



Highlights of [GAO-06-593](#), a report to the Committee on Armed Services, U.S. Senate

DEFENSE ACQUISITIONS

Better Acquisition Strategy Needed for Successful Development of the Army's Warrior Unmanned Aircraft System

Why GAO Did This Study

Through 2011, the Department of Defense (DOD) plans to spend \$20 billion on unmanned aircraft systems, including the Army's "Warrior." Because of congressional concerns that some systems have been more costly and taken more time to produce than predicted, GAO reviewed the Warrior program. This report (1) describes the Army's requirements underlying its decision to acquire Warrior instead of existing systems such as the Air Force's Predator, and (2) assesses whether the Army has established a sound acquisition strategy for the Warrior program.

What GAO Recommends

GAO recommends the Secretary of the Army ensure that a sound, knowledge-based acquisition strategy guide the Warrior program. Specifically, GAO recommends that the Army not approve long-lead items for Warrior low-rate initial production until it can clearly demonstrate that the program's technologies are mature and its design stable. DOD states that delaying procurement of long-lead items will increase program costs and delay fielding of Warrior. GAO's past work shows that programs proceeding without needed knowledge on technologies and design ultimately take longer and cost more money.

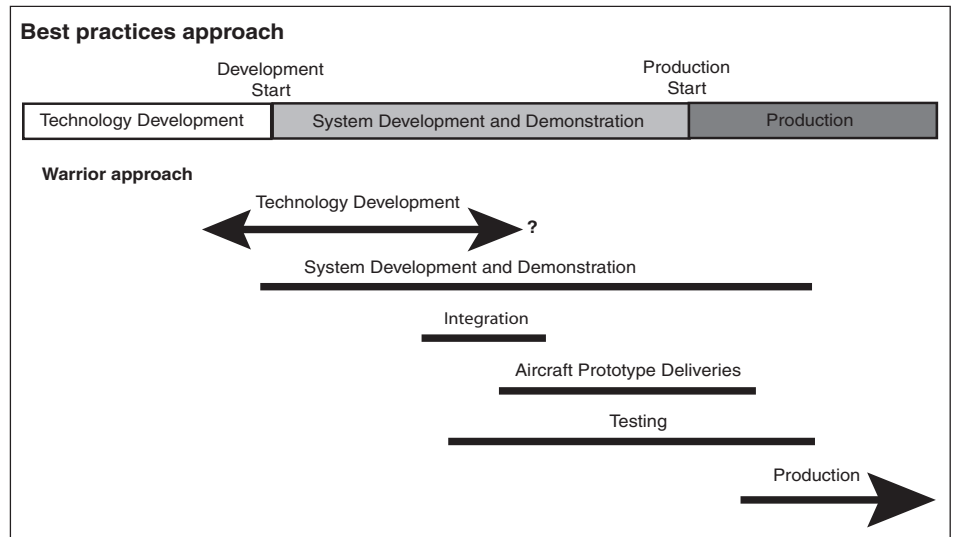
www.gao.gov/cgi-bin/getrpt?GAO-06-593.

To view the full product, including the scope and methodology, click on the link above. For more information, contact John Hutton at (202) 512-7773 or huttonj@gao.gov.

What GAO Found

The Army determined the Warrior is its best option for an unmanned aircraft system directly controlled by field commanders, compared with existing systems such as the Air Force's Predator A. The Army believes that using the Warrior will improve force capability through teaming with other Army assets; using common ground control equipment; and allowing soldiers in the field to operate it. Warrior's key technical features include a heavy fuel engine; automatic take-off and landing system; faster tactical common data link; ethernet; greater carrying capacity for weapons; and avionics with enhanced reliability. The Army projects that Warrior will offer some cost savings over Predator A.

In terms of technology maturity, design stability, and a realistic schedule, the Army has not yet established a sound, knowledge-based acquisition strategy for Warrior. Two of four of the Warrior's critical technologies were immature at the contract award for system development and demonstration and remain so in early 2006, and the mature technologies still have some risk associated with them because neither has previously been fully integrated onto an unmanned aircraft. The Warrior schedule allows 32 months from award of the development and demonstration contract to the initial production decision. Achieving this schedule will require concurrency of technology and product development, testing, and production. Once developmental aircraft are available for testing, the Army plans to fund procurement of long-lead items in August 2007. Experience shows that these concurrencies can result in design changes during production that can prevent delivery of a system within projected cost and schedule. The Warrior program faces these same risks.



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