



Highlights of [GAO-09-267](#), a report to congressional committees

AFGHANISTAN SECURITY

Lack of Systematic Tracking Raises Significant Accountability Concerns about Weapons Provided to Afghan National Security Forces

Why GAO Did This Study

The Department of Defense (Defense), through its Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan (CSTC-A) and with the Department of State (State), directs international efforts to train and equip Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF). As part of these efforts, the U.S. Army Security Assistance Command (USASAC) and the Navy spent about \$120 million to procure small arms and light weapons for ANSF. International donors also provided weapons. GAO analyzed whether Defense can account for these weapons and ensure ANSF can safeguard and account for them. GAO reviewed Defense and State documents on accountability procedures, reviewed contractor reports on ANSF training, met with U.S. and Afghan officials, observed accountability practices, analyzed inventory records, and attempted to locate a random sample of weapons.

What GAO Recommends

To improve weapons accountability, GAO recommends the Secretary of Defense (1) establish clear accountability procedures, including serial number tracking and routine physical inventories, for weapons in U.S. control and custody; (2) direct CSTC-A to assess and verify each ANSF unit's capacity to safeguard and account for weapons; and (3) provide adequate resources to CSTC-A to train, mentor, and assess ANSF in equipment accountability matters. Defense concurred with these recommendations, but did not state when the shortcomings we identified would be addressed. State provided no comments.

To view the full product, including the scope and methodology, click on [GAO-09-267](#). For more information, contact Charles M. Johnson, Jr. at (202) 512-7331 or johnsoncm@gao.gov.

What GAO Found

Defense did not establish clear guidance for U.S. personnel to follow when obtaining, transporting, and storing weapons for the Afghan National Security Forces, resulting in significant lapses in accountability. While Defense has accountability requirements for its own weapons, including serial number tracking and routine inventories, it did not clearly specify whether they applied to ANSF weapons under U.S. control. GAO estimates USASAC and CSTC-A did not maintain complete records for about 87,000, or 36 percent, of the 242,000 U.S.-procured weapons shipped to Afghanistan. For about 46,000 weapons, USASAC could not provide serial numbers, and GAO estimates CSTC-A did not maintain records on the location or disposition of about 41,000 weapons with recorded serial numbers. CSTC-A also did not maintain reliable records for about 135,000 weapons it obtained for ANSF from 21 other countries. Accountability lapses occurred throughout the supply chain and were primarily due to a lack of clear direction and staffing shortages. During our review, CSTC-A began correcting some shortcomings, but indicated that its continuation of these efforts depends on staffing and other factors.

Despite CSTC-A's training efforts, ANSF units cannot fully safeguard and account for weapons and sensitive equipment. Defense and State have deployed hundreds of trainers and mentors to help ANSF establish accountability practices. CSTC-A's policy is not to issue equipment without verifying that appropriate supply and accountability procedures are in place. Although CSTC-A has not consistently assessed ANSF units' ability to account for weapons, mentors have reported major accountability weaknesses, which CSTC-A officials and mentors attribute to a variety of cultural and institutional problems, including illiteracy, corruption, and unclear guidance. Further, CSTC-A did not begin monitoring the end use of sensitive night vision devices until 15 months after issuing them to Afghan National Army units.

Types and Quantities of U.S.-Procured Weapons Shipped to Afghanistan for ANSF (December 2004-June 2008)

Weapon category	Quantity shipped
 Rifles	117,163
 Pistols	62,055
 Machine guns	35,778
 Grenade launchers	18,656
 Shotguns	6,704
 Rocket-propelled grenade launchers	1,620
 Mortars and other weapons	227
Total	242,203

Source: GAO analysis of Defense data.