

Why GAO Did This Study

Over \$18 billion has been appropriated to the Joint Improvised Explosive Device (IED) Defeat Organization (JIEDDO) to address the improvised explosive device (IED) threat, and there is widespread consensus that this threat will continue to be influential in future conflicts. DOD established the Joint Improvised Explosive Device Defeat Organization (JIEDDO) in 2006 to lead, advocate, and coordinate all DOD actions in support of the combatant commanders' and their respective joint task forces' efforts to defeat IEDs. This report, one in a series on JIEDDO's management and operations, addresses the extent to which DOD (1) has provided a comprehensive counter-IED strategic plan including measurable objectives that determine the effectiveness of efforts across DOD to combat IEDs, and (2) has identified counter-IED initiatives and activities, and coordinated these efforts. To address these objectives GAO reviewed counter-IED efforts from fiscal years 2006 through 2011, reviewed and analyzed relevant strategic-planning documents, collected and reviewed data identifying DOD counter-IED efforts, and met with DOD and service officials.

What GAO Recommends

GAO recommends four actions for DOD to develop a comprehensive strategic plan with strategic outcome-related goals and a complete listing of counter-IED efforts to maximize its resources. DOD concurred with one of the recommendations but did not concur with three. GAO continues to believe that its recommendations are warranted as discussed in the report.

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WARFIGHTER SUPPORT

DOD Needs Strategic Outcome-Related Goals and Visibility over Its Counter-IED Efforts

What GAO Found

As the responsible DOD agency for leading, advocating, and coordinating all DOD efforts to defeat improvised explosive devices (IED) the Joint IED Defeat Organization (JIEDDO) was directed to develop DOD's counter-IED strategic plan in February 2006 under DOD Directive 2000.19E. As previously recommended by GAO, JIEDDO has made several attempts to develop such a plan, but its strategic-planning actions have not followed leading strategic-management practices or have since been discontinued. For example, JIEDDO's 2007 strategic plan did not contain a means of measuring its performance outcomes—a leading strategic-management practice. In addition, JIEDDO's 2009–2010 strategic plan contained performance measures, but JIEDDO discontinued using these measures because it later determined that the measures were not relevant to the organization's goals. Although DOD tasked JIEDDO to develop its counter-IED strategic plan, DOD has not translated DOD's counter-IED general mission objective of eliminating IEDs as a weapon of strategic influence into actionable goals and objectives. JIEDDO issued a new counter-IED strategic plan in January 2012; however, the new plan does not apply to all other counter-IED efforts departmentwide, only to those managed by JIEDDO. Consequently, JIEDDO's new strategic plan alone will not provide the means necessary for determining the effectiveness of all counter-IED efforts across DOD. Further, as JIEDDO implements its plan, it will continue to face difficulty measuring effectiveness until DOD establishes and provides results-oriented goals to accompany its general mission objective. Without actionable goals and objectives established by DOD, JIEDDO and other DOD components cannot tie individual performance measures to DOD's desired outcomes. As a result, DOD and external stakeholders will be left without a comprehensive, data-driven assessment as to whether their counter-IED efforts are achieving DOD's mission and will not be informed about the overall effectiveness of its counter-IED efforts or use of resources as they relate to DOD's mission.

DOD has not fully identified its counter-IED initiatives and activities, and as a result is not able to effectively coordinate these efforts across DOD. In attempting to develop a comprehensive database, as previously recommended by GAO, JIEDDO has used at least three systems to collect and record complete information on DOD's counter-IED efforts but discontinued each of them for reasons including lack of timeliness, comprehensiveness, or cost. For example, beginning in 2009, JIEDDO pursued Technology Matrix as a possible counter-IED database for all efforts within the DOD. However, JIEDDO discontinued support for Technology Matrix as a database since DOD did not require all relevant organizations to provide information to JIEDDO, and therefore it was not comprehensive. Without an automated means for comprehensively capturing data on all counter-IED efforts, the military services may be unaware of potential overlap, duplication, or fragmentation. For example, GAO identified six systems that DOD components developed to emit energy to neutralize IEDs, and DOD spent about \$104 million collectively on these efforts, which could be duplicative because the military services did not collaborate on these efforts. Given the lack of a DOD-wide counter-IED database, other efforts may be overlapping.