



Highlights of [GAO-09-518](#), a report to the Subcommittee on Readiness and Management Support, Committee on Armed Services, U.S. Senate

Why GAO Did This Study

The Department of Defense (DOD) reports data about the operational readiness of its forces. In 1999, Congress directed DOD to create a comprehensive readiness system with timely, objective, and accurate data. In response, DOD started to develop the Defense Readiness Reporting System (DRRS). After 7 years, DOD has incrementally fielded some capabilities, and, through fiscal year 2008, reported obligating about \$96.5 million. GAO was asked to review the program including the extent that DOD has (1) effectively managed and overseen DRRS acquisition and deployment and (2) implemented features of DRRS consistent with legislative requirements and DOD guidance. GAO compared DRRS acquisition disciplines, such as requirements development, test management, and DRRS oversight activities, to DOD and related guidance, and reviewed the system's current and intended capabilities relative to legislative requirements and DOD guidance. We did not evaluate DOD's overall ability to assess force readiness or the extent that readiness data reflects capabilities, vulnerabilities, or performance issues.

What GAO Recommends

GAO is making recommendations to address the risks facing DOD in acquiring and developing DRRS and increase the chance of success. DOD agreed or partially agreed with three of our eight recommendations, and disagreed with the remaining five because it stated that it was already taking actions in these areas.

[View GAO-09-518](#) or [key components](#). For more information, contact Sharon Pickup at (202) 512-9619 or pickups@gao.gov, or Randolph C. Hite at (202) 512-3439 or hiter@gao.gov.

MILITARY READINESS

DOD Needs to Strengthen Management and Oversight of the Defense Readiness Reporting System

What GAO Found

DOD has not effectively managed and overseen the DRRS acquisition and deployment, in large part because of the absence of rigorous and disciplined acquisition management controls and an effective governance and accountability structure for the program. In particular, system requirements have not been effectively developed and managed. For example, user participation and input in the requirements development process was, until recently, limited, and requirements have been experiencing considerable change, are not yet stable, and have not been effectively controlled. In addition, system testing has not been adequately performed and managed. For example, test events for already acquired system increments, as well as currently deployed and operating increments, were not based on well-defined plans or structures, and test events have not been executed in accordance with plans or in a verifiable manner. Moreover, DRRS has not been guided by a reliable schedule of work to be performed and key activities to occur. These program management weaknesses can, in part, be attributed to long-standing limitations in program office staffing and program oversight and accountability. Despite being a DOD-wide program, until April, 2009 DRRS was not accountable to a DOD-wide oversight body, and it was not subject to DOD's established mechanisms and processes for overseeing business systems. Collectively, these acquisition management weaknesses have contributed to a program that has fallen well short of expectations, and is unlikely to meet future expectations.

DOD has implemented DRRS features that allow users to report certain mission capabilities that were not reported under the legacy system, but these features are not fully consistent with legislative requirements and DOD guidance; and DOD has not yet implemented other features. The geographic combatant commands are currently reporting their capabilities to execute most of their operations and major war plans in DRRS, and DOD is reporting this additional information to Congress. However, because DRRS does not yet fully interface with legacy systems to allow single reporting of readiness data, the military services have not consistently used DRRS's enhanced capability reporting features. For example, as of May 2009, the Army and Navy had developed interfaces for reporting in DRRS, while the Marine Corps required units to only report in their legacy system. Recently, the Marine Corps also began developing an interface and has done limited reporting in DRRS. In addition, DRRS has not fully addressed the challenges with metrics that led Congress to require a new readiness reporting system. DRRS metrics are less objective and precise, and no more timely than the legacy system metrics. Users have also noted that DRRS lacks some of the current and historical data and connectivity with DOD's planning systems necessary to manage and deploy forces. Until these limitations are fully addressed, DRRS will not have the full complement of features necessary to meet legislative and DOD requirements, and users will need to rely on legacy reporting systems to support mission-critical decisions.