment: As stated

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GAO DRAFT REPORT DATED MAY 22, 2000
(GAO CODE 70025) OSD CASE 2016

"CONTINGENCY OPERATIONS:
PROVIDING CRITICAL CAPABILITIES POSES CHALLENGES"

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE COMMENTS
TO THE GAO RECOMMENDATIONS

Now on pp. 20 to 21.

RECOMMENDATION 1: The GAO recommends that the Secretary of the Army assess the experiences of the 49th Armored Division's rotation to Bosnia before making a decision as to whether it will expand the use of these forces in Kosovo (p. 21/Draft Report)

DOD RESPONSE: Partially concur. The Department agrees that lessons learned during the different phases of deployment to and redeployment from contingency operations should be studied by units preparing to deploy to contingency operations. Thus, the Department intends to incorporate lessons learned from the 49th Armored Division's rotation to Bosnia in assisting other Army National Guard units as well as active units preparing to deploy to Bosnia. However, the Department would not agree that an assessment of the experience of the current National Guard unit in Bosnia should be used *to determine* whether and how other National Guard units deploy to Kosovo. Through the mission analysis process, the Army helps ensure that the training program a unit adopts prior to an operation prepares it for execution of that specific operation. While there are general lessons to be drawn from lessons learned analyses of units engaged in prior operations, units are not deployed based on the performance of other units in different contingencies.

Now on p. 21.

RECOMMENDATION 2: The GAO recommends that the Secretary of the Navy reassess the policy of not using non-deployed carrier-based EA-6B aircraft to supplement land-based aircraft for land missions in contingencies whenever possible. (p. 21/Draft Report)

DOD RESPONSE: Non-concur. The scheduling, deployment and operation of Department of the Navy EA-6B squadrons are governed by the Global Naval Force Presence Policy (GNFPP), the Global Military Force Policy (GMFP), and Service PERSTEMPO guidelines. GNFPP governs the deployment and operation of carrier battle groups, which include the Navy's 10 carrier-based EA-6B squadrons and one reserve EA-6B squadron. GMFP provides oversight of the scheduling and deployment of the eight Navy and Marine Corps expeditionary (land-based) EA-6B squadrons. The Navy's scheduling and deployment of EA-6Bs in execution of GNFPP and GMFP seeks to optimize support for competing CINC requirements. In fact, as a practical result of executing this policy, carrier-based EA-6B squadrons contribute significantly to meeting GMFP contingency response requirements in those cases when land-based EA-6B OPTEMPO exceeds steady-state requirements. (Steady-state OPTEMPO is defined as

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"the maximum level of peacetime operations that can be sustained indefinitely with no adverse impact on normal training or scheduled maintenance cycles"). This was illustrated in Operation NOBLE ANVIL in 1999 when carrier-based EA-6B squadrons were used extensively, surging their GMFP OPTEMPO to wartime levels. If the Navy routinely were to use carrier-based squadrons to supplement a steady-state level of use of land-based squadrons, it would reduce and possibly eliminate the available surge capacity. Nevertheless, the Navy supplements land-based EA-6Bs with carrier-based squadrons when carrier schedules permit. Finally, the Navy routinely (i.e., approximately every 18 months) augments the expeditionary (land) schedule with a 45-day deployment by the reserve EA-6B squadron.

Now on p. 21.

RECOMMENDATION 3: The GAO recommends that the Secretary of Defense direct employing AWACS crews from the Pacific to cover some missions. (p. 21/Draft Report)

DOD RESPONSE: Partially concur. The Secretary of Defense manages the regional allocation of AWACS and crews, as low density/high demand assets, through the Global Military Force Policy (GMFP). As a matter of policy, the Department has the flexibility to shift Pacific-assigned AWACS crews to other regions, and has done so in the past when events have dictated the need – without a mandate to do so. This flexibility is a positive dimension of the GMFP, which provides priorities for the allocation of low density/high demand assets, as well as alternatives when demand for these assets exceeds steady-state levels. While the impact of basing six AWACS crews in the Pacific may warrant continuing study, it would seem prudent to continue making AWACS basing and allocation decisions within the construct of the GMFP, leaving the Department the flexibility to shift Pacific-assigned AWACS to other regions as a matter of policy.

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The following are GAO's comments on DOD's letter dated June 21, 2000.

GAO's Comments

1. We recognize the importance of time to allow divisions engaged in the Balkans to refit, retrain, and prepare for deployment to major theater war following disengagement from the Balkans. Our point is that with the large number of Army divisions affected by operations in the Balkans at any one time—four active and one National Guard division in June 2000—this disruption to wartime training and availability was a key reason the Army chose to involve National Guard divisions in the rotations.

2. DOD concurs with the report's treatment of the status of active and reserve component units. Its comments provide further detail highlighting the differences between active and reserve civil affairs units.

GAO Contacts and Staff Acknowledgments

GAO Contacts

Steve Sternlieb (202) 512-4534

Acknowledgments

In addition to the name above, Rodell Anderson, Tony DeFrank, Leo Sullivan, and Frank Smith made key contributions to this report.

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