



Highlights of [GAO-07-115](#), a report to Subcommittee on Projection Forces, Committee on Armed Services, House of Representatives

Why GAO Did This Study

Since the mid-1990s, the Navy and Marine Corps have studied ways to better protect landing forces. As new operational concepts evolved, the Marine Corps identified requirements for naval surface fire support and the Navy began developing two systems to meet these needs—the Extended Range Munition for existing classes of ships and the future *Zumwalt* class destroyer.

GAO was asked to address (1) whether requirements for fire support have been established and (2) the Navy's progress on the Extended Range Munition, *Zumwalt* class destroyer, and follow-on systems. GAO also analyzed whether these Navy systems fulfill the requirements and whether gaps remain.

To address these objectives GAO analyzed key documents on requirements and programs and held discussions with officials from the Navy and Marine Corps as well as other interested organizations.

What GAO Recommends

GAO recommends that the Department of Defense clarify requirements for volume of fire, clarify Navy and Marine Corps roles in managing resources, comprehensively review the Extended Range Munition program, and assign responsibility for assessing the gap in command and control. DOD concurred with the first and third recommendations, and partially concurred with the others.

www.gao.gov/cgi-bin/getrpt?GAO-07-115.

To view the full product, including the scope and methodology, click on the link above. For more information, contact Paul L. Francis at (202) 512-4841 or francisp@gao.gov.

DEFENSE ACQUISITIONS

Challenges Remain in Developing Capabilities for Naval Surface Fire Support

What GAO Found

In December 2005, more than a decade after the Navy and Marine Corps began to formulate requirements, agreement was reached on the capabilities needed for naval surface fire support. However, quantifiable measures are still lacking for volume of fire—the delivery of a large quantity of munitions simultaneously or over a period of time to suppress or destroy a target. Until further quantifiable requirements are set for volume of fire, it is difficult to assess whether additional investment is necessary or the form it should take.

The Navy's Extended Range Munition and *Zumwalt* class destroyer have cost more, taken longer to develop and field than anticipated, and will deliver fewer capabilities than originally promised. Largely due to technical challenges, the Extended Range Munition is expected to exceed the original cost estimate for development by 550 percent, and the Navy has delayed delivery of initial capability by 11 years. The munition's path for development and fielding remains uncertain as key technologies and munition design have not been adequately demonstrated. The Office of the Secretary of Defense recently assumed oversight of the program, and while a comprehensive review has not yet been held, there are ongoing studies that could assist such a review. The Navy has reduced *Zumwalt* class land attack munitions by 50 percent and cut ship quantities from 32 to 7. The primary reason for reduced capabilities are cost pressures created by the Navy's original concept of revolutionary performance at an unrealistically low cost. The Navy plans to begin construction of the first two ships in the *Zumwalt* class in fiscal year 2008.

The recent study of future fire support needs approved by the Joint Requirements Oversight Council identifies four capability gaps: command and control of fire support; engaging moving targets in poor weather; engaging targets when collateral damage is a concern; and engaging targets that require a large volume of fire. The analysis that forms the basis of the joint study contends that while the Extended Range Munition and *Zumwalt* class destroyer offer significant capabilities in some scenarios, they do not provide enough capability to meet all fire support needs. The Navy, through its surface warfare directorate, has begun analyzing the three engagement gaps, but the Navy has not chosen an organization to analyze the gap in command and control, which is essential for target assignment and information. Any attempts to accept the risks or invest in programs to fill remaining gaps should also involve the expeditionary warfare directorate as the Marine Corps representative. The expeditionary warfare directorate does not have a formal role in developing requirements, determining capabilities, and managing resources for systems that provide naval surface fire support.