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Department of Defense Training for Operations with Interagency, Multinational, and Coalition Partners

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Army Staff Sgt. John Thomas, center, is surrounded by Afghan National Army trainers as he evaluates a target in Kandahar, Afghanistan, on January 23, 2008. (Courtesy of defenseimagery.mil, David M. Votroubek, photographer).

U.S. Navy sailors and Cameroon Naval Forces sailors unload medical supplies donated by Project Handclasp from amphibious dock landing ship USS Fort McHenry (LSD 43) to a landing craft for transport to Limbe Naval Base, Cameroon, on February 28, 2008. (Courtesy of defenseimagery.mil, Bryan A. Goyak, photographer).

Afghan men at a meeting with U.S. Army civil affairs team, on March 27, 2003. (AP Photo/Gurinder Osan).

A U.S. soldier monitors battlefield conditions at a joint U.S./Afghan military command center on June 21, 2007. (AP Photo/Musadeq Sadeq)

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Summary

This book provides suggestions for how the U.S. military can help prepare its personnel to work successfully with interagency (IA), multinational, and coalition partners. The nature of recent challenges and the types of missions the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) has undertaken highlight the need for DoD to consider ways to help the military prepare to work with other government agencies, international organizations, private and nongovernmental organizations, and foreign militaries. These challenges require DoD to combine military and nonmilitary means, such as intelligence, diplomacy, and humanitarian assistance, to advance U.S. national-security interests. Moreover, exhibiting cultural awareness and sensitivity vis-à-vis non-DoD partners is paramount to successful operational planning and execution. To build or bolster local governance, foster economic growth, and respond to natural disasters, the United States must use different types of tools, military and otherwise, simultaneously. It is no small task to synchronize these different tools so that they work in tandem, or at least do not conflict with one another.

There are a number of obstacles to increasing the effectiveness of integrated-operations training. These include a lack of qualified subject-matter experts, the inability or unwillingness of partner organizations to support integrated-operations training programs, and a tendency to focus on familiarization rather than in-depth understanding of non-DoD partners. While there are efforts under way to increase DoD integrated-operations preparation, which we detail in this book, many are hampered by budget constraints, limited staff, and uncertain

prospects for their future existence. The military as a collective also tends to resist integrated-operations preparation, because time spent on the subject detracts from time that could be spent on more-traditional warfighting training.

Another major obstacle is the sheer complexity of the problem. Several different types of organizations are responsible for training the U.S. military. Each service has its own preferences for how it trains its people. In addition, combatant commands (COCOMs) and the Joint Staff also sponsor training and exercises. To the uninitiated outsider, the military-training community is highly chaotic, as it includes individual and unit training, training for different specialties and grades, and familiarization, continuity, and mission-rehearsal (MRX) training. In a similar way, the IA and international partners with which DoD must work represent another chaotic realm in terms of the number and variety of organizations involved. Training to work with these partners, then, involves the intersection or, some might say, the collision, of two complex communities.

To assist in overcoming these obstacles and to improve U.S. military capability, this study was intended to help Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) planners think about integrated operations and help them to craft a strategy to ensure that the U.S. military is better prepared to operate with nonmilitary and foreign partners in the future.

A New Approach to Preparing for Integrated Operations

The RAND study team found that almost all of the requirements for integrated-operations training can be found in existing joint and service task lists. From these lists, we derive a list of integrated-operations tasks, rank the tasks in terms of importance and training contribution, and then survey the training program to determine gaps. We argue that current training programs aimed at headquarters (HQ) staffs need to be revamped to focus on high-priority tasks that are amenable to training.

Recommendations

This book recommends that the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense (OUSD) for Personnel and Readiness (P&R) pursue a comprehensive approach to integrated operations that includes understanding such operations' component tasks, training requirements, and personnel management. Specifically, it recommends that OUSD P&R (1) conduct a demand analysis to determine the full nature and scope of DoD's integrated-operations capability requirements. Such an analysis would help ascertain how many integrated operators of what grades and specialties the U.S. military needs. This is a necessary step to developing a long-term solution. In the interim, DoD should (2) formalize an integrated-operations task list to encourage discussion between COCOMs, the services, the Joint Staff, and others in the training community. (3) In terms of training, this book provides recommendations on where to increase or decrease emphasis in an effort to make the best use of scarce resources. It recommends that OUSD P&R (4) create and maintain a database of ongoing training, exercises, and professional military-education courses, develop measures of effectiveness to analyze tasks and their application over time, and seek to gain insights into training activities undertaken by key allies that might be transferable to the U.S. military. The lack of visibility into training programs places significant limits on OSD's ability to oversee training efforts. OSD requires better information on the method and content of ongoing training programs to craft an effective plan for the future. Finally, once OUSD P&R has determined the most successful approaches, it should (5) advocate for stable funding for innovative programs, some of which currently exist but face uncertain prospects.