

Highlights of [GAO-05-540](#), a report to the Subcommittee on Strategic Forces, Committee on Armed Services, House of Representatives

Why GAO Did This Study

In its December 2001 Nuclear Posture Review, the Department of Defense (DOD) created a New Triad by significantly changing its definition and conceptual framework for its strategic capabilities to include not only the nuclear capabilities of the old Triad that consisted of intercontinental ballistic missiles, submarine-launched ballistic missiles, and strategic bombers, but also the capabilities of offensive conventional strike forces, active and passive defenses, and a revitalized defense infrastructure (see figure).

GAO was asked to determine the extent to which DOD has (1) identified the projected spending for the New Triad in its Future Years Defense Program (FYDP) and (2) developed a long-term investment approach to identify and manage future spending for the New Triad.

What GAO Recommends

GAO recommends that DOD take actions designed to provide greater visibility of the projected spending and future investments for DOD's efforts to create the New Triad and acquire future capabilities.

Although GAO requested them, DOD did not provide comments by the time the final report went to print.

www.gao.gov/cgi-bin/getrpt?GAO-05-540.

To view the full product, including the scope and methodology, click on the link above. For more information, contact Janet St. Laurent at (202) 512-4402 or stlaurentj@gao.gov.

MILITARY TRANSFORMATION

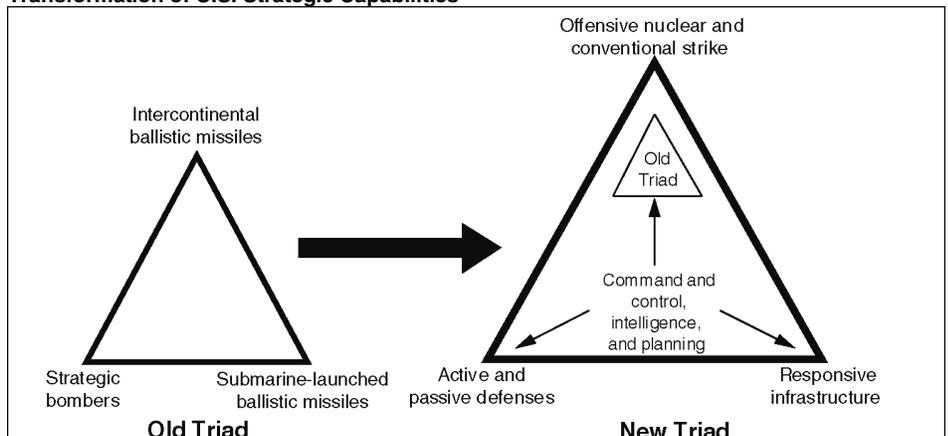
Actions Needed by DOD to More Clearly Identify New Triad Spending and Develop a Long-term Investment Approach

What GAO Found

Although DOD broadened its definition of strategic capabilities during the 2001 Nuclear Posture Review and established a New Triad, it has not developed a way to use the FYDP to identify the total amount it plans to spend to sustain and enhance New Triad capabilities during the next few years. The FYDP is one of the principal tools available to help inform DOD and Congress about spending plans for the next 5 years and to make informed decisions in light of competing priorities. While DOD has identified some New Triad spending included in the FYDP, it has not identified all associated spending. GAO's notional analysis of New Triad-related programs in the FYDP through 2009 shows that overall spending could be significantly greater than DOD's limited analyses have identified to date. According to DOD officials, DOD has not fully identified spending in the FYDP because of the diversity and broad scope of the concept. A mechanism for aggregating FYDP data, known as a "virtual major force program," could help DOD address these obstacles and provide the Secretary of Defense and Congress with better visibility into overall DOD spending plans for the New Triad.

DOD also faces long-term affordability challenges in funding the New Triad. However, it has not developed an overarching and integrated long-term investment approach to identify the projected resource requirements and funding timelines to acquire and sustain New Triad capabilities beyond the period of time covered by FYDP. Long-term capital investment planning is an important tool to help organizations establish priorities and develop future budgets. DOD is likely to face significant affordability challenges in the long term in deciding the mix of nuclear and conventional capabilities needed to implement the vision of the New Triad, as existing nuclear weapons platforms begin to reach the end of their lives within the next 15 years and missile defense capabilities are expanding. While DOD has identified some near-term investments, its investment plans are incomplete and it lacks a comprehensive strategy for developing a long-term plan.

Transformation of U.S. Strategic Capabilities



Source: 2001 Nuclear Posture Review.