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## Introduction

The need to train as we fight is fundamental to our armed forces. Ranges are some of the Department of Defense's (DoD's) most valued assets because they closely resemble the operational environments of assigned military missions around the globe. Installations are also critical for maintaining military readiness and mission effectiveness by serving as extensions of the ranges for support activities. As a result of their value to U.S. armed forces, ranges and installations must be available when and where needed, and have the capabilities necessary to support current and future military mission requirements. Creating and sustaining a network of ranges requires a management framework that effectively addresses mission requirements, environment and natural resource management, and local community interests.

DoD developed the Sustainable Ranges Initiative (SRI) to serve as a framework for addressing these fundamental issues. Strategic elements of this initiative include policy, programming, leadership and organization, legislation and regulation, outreach and engagement, an information enterprise, and comprehensive reporting to Congress. A key component of the SRI is this annual report to Congress.

The 2012 SRR updates DoD's prior annual reports and addresses:

- ▶ Military Service methodologies and approaches for determining current and future range requirements (Chapter 2)
- ▶ Military Service-specific mission-based assessments using standardized range capability attributes and encroachment factors (Chapter 3)
- ▶ Critical range-related issues identified by the Military Services (Chapter 3)

- ▶ Progress toward the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) and Military Service-based goals and key milestones for developing a sustainable range management program (Chapter 4)
- ▶ Approaches for reducing encroachment through partnerships with state and local governments, other federal agencies, and non-governmental organizations (Chapter 4)
- ▶ Current and planned funding associated with sustaining military ranges (Chapter 4)
- ▶ New program directions, priorities, and management initiatives (Chapter 5)

The 2012 SRR specifically:

- ▶ Limits discussion of test and evaluation (T&E) ranges to the aspects of their use in supporting training

- ▶ Addresses overarching issues that may impact DoD's training range capabilities (e.g., energy siting considerations and frequency spectrum limitations)
- ▶ Updates Military Service-specific information on progress towards existing and new goals and milestones
- ▶ Emphasizes "Military Service Special Interest" issues for each branch of the military and identifies critical ranges issues
- ▶ Responds to specific commentary offered by the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) on the 2011 SRR

## 1.1 Background

To properly prepare U.S. forces for mission success, DoD must train at ranges that have the types of natural conditions and operational contexts personnel and systems may encounter during their deployments. As such, sustaining a diverse set of range resources is critical to ensuring readiness and military effectiveness. Using realistic training ranges allows DoD to:

- ▶ Foster the development and maintenance of operational proficiency and mission readiness
- ▶ Enable increased force operational survivability and mission success
- ▶ Provide realistic environments needed for the development of tactical operational and strategic concepts, as well as tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTPs)
- ▶ Support the testing, evaluation, and improvement of system maneuverability, reliability, and effectiveness in the range environment outside of the laboratory or development facility

Increased operational tempo (op-tempo) and overseas deployments, specifically to support operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, have strained the ability of some existing range resources and infrastructures to continue supporting training at the required levels. Together with increasing constraints on range activities resulting from expanding urban and rural communities and their associated economic development, sustaining range health and readiness pose very real concerns for the Military Services.

In addition to training activities, some ranges also support tactics development and other similar activities. Other ranges principally support T&E activities related to system

development and validation. Sustaining ranges that are primarily focused on supporting T&E activities is critical to national security if the United States is to maintain its leadership role in defense activities. Importantly, capability requirements and encroachment impairments can be quite different, depending on whether the primary focus of the activity in question is training or testing based. For example, frequency spectrum conditions that may be acceptable for one community at a given range may not be sufficient for another.

To sustain these valuable assets, the SRI emphasizes a comprehensive approach to the management of all ranges. It provides visibility to senior leadership through the OIPT which is composed of senior leadership from the training, testing, and installations and environmental communities in OSD and the Military Services. The SRI advocates for policy and funding in support of range sustainability, and facilitates coordination between OSD and the Military Services. The SRI also provides a common framework for developing partnerships with other federal and state agencies, local governments, and non-governmental organizations, so these groups can work cooperatively on issues of mutual concern. Examples of this cooperation include the SERPPAS, the multi-partner efforts included in many REPI projects, and the Office of Economic Adjustment's Compatible Use Program.

DoD does not exclusively use DoD-managed areas to conduct training and testing/evaluation activities. It also utilizes land that is owned or managed by other federal agencies (e.g., Bureau of Land Management [BLM]), states, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and even some that is privately held. With the permission of other nations, DoD also utilizes various land, air, sea, and undersea spaces as well as international areas for training. DoD works collaboratively with these various stakeholders to create the conditions required to best sustain ranges, support mission activities, and ensure stakeholders' interests are met.

## 1.2 Legislative Requirements and GAO Comments to the 2011 Report to Congress on Sustainable Ranges

The 2012 SRR is an update to the 2011 report. The SRR is developed in response to Section 366 of the 2003 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA)<sup>1, 2</sup> in which Congress requires DoD to develop a comprehensive plan to address training constraints caused by limitations on the use of available military lands, marine areas, and airspace in the United States and overseas. Section 366 also requires DoD to

1 See Appendix A: National Defense Authorization Act Language for the full text of the cited sections.

2 Section 366 was enacted in the Bob Stump National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2003, Public Law 107-314. The terms "range" and "operational range" were given statutory definitions in the FY2004 NDAA. Consequently, the terms and coverage of Section 366 from FY2003 are not entirely consistent with the later enacted definitions. Because DoD interprets Congress' intent for Section 366 to encompass more than operational ranges (as defined in the law), and because it is DoD's objective to provide Congress with an accurate and definitive statement of our training requirements, this report does not apply statutorily defined terms of "range" or "operational range." While this report does use the term "range," it does so in the context of that term's usage in Section 366, which is clearly broader than provided for in the statutory definition in 10 United States Code (U.S.C) 101(e).

submit an annual progress report to Congress along with the President's budget through fiscal year (FY) 2013.

NDAA Section 366 requires GAO to provide Congress with an independent evaluation of DoD's annual report on sustainable ranges. In its assessment of the 2011 SRR, GAO acknowledged that:

- ▶ DoD meets the annual reporting requirement to describe progress made in implementing its sustainable ranges plan and on any additional actions taken, or to be taken, to address training constraints caused by limitations on the use of military lands, marine areas, and airspace
- ▶ DoD continues improving the Defense Readiness Reporting System (DRRS), and plans to have a fully functional range assessment model by June 2012

GAO made the following suggestions for DoD to further improve the fidelity of the SRR for 2012:

- ▶ To clearly measure year-to-year progress, and improve how the Military Service goals and milestones are tracked and reported by including a brief narrative to describe progress made for each action and milestone
- ▶ To improve clarity, require the Military Services to explain why projections for some funding categories are excluded (e.g., Army Compatible Use Buffer Program), and explain significant funding fluctuations from one year to the next

### 1.3 Linking the 2012 Report to Congress on Sustainable Ranges to Other Reporting Requirements

DoD notes that the *REPI Report to Congress*, required separately under Section 2822 of the FY2006 NDAA, describes funding, partnerships, and actions that protect habitat and ensure compatible land use around installations. The REPI report provides substantive information on how DoD has effectively employed the Congressional authority granted under Section 2684a of the FY2003 NDAA to enter into agreements with private organizations and state or local governments to limit incompatible development, and to preserve diminishing open space around military ranges and installations. As such, the REPI report compliments this report in addressing actions taken by DoD to mitigate encroachment on military installations and ranges that require, or may reasonably require, safety or operational buffer areas. The SRR and REPI report both respond to Congressional reporting requirements, but target different aspects of DoD's comprehensive efforts to fully capture mission requirements, current asset capability, and current and future risks to these capabilities from encroachment.

The focus of the SRR is on training. While the report also touches on T&E ranges, it does so only to the extent that these ranges support training activities and in the broader perspective of DoD's overall SRI. Beginning with the 2012

*Strategic Plan for T&E Resources*, the DoD test community began reporting biennially on the encroachment factors impacting research, development, test, and evaluation activities. This reporting is based on the assessment survey process developed for the training ranges in the SRR. However, it has been modified to fit the needs of the T&E community to ensure encroachment issues become a key consideration in the planning and maintaining of a robust T&E infrastructure throughout DoD.

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