

G A O
Accountability · Integrity · Reliability

Highlights

Highlights of [GAO-08-1060](#), a report to the Committee on Armed Services, U.S. Senate

Why GAO Did This Study

Increasing combat demands and fiscal constraints make it critical for the Department of Defense (DOD) to ensure that its weapon system investments not only meet the needs of the warfighter, but make the most efficient use of available resources. GAO's past work has shown that achieving this balance has been a challenge and weapon programs have often experienced cost growth and delayed delivery to the warfighter.

In 2003, DOD implemented the Joint Capabilities Integration and Development System (JCIDS) to prioritize and ensure that the warfighter's most essential needs are met. In response to Senate Report 109-69, GAO reported in March 2007 that DOD lacks an effective approach to balance its weapon system investments with available resources.

This follow-on report focuses on (1) whether the JCIDS process has achieved its objective to prioritize joint warfighting needs and (2) factors that have affected DOD's ability to effectively implement JCIDS. To conduct its work, GAO reviewed JCIDS guidance and capability documents and budgetary and programming data on major weapon systems, and interviewed DOD officials.

What GAO Recommends

GAO is recommending actions aimed at improving DOD's ability to prioritize joint capability needs. DOD generally concurred, but believes that current processes and resources in the department are sufficient for doing this.

To view the full product, including the scope and methodology, click on [GAO-08-1060](#). For more information, contact Michael J. Sullivan at (202) 512-4841 or sullivanm@gao.gov.

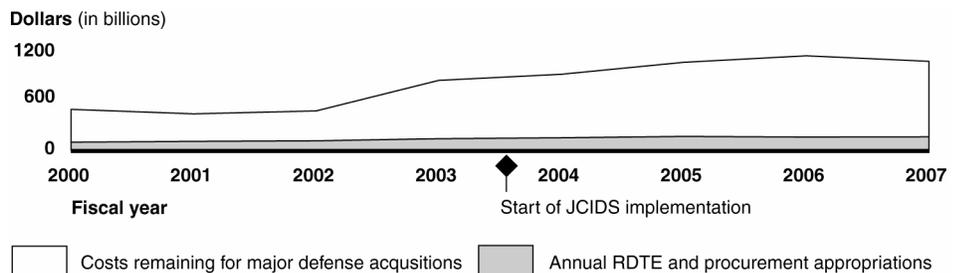
DEFENSE ACQUISITIONS

DOD's Requirements Determination Process Has Not Been Effective in Prioritizing Joint Capabilities

What GAO Found

The JCIDS process has not yet been effective in identifying and prioritizing warfighting needs from a joint, departmentwide perspective. GAO reviewed JCIDS documentation related to proposals for new capabilities and found that most—almost 70 percent—were sponsored by the military services, with little involvement from the joint community—including the combatant commands (COCOMs), which are largely responsible for planning and carrying out military operations. By continuing to rely on capability proposals that lack a joint perspective, DOD may be losing opportunities to improve joint warfighting capabilities and reduce the duplication of capabilities in some areas. In addition, virtually all capability proposals that have gone through the JCIDS process since 2003 have been validated—or approved. DOD continues to have a portfolio with more programs than available resources can support. For example, the remaining costs for major weapon system programs in DOD's portfolio went from being about four times greater to almost six times greater than annual funding available during fiscal year 2000 through 2007. The JCIDS process has also proven to be lengthy—taking on average up to 10 months to validate a need—which further undermines efforts to effectively respond to the needs of the warfighter, especially those that are near-term.

Major Defense Acquisition Program Costs Remaining versus Annual Appropriations, from Fiscal Year 2000 through Fiscal Year 2007



Source: DOD (data); GAO (analysis and presentation).

DOD lacks an analytical approach to prioritize joint capability needs and determine the relative importance of capability proposals submitted to the JCIDS process. Further, the functional capabilities boards, which were established to manage the JCIDS process and facilitate the prioritization of needs, have not been staffed or resourced to effectively carry out these duties. Instead, the military services retain most of DOD's analytical capacity and resources for requirements development. The Joint Staff recently initiated a project to capture the near-, mid-, and long-term needs of the services and other defense components, and to synthesize them with the needs of the COCOMs. However, DOD officials told us that determining how best to integrate COCOM and service capability perspectives will be challenging because of differences in roles, missions, and time frames. Efforts have also begun to streamline the process and reduce the time it takes to validate proposals.