FOREIGN MILITARY SALES

Expanding Use of Tools to Sufficiently Define Requirements Could Enable More Timely Acquisitions

Why GAO Did This Study

The U.S. government procures billions of dollars in goods and services each year on behalf of foreign governments through the FMS program. Multiple federal agencies are involved in the FMS program; however, DOD manages the procurement process. The FMS program is a key component of national security and foreign policy.

House Report 114-537 included a provision for GAO to review certain aspects of DOD’s acquisition process such as what effect, if any, certain types of contracts may have on the FMS process. This report addresses (1) how the use of firm-fixed-price contracts compares to other contract types awarded for FMS and the reasons they are used; and (2) the factors that may contribute to delays or potentially increase costs. GAO has other work addressing the FMS process and will issue separate reports.

GAO analyzed FMS procurement data for fiscal years 2007 through 2016, the most current data available to determine trends. GAO also selected a non-generalizable sample of 32 FMS cases from seven program offices, based on use of different contract types to procure the same item; reviewed relevant DOD and federal acquisition regulations and policies; and interviewed DOD officials.

What GAO Recommends

GAO recommends that DOD issue department-wide guidance for program offices to expand the use of tools, such as checklists, to aid FMS customers in specifying their requirements in a way that DOD can act upon in a timely manner. DOD concurred with GAO’s recommendation.

View GAO-17-682. For more information, contact Marie A. Mak at (202) 512-4841 or MakM@gao.gov.