

Highlights of [GAO-12-479](#), a report to the Committee on Armed Services, House of Representatives

Why GAO Did This Study

DOD has committed billions of dollars to developing, maintaining, and employing warfighting capabilities that rely on access to the electromagnetic spectrum. According to DOD, electronic warfare capabilities play a critical and potentially growing role in ensuring the U.S. military's access to and use of the electromagnetic spectrum. GAO was asked to assess the extent to which DOD (1) developed a strategy to manage electronic warfare and (2) planned, organized, and implemented an effective governance structure to oversee its electronic warfare policy and programs and their relationship to cyberspace operations. GAO analyzed policies, plans, and studies related to electronic warfare and cyberspace operations and interviewed cognizant DOD officials.

What GAO Recommends

GAO recommends that DOD should (1) include in its future electronic warfare strategy reports to Congress certain key characteristics, including performance measures, key investments and resources, and organizational roles and responsibilities; (2) define objectives and issue an implementation plan for the Joint Electromagnetic Spectrum Control Center; and (3) update key departmental guidance to clearly define oversight roles, responsibilities, and coordination for electronic warfare management, and the relationship between electronic warfare and cyberspace operations. DOD generally concurred with these recommendations, except that the strategy should include performance measures. GAO continues to believe this recommendation has merit.

View [GAO-12-479](#). For more information, contact Brian J. Lepore at (202) 512-4523 or leporeb@gao.gov.

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ELECTRONIC WARFARE

DOD Actions Needed to Strengthen Management and Oversight

What GAO Found

The Department of Defense (DOD) developed an electronic warfare strategy, but it only partially addressed key characteristics that GAO identified in prior work as desirable for a national or defense strategy. The National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2010 requires DOD to submit to the congressional defense committees an annual report on DOD's electronic warfare strategy for each of fiscal years 2011 through 2015. DOD issued its fiscal year 2011 and 2012 strategy reports to Congress in October 2010 and November 2011, respectively. GAO found that DOD's reports addressed two key characteristics: (1) purpose, scope, and methodology and (2) problem definition and risk assessment. However, DOD only partially addressed four other key characteristics of a strategy, including (1) resources, investments, and risk management and (2) organizational roles, responsibilities, and coordination. For example, the reports identified mechanisms that could foster coordination across the department and identified some investment areas, but did not fully identify implementing parties, delineate roles and responsibilities for managing electronic warfare across the department, or link resources and investments to key activities. Such characteristics can help shape policies, programs, priorities, resource allocation, and standards in a manner that is conducive to achieving intended results and can help ensure that the department is effectively managing electronic warfare.

DOD has taken steps to address a critical electronic warfare management gap, but it has not established a departmentwide governance framework for electronic warfare. GAO previously reported that effective and efficient organizations establish objectives and outline major implementation tasks. In response to a leadership gap for electronic warfare, DOD is establishing the Joint Electromagnetic Spectrum Control Center under U.S. Strategic Command as the focal point for joint electronic warfare. However, because DOD has yet to define specific objectives for the center, outline major implementation tasks, and define metrics and timelines to measure progress, it is unclear whether or when the center will provide effective departmentwide leadership and advocacy for joint electronic warfare. In addition, key DOD directives providing some guidance for departmentwide oversight of electronic warfare have not been updated to reflect recent changes. For example, DOD's primary directive concerning electronic warfare oversight was last updated in 1994 and identifies the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics as the focal point for electronic warfare. The directive does not define the center's responsibilities in relation to the office, including those related to the development of the electronic warfare strategy and prioritizing investments. In addition, DOD's directive for information operations, which is being updated, allocates electronic warfare responsibilities based on the department's previous definition of information operations, which had included electronic warfare as a core capability. DOD's oversight of electronic warfare capabilities may be further complicated by its evolving relationship with computer network operations, which is also an information operations-related capability. Without clearly defined roles and responsibilities and updated guidance regarding oversight responsibilities, DOD does not have reasonable assurance that its management structures will provide effective departmentwide leadership for electronic warfare activities and capabilities development and ensure effective and efficient use of its resources.