



September 2017

DEFENSE MANAGEMENT

DOD Needs to Improve Its Oversight of Executive Agents

GAO Highlights

Highlights of [GAO-17-601](#), a report to the Committee on Armed Services, U.S. Senate

Why GAO Did This Study

DOD maintains military forces with unparalleled capabilities. However, the department continues to confront weaknesses in the management of its business functions that support these forces. DOD uses Executive Agents, which are intended to facilitate collaboration, to achieve critical department objectives.

Senate Report 114-255, accompanying a bill for the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2017, included a provision that GAO review DOD Executive Agents. This report (1) describes the number and focus of DOD Executive Agents; and evaluates the extent to which DOD (2) tracks its Executive Agents and (3) conducts periodic assessments of its Executive Agents. GAO reviewed relevant DOD directives and the list of Executive Agents; developed and implemented a questionnaire to DOD's Executive Agents; and interviewed relevant DOD officials.

What GAO Recommends

GAO recommends that ODCMO strengthen its approach to track DOD Executive Agents; verify assessments are conducted; and issue implementing guidance for documenting assessments. DOD concurred with the recommendations.

View [GAO-17-601](#). For more information, contact Andrew Von Ah at (213) 830-1011 or vonaha@gao.gov.

September 2017

DEFENSE MANAGEMENT

DOD Needs to Improve Its Oversight of Executive Agents

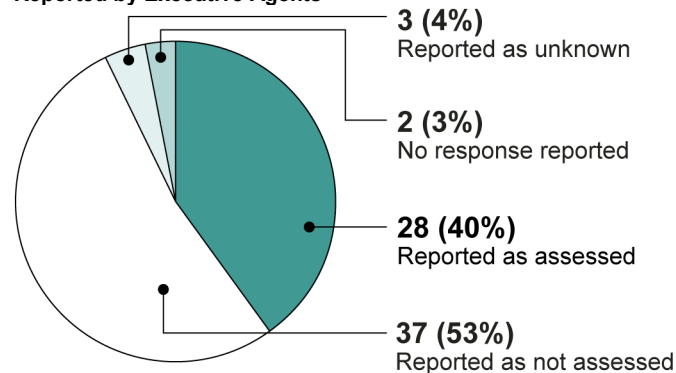
What GAO Found

Based on GAO's analysis, the Department of Defense (DOD) has 81 Executive Agents—management arrangements where the head of a DOD component is designated specific roles and responsibilities to accomplish objectives when more than one component is involved. These Executive Agents are assigned to 12 DOD components and support a range of activities, including managing technology and developing training programs. The Secretary of the Army is designated as the Executive Agent for almost half of them (38 of 81). DOD's Executive Agent directive requires that the Office of the Deputy Chief Management Officer (ODCMO) maintain a list of Executive Agent designations and oversee their assessments, among other things. Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) Principal Staff Assistants are required to assess their respective Executive Agents every 3 years to determine their continued need, currency, efficiency, and effectiveness.

GAO found weaknesses in DOD's approach to tracking its Executive Agents, resulting in inaccuracies regarding 10 Executive Agents. For example, DOD's list of Executive Agents included several that are not currently active. While ODCMO is required to maintain a list of Executive Agents, ODCMO officials rely on self-reported information from DOD Executive Agents and OSD Principal Staff Assistants. Without taking steps to accurately track DOD Executive Agents, DOD's list will continue to be out dated and ODCMO cannot effectively oversee DOD Executive Agents.

Principal Staff Assistants had not periodically assessed more than half (37 of 70) of DOD Executive Agents that responded to GAO's questionnaire (see figure). ODCMO is responsible for overseeing the implementation of DOD's Executive Agents directive, which requires that Principal Staff Assistants conduct assessments; however, ODCMO officials told GAO they do not ensure that Principal Staff Assistants have conducted these assessments. GAO also found that Principal Staff Assistants are not required to document these assessments. Without verifying the completion of these assessments and issuing guidance requiring their documentation, DOD does not have reasonable assurance that DOD Executive Agents are accomplishing department objectives.

Number and Percentage of Required Assessments Principal Staff Assistants Conducted, as Reported by Executive Agents



Source: GAO analysis of Department of Defense questionnaire responses. | GAO-17-601

Contents

Letter	1
Background	7
DOD Has 81 DOD Executive Agents Focused on a Variety of Topics and Designated to Various Components across the Department	10
Weaknesses Exist in DOD's Approach to Tracking Its DOD Executive Agents	14
About Half of the DOD Executive Agents Who Responded to Our Questionnaire Were Not Assessed	19
Conclusions	24
Recommendations for Executive Action	25
Agency Comments	25
Appendix I	List of Department of Defense (DOD) Executive Agents 27
Appendix II	Comments from the Department of Defense 34
Appendix III	GAO Contact and Staff Acknowledgments 37
Tables	
Table 1: Analysis of Documentation of 12 Department of Defense (DOD) Executive Agent Assessments	22
Table 2: List of 38 Department of Defense (DOD) Executive Agents Assignments Designated to the Secretary of the Army, as of May 2017	27
Table 3: List of 21 Department of Defense (DOD) Executive Agent Assignments Designated to the Secretary of the Air Force, as of May 2017	30
Table 4: List of 9 Department of Defense (DOD) Executive Agent Assignments Designated to the Secretary of the Navy (including the Marine Corps), as of May 2017	31
Table 5: List of 13 Department of Defense (DOD) Executive Agent Assignments Designated to the Heads of Other Department of Defense (DOD) Components, as of May 2017	32

Figures

Figure 1: Department of Defense (DOD) 81 DOD Executive Agents, by assigned DOD Component Head and Office of the Secretary of Defense Principal Staff Assistant, as of May 2017	11
Figure 2: Number and Percentage of Department of Defense Executive Agents That Reported Being Assessed and Whether That Assessment Was Documented, as of March 2017	20

Abbreviations

DOD	Department of Defense
ODCMO	Office of the Deputy Chief of Management Officer
OSD	Office of the Secretary of Defense

<p>This is a work of the U.S. government and is not subject to copyright protection in the United States. The published product may be reproduced and distributed in its entirety without further permission from GAO. However, because this work may contain copyrighted images or other material, permission from the copyright holder may be necessary if you wish to reproduce this material separately.</p>
--



September 27, 2017

The Honorable John McCain
Chairman
The Honorable Jack Reed
Ranking Member
Committee on Armed Services
United States Senate

The Department of Defense (DOD) maintains military forces with unparalleled capabilities. However, DOD continues to confront weaknesses in its organization and the management of its business functions that support these forces. We have reported in our high-risk work that DOD faces challenges in efficiently managing its finances, information systems, contracts, and weapon systems, among other areas.¹ More recently, Congress has called for DOD to develop an organizational strategy to improve collaboration and integration across its components in achieving critical departmental objectives.² Further, in a February 2017 memorandum, Defense Secretary Mattis expressed his intent to identify how the department can conduct business operations more effectively and efficiently, such as by identifying business services and tasks that no longer merit individual military department approaches.³

DOD has used a set of management arrangements to facilitate collaboration in achieving mission requirements when the efforts of more than one DOD component are required and need to be coordinated. These include DOD Executive Agents, Chairman of the Joint Chief of

¹GAO, *High Risk Series: Progress on Many High-Risk Areas, While Substantial Efforts Needed on Others*, [GAO-17-317](#) (Washington, D.C.: Feb. 15, 2017).

²National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2017, Pub. L. No. 114-328, § 911 (2016).

³Secretary of Defense Memorandum, *Establishment of Cross-Functional Teams to Address Improved Mission Effectiveness and Efficiencies in the DOD* (Feb. 17, 2017).

Staff Controlled Activities, DOD Lead Agents, and Joint Program Offices.⁴ These arrangements vary in how they are designated, the level of collaboration between components, and associated funding requirements. These arrangements also vary in the scope of the responsibilities DOD provides to them.

According to DOD Directive 5101.1, *DOD Executive Agent*, DOD Executive Agent designations are conferred when no existing means to accomplish department objectives exists, DOD resources need to be focused on a specific area or areas of responsibility in order to minimize duplication or redundancy, or such designation is required by law, executive order, or government-wide regulation. Further, within the scope of assigned responsibilities and functions, the authority of the DOD Executive Agent takes precedence over the authority of other DOD component officials performing related or collateral joint or multicomponent support responsibilities and functions.⁵

We previously reported in 2013 that DOD could improve the use of its DOD Executive Agent in the area of foreign language support.⁶ DOD utilizes language professionals and regional experts within its ranks of military personnel to provide foreign language support, such as foreign language skills, needed to execute missions, as well as contracted interpreters and translators who provide this support. We found that DOD components outside the management of the DOD Executive Agent had acquired foreign language support services and products, such as foreign language-enabled role players. We recommended that DOD analyze

⁴A DOD Executive Agent is the head of a DOD component to whom the Secretary of Defense or Deputy Secretary of Defense assigned specific responsibilities, functions, and authorities to provide defined levels of support for operational missions, or administrative or other designated activities that involve two or more of the DOD components. A Chairman of the Joint Chief of Staff Controlled Activity is an arrangement the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff established that, along with meeting other criteria, has a charter the Secretary of Defense approved; has a designated executive agent; and performs a joint mission. A DOD Lead Agent is an individual service, combatant command, or Joint Staff directorate assigned to develop and maintain a DOD guidance document. A Joint Program Office is an independent program used to manage a joint acquisition and coordinates on behalf of all DOD components. Other types of management arrangements include DOD Field Activities and Defense Agencies.

⁵DOD Directive 5101.1, *DOD Executive Agent* (Sept. 3, 2002) (certified current as of Nov. 21, 2003) (incorporating change 1, May 9, 2003).

⁶GAO, *Defense Contracting: Actions Needed to Explore Additional Opportunities to Gain Efficiencies in Acquiring Foreign Language Support*, [GAO-13-251R](#) (Washington, D.C.: Feb. 25, 2013).

spending for services and products acquired outside the management of the DOD Executive Agent, and use this analysis to determine whether adjustments were needed to the scope of the DOD Executive Agent. In implementing the recommendation, the department analyzed this spending in 2014 and found opportunities to centralize additional contracting activities through the DOD Executive Agent.

Senate Report 114-255, accompanying a bill for the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2017, included a provision that we review DOD Executive Agents.⁷ This report (1) describes the number and focus of DOD Executive Agents; and evaluates the extent to which DOD (2) tracks its DOD Executive Agents and (3) conducts periodic assessments of its DOD Executive Agents.

To describe the number and focus of DOD Executive Agents, we reviewed DOD Directive 5101.1 to determine the roles and responsibilities of the various DOD components involved with DOD's Executive Agents. We also obtained a list of DOD Executive Agents and associated documentation about each DOD Executive Agent from the Office of the Deputy Chief Management Officer (ODCMO). Directive 5101.1 requires ODCMO to maintain such a list.⁸ The list included information about the number of DOD Executive Agents, the DOD component and Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) Principal Staff Assistant to which they were assigned, contact information for officials at the DOD Executive Agent and the OSD Principal Staff Assistant offices, and the date of assignment. To describe the number of DOD Executive Agents, we analyzed DOD's list and contacted each official from the list. ODCMO's original list contained 84 DOD Executive Agent designations; however, we did not include 3 designations because they had been previously cancelled and should not have been included on the list. Between August 2016 and May 2017, four designations were cancelled, three designations were newly established, and we discovered one DOD

⁷S. Rep. No. 114-255, at 108 (2016).

⁸The directive assigns this responsibility to the Director of Administration and Management of the Office of the Secretary of Defense. After the directive was issued, the Deputy Secretary of Defense issued a memorandum consolidating the Office of the Director of Administration and Management into ODCMO. The memorandum stated that all authorities previously residing with the Director of Administration and Management will accrue to ODCMO. Deputy Secretary of Defense Memorandum, *Reorganization of the Office of the Deputy Chief Management Officer* (July 11, 2014). As a result, throughout this report, responsibilities assigned to the Director of Administration and Management will be referred to as responsibilities assigned to ODCMO.

Executive Agent designation that had been previously established but was missing from ODCMO's original list. As of May 2017, we determined that DOD has 81 DOD Executive Agents, as discussed in this report. We also reviewed each Executive Agent's respective DOD issuance and conducted interviews with officials from seven DOD Executive Agents and focal points within individual components responsible for managing the DOD Executive Agent program within their component. In addition, we sent a questionnaire to officials representing each of the DOD Executive Agents we identified to determine the reason each DOD Executive Agent was designated, the DOD issuances that described the responsibilities of the DOD Executive Agent, the contact information for the OSD Principal Staff Assistant, if known, who are required to assess DOD Executive Agents at least once every 3 years according to DOD policy, and the number of assessments the OSD Principal Staff Assistants conducted, among other things. We included a question about the contact information for the OSD Principal Staff Assistant because the information we received from ODCMO was incomplete, and officials from ODCMO informed us that the best way to collect this information was to contact officials from each DOD Executive Agent.

To inform the design of our questionnaire, we conducted pretests with officials from four DOD Executive Agents, including one from the Army, Air Force, Navy, and the Defense Security Cooperation Agency, who had work experience performing the responsibilities and functions of the DOD Executive Agent. We explained the intent and design of the questionnaire to ensure that, in general, the intended questionnaire recipients would have the knowledge and resources to respond to our questionnaire and that questions collected reliable information, and to obtain any suggestions for clarification. Furthermore, the questionnaire was designed with the assistance of a GAO survey specialist and was reviewed by another GAO survey specialist. To identify questionnaire respondents, we contacted each official from the list of DOD Executive Agents in early December 2016 to confirm that they were the appropriate officials to respond to our questionnaire. At that time, we had determined there were 78 DOD Executive Agents.⁹ Through our efforts, as of January 2017, we were able to confirm contact information for 75 of 78 DOD

⁹These 78 DOD Executive Agent designations included everything on ODCMO's original list except the 3 DOD Executive Agent designations that had been previously cancelled and should not have been included in the original list as well as the 3 additional designations that had been cancelled between July 2016 and December 2016.

Executive Agents.¹⁰ To distribute the questionnaire, we sent an e-mail to each of those 75 DOD Executive Agents with the questionnaire attached on January 24, 2017. We sent a reminder to officials who had not yet completed the questionnaire on February 8, 2017, and a DOD official sent reminder e-mails in mid-February 2017. We granted requests for extensions from officials associated with several DOD Executive Agents and we accepted completed questionnaires until March 17, 2017. Because we attempted to contact all DOD Executive Agents for whom we had contact information, rather than a sample, there was no sampling error. However, we did not try to generalize results of our questionnaire and the results do not represent experiences of DOD Executive Agents who were not contacted or who did not return a questionnaire. In total, we distributed 75 questionnaires. Out of the 75 questionnaires sent, we received 70 completed questionnaires from DOD Executive Agents, for a response rate of 93 percent. One official for a DOD Executive Agent stated that he did not believe the program was considered a DOD Executive Agent and informed us that he could not complete the questionnaire. To minimize data-entry errors, we used an automated program to import questionnaire responses into a single computer file. To further reduce the potential for data-entry errors, we compared selected questionnaire responses to the imported data in the computer file. To analyze those responses, the GAO team used two analysts to independently verify the responses.

To evaluate the extent to which DOD tracks its Executive Agents, we reviewed DOD Directive 5101.1 and interviewed ODCMO officials to determine DOD's approach to maintaining information about DOD Executive Agents, and the roles and responsibilities of ODCMO to track DOD Executive Agents. To determine the extent to which ODCMO has maintained a current list of DOD Executive Agent designations as

¹⁰As of mid-January 2017, we learned of two newly established DOD Executive Agents, but we did not include those DOD Executive Agents in our questionnaire distribution because they would not have been able to answer some of the questions since they had been recently designated. Therefore, with the addition of these two DOD Executive Agents, the total number of DOD Executive Agents was 80. Through follow-up efforts related to the completed questionnaires, we learned of one DOD Executive Agent designation that had been previously established but was missing from ODCMO's original list. However, we did not send a questionnaire to this DOD Executive Agent since we did not learn about its existence in time. With the addition of this DOD Executive Agent, the total number of DOD Executive Agents was 81. In addition, in May 2017, DOD officials informed us that another DOD Executive agent was newly established, and another DOD Executive Agent was cancelled. With these two adjustments, the total number of DOD Executive Agents as of May 2017 remained 81, as discussed in our report.

required by DOD Directive 5101.1, we analyzed ODCMO's list of DOD Executive Agents and compared the data in the list to DOD issuances associated with the DOD Executive Agents identified by ODCMO. We also contacted the identified point of contact from each DOD Executive Agent to check whether each was the appropriate contact for our review and that the ODCMO-listed contact information was accurate. If the contact information was not correct, we took steps to obtain the appropriate contact information from the identified official or from officials within the same component or ODCMO. We interviewed ODCMO officials to determine what guidance was provided to DOD to implement DOD Directive 5101.1, specifically any guidance related to maintaining the list of DOD Executive Agents, to include adding new and removing cancelled DOD Executive Agent designations from the list. We compared DOD's approach to tracking DOD Executive Agent designations to the stated requirements in DOD Directive 5101.1. We also compared DOD's approach to the *Standards for Internal Control in the Federal Government*, including requirements for using high-quality information to achieve the entity's objectives.¹¹

To evaluate the extent to which DOD conducts periodic assessments of its DOD Executive Agents, we analyzed responses to our questionnaire regarding the number and type of assessments that the OSD Principal Staff Assistant had conducted. We reviewed any documentation submitted with the responses to determine the extent to which the assessments met the criteria in DOD Directive 5101.1, specifically the requirement that the relevant OSD Principal Staff Assistant itself conduct the assessment and do so at least once every 3 years.¹² We conducted this analysis by having two GAO analysts independently review the submitted documentation and determine whether the documentation fulfilled those requirements. Any initial differences in the coding were discussed and reconciled by the analysts. To better understand the views of OSD Principal Staff Assistants regarding their responsibility to assess the DOD Executive Agents, we selected a nongeneralizable sample of DOD Executive Agents and conducted nine follow-up interviews with the

¹¹GAO, *Standards for Internal Control in the Federal Government*, [GAO-14-704G](#) (Washington, D.C.: Sept. 10, 2014).

¹²The directive also requires that the assessments determine the DOD Executive Agent's continued need, currency, and effectiveness and efficiency in satisfying end-user requirements. However, we did not assess whether the assessments addressed these requirements because the department has left the interpretation of these terms to the OSD Principal Staff Assistants.

OSD Principal Staff Assistants for those DOD Executive Agents. While not generalizable, the sample we selected was designed to represent a variety of DOD Executive Agents where (1) DOD Executive Agents indicated they were assessed or indicated they were not, (2) different DOD components were designated as DOD Executive Agents, and (3) different DOD organizations were designated as OSD Principal Staff Assistants. We also interviewed ODCMO officials to understand its role as it relates to conducting the assessments. We compared DOD's approach to assess DOD Executive Agent designations to the stated requirements in DOD Directive 5101.1. We also compared DOD's approach to the *Standards for Internal Control in the Federal Government*, including requirements for documenting internal control activities.¹³

We conducted this performance audit from July 2016 to September 2017, in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives.

Background

DOD codified its DOD Executive Agent program in 2002 and issued a directive, DOD Directive 5101.1, that defines a DOD Executive Agent and establishes the roles and responsibilities governing the DOD Executive Agent assignments and arrangements. DOD officials told us that the department issued a directive for its DOD Executive Agent program in part because the term DOD Executive Agent had been used to describe a variety of management arrangements, and DOD Directive 5101.1 was intended to clarify the term. For example, in 1998, DOD identified approximately 401 Executive Agents within the military departments. However, after the directive was issued in 2002, ODCMO officials stated they worked with identified Executive Agents to determine which were to remain DOD Executive Agents under the directive. As a result, the number of activities and programs with the title of DOD Executive Agent was significantly reduced. For example, the Joint Interagency Task Force West was referred to as U.S. Pacific Command's Executive Agent to support law enforcement for counterdrug efforts in the Asia-Pacific region.

¹³ [GAO-14-704G](#).

However, according to ODCMO officials, this task force was not considered to be an official DOD Executive Agent per DOD Directive 5101.1, and ODCMO officials removed its DOD Executive Agent designation. For issuances published before March 25, 2012, DOD policy is that directives are to be updated or cancelled after 10 years.¹⁴ ODCMO officials told us that they are in the process of updating DOD Directive 5101.1, certified current in 2003, but did not have a firm deadline for when the directive will be updated.

DOD Executive Agent designations are conferred when 1) the efforts of more than one DOD component needs to be coordinated and no existing means to accomplish DOD objectives exists, 2) DOD resources need to be focused on a specific area or areas of responsibility in order to minimize duplication or redundancy, or 3) such designation is required by law, executive order, or government-wide regulation. Further, within the scope of its assigned responsibilities and functions, the authority of the DOD Executive Agent takes precedence over the authority of other DOD component officials performing related or collateral joint or multicomponent support responsibilities and functions.

A DOD Executive Agent is the head of a DOD component. The DOD Executive Agent may delegate the authority to act to a subordinate designee within that official's component. For example, the Secretary of the Army is the designated DOD Executive Agent for DOD Biometrics, and has delegated that responsibility to the Army's Provost Marshall. DOD Directive 5101.1 assigns ODCMO the overall program management of the DOD Executive Agent program. Specifically, ODCMO oversees the implementation of the DOD Executive Agent directive, develops policy on DOD Executive Agent designations, and issues guidelines as appropriate to further define responsibilities contained in DOD Directive 5101.1.

An OSD Principal Staff Assistant oversees the activities of DOD Executive Agents in their functional areas of responsibility. In addition, DOD Directive 5101.1 states that the OSD Principal Staff Assistant should assess the DOD Executive Agents in their functional areas periodically, but not less than once every 3 years, to determine the DOD Executive Agent's continued need, currency, and effectiveness and

¹⁴DOD policy states that issuances published or changed after March 25, 2012 will be processed for cancellation on the 10-year anniversary unless an extension is approved. DOD Instruction 5025.01, *DOD Issuances Program* (Aug. 1, 2016) (change 1, Apr. 10, 2017).

efficiency in satisfying end-user requirements. According to ODCMO officials, these OSD Principal Staff Assistants are the Under Secretaries of Defense, the Deputy Chief Management Officer, the General Counsel of DOD, the Inspector General of DOD, and those Assistant Secretaries of Defense, Assistants to the Secretary of Defense, and OSD Directors, and equivalents, who report directly to the Secretary or Deputy Secretary of Defense. Typically, the OSD Principal Staff Assistants assess DOD Executive Agents within their functional areas. For example, the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics would assess DOD Executive Agents involved in acquisition and logistics related areas, such as the DOD Executive Agents for Medical Material, Subsistence, Construction and Barrier Material, and Bulk Petroleum that are tasked with managing the logistics of supplying these products across the department.

Only the Secretary of Defense or the Deputy Secretary of Defense may designate a DOD Executive Agent, and the designation remains in effect until the Secretary of Defense or the Deputy Secretary of Defense revokes or supersedes it. According to ODCMO officials, the Secretary or Deputy Secretary of Defense designates a DOD Executive Agent after an evaluation of existing organizational and management arrangements and a determination that a DOD Executive Agent would most effectively, economically, or efficiently carry out a function or task. However, according to ODCMO officials, the head of a DOD component may volunteer as a DOD Executive Agent and may formally request the Secretary or Deputy Secretary of Defense make the assignment, or an OSD Principal Staff Assistant may propose that the Secretary or Deputy Secretary of Defense assign a DOD component as a DOD Executive Agent. ODCMO officials stated this typically happens when a military department, defense agency, or a combatant command has substantial responsibility or expertise to execute a task on behalf of DOD, or the function is particularly sensitive or complex as differentiated from its overall organic mission. ODCMO officials also stated that DOD Executive Agent designations are typically formalized in a Secretary or Deputy Secretary of Defense memorandum, with direction to establish a DOD issuance to codify the specifics of the DOD Executive Agent arrangement at a later date. ODCMO officials stated that the issuance is important, as the designation of the title of DOD Executive Agent by itself confers no specific responsibilities. The nature and scope of the authority delegated must be stated in the memorandum or DOD issuance designating the DOD Executive Agent.

According to ODCMO officials, funding of specific DOD Executive Agent activities is not determined at the time of assignment. Rather, the designated DOD Executive Agent seeks resources through DOD's planning and budgeting process. Further, according to ODCMO officials, the DOD Executive Agent often bears the major share of the cost to execute the assigned responsibilities. However, ODCMO officials explained that, as necessary, funding determinations between the DOD Executive Agent and other DOD stakeholders are negotiated through memorandums of agreement or understanding and DOD's annual program and budget review process.

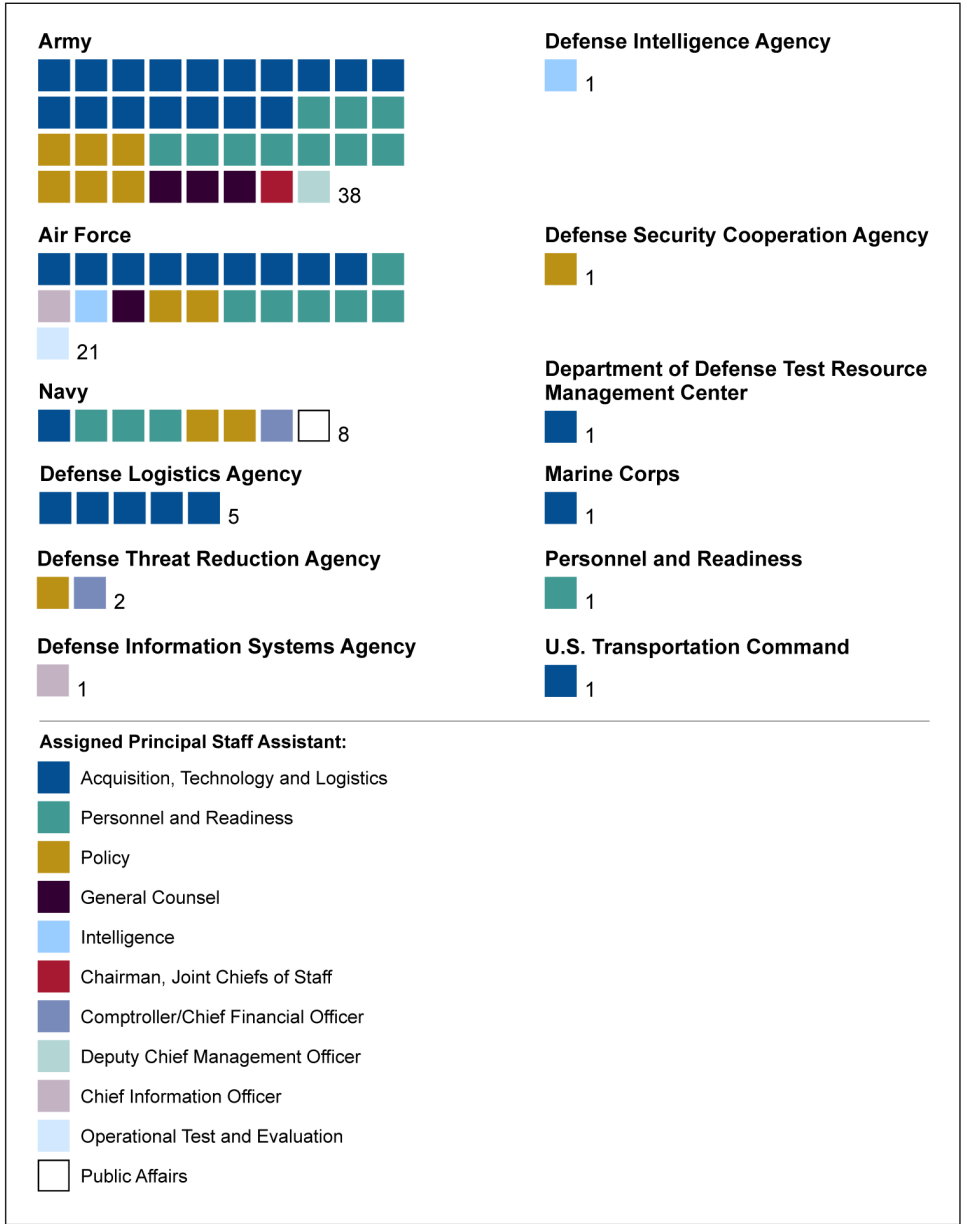
DOD Has 81 DOD Executive Agents Focused on a Variety of Topics and Designated to Various Components across the Department

We determined that DOD had 81 DOD Executive Agents focused on a variety of topics and designated to 12 different DOD components, as of May 2017.¹⁵ Almost half (38 of 81) or 47 percent of the DOD Executive Agents are designated to the Secretary of the Army and 68 of 81, or 84 percent, were designated to the Secretaries of the Army, Air Force, or Navy or the Commandant of the Marine Corps. In contrast, six DOD components had one DOD Executive Agent designation each. Additionally, 11 different OSD Principal Staff Assistants oversee 81 DOD Executive Agents. This information is based on our analysis of ODCMO's list of DOD Executive Agents.¹⁶ Figure 1 shows the DOD Executive Agent designations by DOD component and by OSD Principal Staff Assistant.

¹⁵As discussed above, ODCMO's original list contained 84 DOD Executive Agent designations. However, we did not include three designations because they had been previously cancelled and should not have been included on the list. Between August 2016 and May 2017, four designations were cancelled, three designations were newly established, and we discovered one DOD Executive Agent designation that had been previously established but was missing from ODCMO's original list. As of May 2017, we determined that DOD had 81 DOD Executive Agents.

¹⁶For seven DOD Executive Agents, the information presented in ODCMO's list, the DOD Executive Agents' questionnaire responses, and DOD issuances was not entirely consistent, or the DOD issuances did not indicate which office served as the OSD Principal Staff Assistant. Therefore, we are reporting ODCMO's information. These DOD Executive Agents are for the Commander's Emergency Response Program, Military Ground-Based Counter Radio-Controlled Improvised Explosive Device Electronic Warfare Technology, DOD Presence in the Georgia-U.S. Biosurveillance and Research Center, R-2508 Complex Enhancement Program, Force Protection of Military Sealift Assets, High School News Service, and the Yellow Ribbon Program. For the DOD Executive Agent for Weapons of Mass Destruction Elimination Operations in Iraq, the DOD issuances did not indicate which office served as the OSD Principal Staff Assistant; however, because we found this designation was missing from ODCMO's list we are reporting our determination of the OSD Principal Staff Assistant. See app. I for more information.

Figure 1: Department of Defense (DOD) 81 DOD Executive Agents, by assigned DOD Component Head and Office of the Secretary of Defense Principal Staff Assistant, as of May 2017



Source: GAO analysis of Department of Defense information. | GAO-17-601

According to ODCMO officials, a DOD Executive Agent designation is typically assigned to the DOD component that is already involved in the work related to the DOD Executive Agent. Below are several types of activities DOD Executive Agents perform and an example of a DOD Executive Agent that performs the activity:

- **Administrative Support**—The Secretary of the Army, as the designated DOD Executive Agent for the U.S. Military Entrance Processing Command, is responsible for programming, budgeting, and funding all Military Entrance Processing Command operations.
- **Developing Standards**—The Director of the Defense Information Systems Agency, as the DOD Executive Agent for Information Technology Standards, is responsible for developing and maintaining information-technology standards.
- **Developing Training Programs**—The Secretary of the Air Force, as the DOD Executive Agent for Military Working Dogs, is responsible for developing required training programs and curricula for military working-dog instructors, kennel masters, and handlers.
- **Technology Management**—The Secretary of the Navy, as the DOD Executive Agent for Printed Circuit Board and Interconnect Technology, is responsible for developing and maintaining a technology roadmap to ensure that DOD has access to manufacturing capabilities and technical expertise necessary to meet future military requirements regarding this technology.
- **Acquisition Support**—The Commandant of the Marine Corps, as the DOD Executive Agent for Non-Lethal Weapons, is responsible for coordinating nonlethal weapon requirements across doctrine, organization, training, materiel, leadership and education, personnel, and facilities.
- **Department-wide Visibility**—The Secretary of the Army, as the DOD Executive Agent for the Unexploded Ordnance Center of Excellence, chairs the center and executes management oversight and funding responsibilities for the center.

As part of our questionnaire for DOD Executive Agents, we asked about the reasons why DOD conferred the designation.¹⁷ In response, 51 percent (36 of 70) of DOD Executive Agents responding to our

¹⁷As discussed in our scope and methodology, we received completed questionnaires from 70 DOD Executive Agents.

questionnaire reported that their designation was conferred to minimize the duplication or redundancy of DOD resources. Thirty-six percent (25 of 70) of DOD Executive Agents responding to our questionnaire reported that their designation was conferred because no other means existed for the department to accomplish its objective. Finally, 26 percent (18 of 70) of DOD Executive Agents responding to our questionnaire reported that their designation was conferred because it was required by law, executive order, or government-wide regulation.¹⁸

A majority of the DOD Executive Agents have OSD Principal Staff Assistants from one of three Under Secretaries of Defense. About half (35 of 81), or 43 percent, of the OSD Principal Staff Assistants for DOD Executive Agents are assigned to the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics, while another 40 percent (32 of 81) of OSD Principal Staff Assistants are assigned to the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness or the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy. According to DOD Directive 5101.1, an OSD Principal Staff Assistant is to oversee the activities of DOD Executive Agents in their functional areas of responsibility. In addition, the OSD Principal Staff Assistant is also assigned to assess each DOD Executive Agent to determine the DOD Executive Agent's continued need, currency, and effectiveness and efficiency in satisfying end-user requirements. Typically, the OSD Principal Staff Assistant is to assess DOD Executive Agents within their functional areas. For example:

- The Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics oversees 35 DOD Executive Agents and typically assesses those involved in acquisition and logistics-related areas, such as the Director of the Defense Logistics Agency, serving as the DOD Executive Agent for Medical Materiel, Subsistence, Construction and Barrier Materiel, and Bulk Petroleum and is tasked with managing the logistics of supplying these products across the department. In addition, the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics also oversees two designations related to chemical and biological weapons and two designations related to the safety and security of biological toxins and hazards.
- The Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness's portfolio includes readiness; health affairs; training; and personnel

¹⁸We asked respondents to state the reason or reasons the DOD Executive Agent designation was conferred. Because respondents could select more than one response, the responses added to more than 100 percent.

requirements and management, including equal opportunity, morale, welfare, recreation, and quality-of-life matters. The Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness oversees 20 DOD Executive Agents, including three designations related to language training or foreign language contracts; two designations related to recruitment and entrance processing; and the Armed Services Entertainment program.

- The Under Secretary of Defense for Policy's portfolio includes all matters pertaining to the formulation of national security and defense policy. The office oversees 12 DOD Executive Agents, including two designations related to security cooperation activities and two designations related to multinational organizations.

Weaknesses Exist in DOD's Approach to Tracking Its DOD Executive Agents

We found that DOD has weaknesses in its approach to tracking its DOD Executive Agents, resulting in ODCMO not having an accurate accounting of the number of DOD Executive Agents. According to DOD Directive 5101.1, ODCMO is responsible for developing, maintaining, monitoring, revising, and making available the list of DOD Executive Agent designations. However, we found that ODCMO did not maintain a list of DOD Executive Agents that was current or complete. For example, we found 10 designations on DOD's list of DOD Executive Agents that were not accurate, including the following:

- Disestablished DOD Executive Agents: Three DOD Executive Agent designations that were on ODCMO's list had been disestablished; however, they had not been removed from the list. For example, in October 2015, a Deputy Secretary of Defense memorandum disestablished the DOD Executive Agent for Space by redesignating it as the Principal DOD Space Advisor. ODCMO officials stated that they were aware that it had been disestablished, but had not removed it from the list until a directive, issued in June 2017, cancelled the designation for the DOD Executive Agent for Space.¹⁹ In another example, the DOD Executive Agent for Global Command and Control Systems should have been removed from ODCMO's list in 2013.²⁰

¹⁹DOD Directive 5100.96, *DOD Space Enterprise Governance and Principal DOD Space Advisor (PDSA)* (June 9, 2017).

²⁰The Air Force sought to disestablish this DOD Executive Agent in 2013; however, an ODCMO official determined that no official action was necessary to cancel the designation because it was not actually considered a DOD Executive Agent per DOD Directive 5101.1.

-
- **Inactive DOD Executive Agents:** Two DOD Executive Agent designations were no longer considered active, meaning that while the designations have not been cancelled, the DOD Executive Agents are no longer performing the responsibilities of the DOD Executive Agents. DOD Directive 5101.1 states that the designations are to remain in effect until the Secretary of Defense or the Deputy Secretary of Defense revokes or supersedes them. However, the Secretary of Defense or Deputy Secretary of Defense has not issued any documentation to disestablish the DOD Executive Agents.²¹ Specifically, some Army officials from the Chemical Demilitarization Program stated that the responsibilities of the DOD Executive Agent had been completed in 2012 and thus the designation was no longer active. In the other example, officials from the DOD Executive Agent for DOD Civilian Police Officers and Security Guards Physical Fitness Standards Program stated that the directive for this program was updated in 2012 and reference to the DOD Executive Agent designation had been removed because the designation was no longer necessary. Officials stated that they intended to pursue the cancellation of the designation at a later date.
 - **Unclear DOD Executive Agent designations:** Three DOD Executive Agent designations were unclear, such that they were not considered actual DOD Executive Agents, or officials in the relevant component had no knowledge of the designation. For example, Navy officials stated that they could not find any organization currently carrying out any responsibility related to the DOD Executive Agent for High School News Service or for the Force Protection of Military Sealift Assets. ODCMO officials told us that these may have been considered DOD Executive Agents at one time, but the arrangements were never documented. In the other example, the status of the DOD Executive Agent for the Global Positioning System is unclear since Air Force officials at the program stated that they do not use the term DOD Executive Agent to refer to the program and were unaware that the

²¹In a May 2017 memorandum from the Department of the Army, the Army determined, in agreement with ODCMO and the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics—the assigned OSD Principal Staff Assistant—that the DOD Executive Agent for Chemical Demilitarization should no longer be accounted for as a separate designation. Officials stated that, since 2016, the responsibilities of the DOD Executive Agent for Chemical Demilitarization have been subsumed within the responsibilities of the DOD Executive Agent for Recovered Chemical Warfare Material Program. The Army memorandum acknowledged that the responsibilities of the DOD Executive Agent for Chemical Demilitarization have evolved over time to focus on recovery of chemical warfare materiel. ODCMO plans to take action to remove reference to the DOD Executive Agent for Chemical Demilitarization from their list.

program was considered to be a DOD Executive Agent. ODCMO officials stated that a determination was likely made at some point to consider this organization a DOD Executive Agent, and therefore the organization was included on ODCMO's list, but no official documentation was issued. Air Force Officials who track the Air Force's DOD Executive Agents stated that the Global Positioning System program may have been considered a DOD Executive Agent at one time.

- **Missing DOD Executive Agent Designation:** One DOD Executive Agent designation was missing from ODCMO's list. ODCMO's list included an DOD Executive Agent for Weapons of Mass Destruction and Delivery Vehicle Elimination Operations in Libya, and the Defense Threat Reduction Agency was the designated DOD Executive Agent. However, Defense Threat Reduction Agency officials stated that there are actually two separate designations, one for such operations in Libya and one in Iraq. Both ODCMO and the Defense Threat Reduction Agency lost track of the designation for Iraq and it was not included in ODCMO's list of DOD Executive Agents.
- **Not an DOD Executive Agent:** One DOD Executive Agent designation was on ODCMO's list that ODCMO and Army officials agree should not have been considered as a DOD Executive Agent. According to ODCMO officials, the DOD Executive Agent for the Joint Center for International Security Force Assistance was inappropriately applied to the organization. Officials explained that the center is actually a Chairman's Controlled Activity, which is another type of management arrangement the department uses. Per DOD policy, only the Secretary of Defense or Deputy Secretary of Defense may cancel a designation. Thus, Army officials stated that until official action is taken to document that the center is not an DOD Executive Agent, it will remain on ODCMO's list and the Army will consider it a valid DOD Executive Agent.

We also identified seven other designations that ODCMO may need to revisit. ODCMO officials stated that our review highlighted several designations that may no longer be considered active and require resolution. Specifically:

- Army officials with whom we spoke told us that 5 of the Army's 38 designations may no longer be necessary and could be disestablished.
- Officials from the DOD Executive Agent for Weapons of Mass Destruction Elimination Operations and Delivery Vehicle Elimination Operations in Libya stated in their response to our questionnaire that

the DOD Executive Agent's 2004 designation is no longer needed, as considerable time has passed and the nature of U.S. government engagement and policies toward Libya have changed significantly.²²

- Officials from both the DOD Executive Agent and the OSD Principal Staff Assistant for the DOD Executive Agent for the Regional Centers for Security Studies stated that the designation may no longer be necessary, as the functions and responsibilities of this DOD Executive Agent are operating in a routine manner. According to ODCMO officials, a number of different circumstances may prompt the cancellation of a DOD Executive Agent designation, to include circumstances when the responsibilities of a DOD Executive Agent have become institutionalized as part of an office or agency.

ODCMO controls its updates to the DOD Executive Agent list to ensure any changes are vetted through the appropriate offices. However, according to ODCMO officials, to maintain the list they rely on representatives from DOD Executive Agents to self-report any modifications to the DOD Executive Agent or contact information for relevant officials, which has resulted in some of the discrepancies described above. Aside from DOD Executive Agents self-reporting any changes, ODCMO officials stated that there is no process to ensure that all information on the list is current or complete. Furthermore, ODCMO officials stated that they have not issued guidance instructing DOD Executive Agent officials under what circumstances they should self-report changes.

Moreover, we found that ODCMO does not have a process for being notified when a new DOD Executive Agent is established or when one is cancelled. ODCMO officials stated that they provide consultation upon request to other DOD components that are considering establishing a new DOD Executive Agent. However, officials stated they are not always consulted and may not become aware of the new DOD Executive Agent designation until after its establishment. For example, ODCMO officials stated that were not involved in the issuance of the January 2017 Deputy Secretary of Defense memorandum that announced the designation of the Secretary of the Army as the DOD Executive Agent for the DOD Biological Select Agent and Toxin Biosecurity Program. ODCMO officials

²²Since this designation was not officially disestablished at the time of our review, we considered the designation as active. Thus, we counted this designation as 1 of the 81 DOD Executive Agent designations we determined through our review, and we counted the completed questionnaire in our response rate.

told us they have, on at least one occasion, learned about interest in establishing a DOD Executive Agent for a function that another DOD Executive Agent was already addressing, and advised against its establishment.

Furthermore, ODCMO officials said that a DOD Executive Agent designation can be removed from the list of DOD Executive Agents by cancelling or updating the DOD issuance that established the DOD Executive Agent. Even though ODCMO coordinates all issuances for the department, ODCMO officials stated that they are not informed of all changes in issuances related to DOD Executive Agent designations, such as when a designation is updated or cancelled. For example, as noted earlier, officials from the DOD Executive Agent for DOD Civilian Police Officers and Security Guards Physical Fitness Standards Program stated that reference to the DOD Executive Agent designation was removed as part of the 2012 update to the DOD directive for the DOD Executive Agent. However, ODCMO officials were not aware that the updated directive no longer included a reference to the DOD Executive Agent designation, and therefore ODCMO still had this DOD Executive Agent on its list. DOD Executive Agent officials stated that they intended to pursue the cancellation of the designation at a later date. When consulted on DOD issuances related to the establishment, disestablishment, or modification of a DOD Executive Agent–related issuance, ODCMO officials stated they advise the OSD Principal Staff Assistants, among others, to discretely identify the actions related to the DOD Executive Agent designation to facilitate their tracking.

According to DOD Directive 5101.1, ODCMO is to issue guidelines, as appropriate, to define further the policies, responsibilities and functions, and authorities contained in the directive. This could include the process for notifying ODCMO when a change is made to a DOD Executive Agent, such as when one is established, removed, or modified. *Standards for Internal Control in the Federal Government* states that management should use high-quality information to achieve the entity’s objectives.²³ Specifically, management obtains relevant data from reliable internal and external sources in a timely manner based on the identified information requirements. ODCMO officials agreed that they need to improve their tracking of DOD Executive Agents; however, they have not developed an approach for this. Without taking steps to ensure that it is accurately

²³[GAO-14-704G](#).

tracking its Executive Agents, ODCMO will not be able to effectively oversee the DOD Executive Agent program. An accurate list is an important tool to help ODCMO manage its DOD Executive Agent program, including ensuring that there is no overlap in efforts across the DOD Executive Agent designations. As a result, DOD's list of Executive Agents will continue to be out dated and incomplete.

About Half of the DOD Executive Agents Who Responded to Our Questionnaire Were Not Assessed

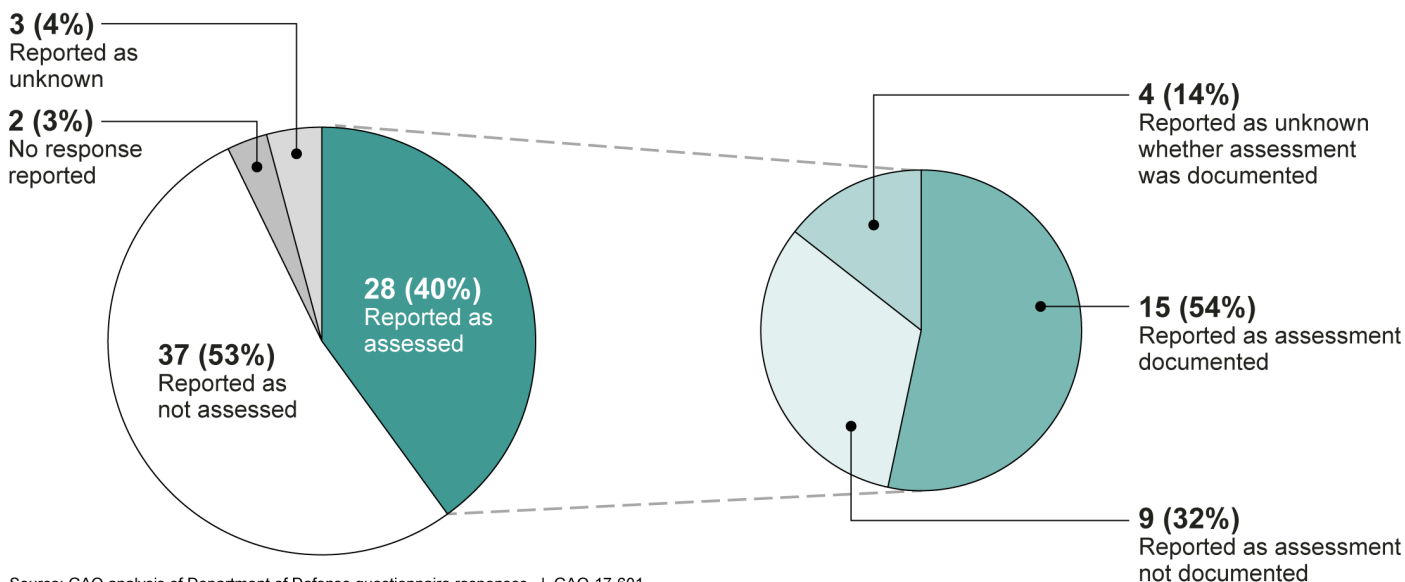
According to the 70 DOD Executive Agents responding to our questionnaire, OSD Principal Staff Assistants responsible for assessing DOD Executive Agents have not conducted assessments of about half (37 of 70) of the DOD Executive Agents in the past 3 years, as required by DOD guidance.²⁴ Of the remaining 33 DOD Executive Agents, 28 responded that their OSD Principal Staff Assistant assessed them. Moreover, of those 28 DOD Executive Agents, almost half (13 of 28) said their assessment was not documented or that they did not know whether documentation existed.²⁵ Finally, 3 DOD Executive Agents responded that they did not know whether OSD Principal Staff Assistants had assessed them.²⁶ (See fig. 2.)

²⁴DOD Directive 5101.1 states that the OSD Principal Staff Assistant should assess the performance of DOD Executive Agents within their functional areas. The directive further states the assessments should occur periodically, but not less than once every 3 years, to determine the DOD Executive Agent's continued need, currency, and effectiveness and efficiency in satisfying end-user requirements.

²⁵Two of the 37 DOD Executive Agents who reported not having been assessed were assigned within the past 3 years, so the OSD Principal Staff Assistant is not yet required to have conducted an assessment. The DOD Biological Select Agent and Toxin Biosafety Executive Agent was designated in 2015, and the DOD Executive Agent for Cyber Test Ranges was designated in 2016. As a result, the OSD Principal Staff Assistant is not yet required to have conducted an assessment.

²⁶We had two questions to gather this information, one about whether an assessment had been conducted and a follow up question about whether the assessment was documented. The first question was: "Between October 2013 and September 2016, how many times has this DOD Executive Agent been assessed by the OSD Principal Staff Assistant assigned to this DOD Executive Agent for any of the following: continued need; currency; and effectiveness and efficiency? (Directions: "Please enter a number in the box.") Two respondents to the questionnaire did not respond to this question. The follow-up question was: "If you answered that this DOD Executive Agent was assessed 1 or more times, were any of these assessments documented?" Answer options: "Yes (If yes, please attach a copy of the assessment to the email when you return this questionnaire and enter the assessment name here.); No; Don't Know."

Figure 2: Number and Percentage of Department of Defense Executive Agents That Reported Being Assessed and Whether That Assessment Was Documented, as of March 2017



Source: GAO analysis of Department of Defense questionnaire responses. | GAO-17-601

Among the DOD Executive Agents that indicated they were assessed and provided documentation of the assessment, we found that many did not meet all of the requirements for assessments as prescribed in DOD Directive 5101.1. Specifically, the OSD Principal Staff Assistants did not conduct the assessment at all or did not conduct it within the past 3 years.²⁷ Of the 15 respondents who indicated that the assessment was documented, 12 either provided documentation, the text of the document in their response but not the document itself, or a citation to a DOD issuance related to the DOD Executive Agent that we were able to find independently. The documentation provided included, for example, minutes of annual meetings reviewing DOD Executive Agent programs, assessments the DOD Executive Agent directed independent consultants

²⁷The directive also requires the assessment to include continued need for the DOD Executive Agent, as well as currency, effectiveness, and efficiency in satisfying end-user requirements. ODCMO officials told us that they have not defined continued need, currency, effectiveness, and efficiency in satisfying end-user requirements and defer to the OSD Principal Staff Assistants to define these terms based on their responsibilities, authorities, and expertise. As a result, we did not determine whether the assessments addressed the DOD Executive Agents' continued need, currency, effectiveness, and efficiency in satisfying end-user requirements.

to conduct, or delegations of authority from the head of the component designated to be the DOD Executive Agent to other officials.²⁸ Our review of these documents found that for half (6 of 12) of the DOD Executive Agents that provided documentation, the OSD Principal Staff Assistant did not conduct the assessment, and 3 of the 6 did not conduct it within the past 3 years, as shown in table 1 below. For example, the OSD Principal Staff Assistant did not conduct the assessments of the four DOD Executive Agents assigned to the Defense Logistics Agency (Subsistence, Bulk Petroleum, Construction/Barrier Material, and Medical Material). According to an official from the OSD Principal Staff Assistant's office, the OSD Principal Staff Assistant delegated the responsibility to conduct the assessment directly to the DOD Executive Agent in one case, and in the other three cases the OSD Principal Staff Assistant approved the DOD Executive Agent's decision to direct an independent consultant to conduct the assessments.²⁹

In addition, according to Army officials, 2 of the 12 documented assessments should not be considered assessments. Specifically, Army officials from the Office of the Administrative Assistant to the Secretary of the Army, the office that manages the Army's DOD Executive Agents, did not agree that the documentation submitted by two Army DOD Executive Agents should be considered an assessment. Specifically, the DOD Executive Agents for Chemical and Biological Defense Program and the DOD Executive Agent for the Contract Linguist Program submitted Army memorandums stating that the Secretary of the Army was delegating the responsibilities of the DOD Executive Agent to other offices within the

²⁸DOD Instruction 5025.01, *DOD Issuances Program*, requires that DOD issuances, including those designating a DOD Executive Agent, be reviewed annually to ensure currency and be reissued or updated, or their duration extended, at least every 10 years if still required. In one case, a respondent indicated that the reissuance of the DOD directive designating the DOD Executive Agent was evidence of the assessment required by DOD Directive 5101.1. Because DOD issuances are publically available, we obtained a copy of the DOD directive and used it for our review.

²⁹According to *Standards for Internal Control in the Federal Government*, management organizations, such as DOD Executive Agents, may find it beneficial to conduct self-assessments or direct evaluations to monitor their own performance. However, these management activities may not be a substitute for oversight activities because oversight organizations, such as OSD Principal Staff Assistants, may need to be independent from management organizations, such as DOD Executive Agents, to fulfill their oversight responsibilities. Thus, while DOD Directive 5101.1 does not prohibit other organizations from conducting assessments of the DOD Executive Agents, the OSD Principal Staff Assistants may need to consider the implications of using such assessments to exercise their oversight responsibilities.

Army. According to Army officials who prepared the memorandums, the Army did not conduct any review or assessment of the DOD Executive Agent while generating these memorandums.

Table 1: Analysis of Documentation of 12 Department of Defense (DOD) Executive Agent Assessments

DOD Executive Agent assignments	Was the assessment conducted by the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) Principal Staff Assistant?	Was the assessment completed within the past 3 years?	Assessment documentation provided
Defense Activity for Non-Traditional Education Support	●	●	Review of Troops to Teachers, one program operated by the DOD Executive Agent, focusing primarily on administrative and financial issues
Defense Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome Prevention Program	●	●	Minutes of annual meeting reviewing status and progress of the DOD Executive Agent's activities and allocating funding to projects
Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center	●	●	Minutes of Defense Language Steering Committee meeting, including review of center activities
Emergency Response to Transportation Mishaps	●	●	Reissued DOD Directive 6055.09E that established DOD Executive Agent
U.S. Southern Command Counterdrug Forward Operating Locations at Curaçao/Aruba	●	●	Budget justification documents discussing prior accomplishments and planned activities of the DOD Executive Agent
Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation	●	●	Minutes of Board of Visitors meeting, including annual review of institute's operations
Bulk Petroleum	○	●	Assessment conducted by office within the DOD Executive Agent
Chemical and Biological Defense Program	○	●	Text of memorandum delegating DOD Executive Agent responsibilities, functions, and authorities from Secretary of the Army to Vice Chief of Staff, Army and Assistant Secretary of the Army (Acquisition, Logistics and Technology)
Medical Materiel	○	●	Assessment conducted by an independent consultant
Construction/Barrier Materiel	○	○	Assessment conducted by an independent consultant
Contract Linguist Program	○	○	Memorandum delegating DOD Executive Agent responsibilities, functions, and authorities from Secretary of the Army to Army Deputy Chief of Staff, G-2
Subsistence	○	○	Assessment conducted by an independent consultant

Key:

● = Met requirement

○ = Did not meet requirement

Source: GAO analysis of Department of Defense documentation provided by DOD Executive Agent. | GAO-17-601

Note: The 12 DOD Executive Agents listed in this table provided documentation in response to GAO's question about assessments.

DOD Directive 5101.1 states that the OSD Principal Staff Assistant shall assess DOD Executive Agent assignments and arrangements associated with such assignments under their cognizance, as noted previously. The directive further states the assessments shall occur periodically, but not less than once every 3 years, to determine the DOD Executive Agent's continued need, currency, and effectiveness and efficiency in satisfying end-user requirements. In addition, *Standards for Internal Control in the Federal Government* state that documentation is a necessary part of an effective internal control system, and is required for the effective design, implementation, and operating effectiveness of an entity's internal control system.³⁰ The directive also assigns ODCMO the responsibility for overseeing the implementation of the directive.

ODCMO officials told us that they did not know whether the assessments were occurring, and neither requested nor received assessments. The officials stated that they have not ensured the completion of DOD Executive Agents assessments because they narrowly interpreted their responsibility to oversee the implementation of DOD Directive 5101.1. Specifically, ODCMO officials stated that their responsibilities were limited to providing advice to other DOD components that expressed interest in using the DOD Executive Agent designation and maintaining a list of DOD Executive Agent designations.

Further, we found that when the assessments were completed, according to the officials, the assessments were not always documented. While DOD Directive 5101.1 does not require the assessments to be documented, in the absence of such documentation, the OSD Principal Staff Assistant cannot demonstrate it has conducted an assessment in the past 3 years or that the assessment reviewed the DOD Executive Agent's continued need, currency, effectiveness, and efficiency in satisfying end-user requirements. According to DOD Directive 5101.1, ODCMO shall issue implementing guidance, which may include clarifying the responsibility of OSD Principal Staff Assistants in conducting assessments of DOD Executive Agents. ODCMO officials told us that they have not issued implementing guidance because they do not want to

³⁰ [GAO-14-704G](#).

be prescriptive in how OSD Principal Staff Assistants should assess DOD Executive Agents, as each DOD Executive Agent designation is unique. Therefore, ODCMO wants to provide flexibility in how those OSD Principal Staff Assistants conduct the assessments, including how they define the terms continued need, currency, and effectiveness and efficiency in satisfying end-user requirements. However, ODCMO could issue implementing guidance that ensures that the assessments are completed and documented. Several OSD Principal Staff Assistants with whom we spoke also told us that additional ODCMO guidance could help clarify the assessment requirement.

Without verifying that the OSD Principal Staff Assistants for all DOD Executive Agents have completed required assessments and providing implementing guidance requiring the documentation of the assessments, the department does not have reasonable assurance that OSD Principal Staff Assistants are assessing DOD Executive Agents or that DOD Executive Agents—as a management arrangement—are accomplishing department objectives. According to DOD officials, conducting these periodic assessments would assist the department in reviewing DOD Executive Agent designations to ensure that the department is managing its resources efficiently and effectively.

Conclusions

DOD Executive Agents can help the department further achieve its range of objectives more efficiently and effectively when additional coordination is needed to focus DOD resources and minimize duplication or redundancy of activities, among other things. However, ODCMO faces challenges in overseeing DOD Executive Agents. For example, ODCMO has weaknesses in its approach to tracking its DOD Executive Agents, making it difficult to determine how effectively the office is carrying out its responsibilities. Further, ODCMO does not ensure that OSD Principal Staff Assistants are conducting required assessments or that these assessments are documented in a manner that supports that DOD Executive Agents were assessed for continued need, currency, and effectiveness and efficiency in meeting end-user needs. Given its oversight responsibility for the DOD Executive Agent program, ODCMO should take action to ensure that requirements in DOD Directive 5101.1 are being met and that the program is being effectively implemented. Without this action, DOD does not know whether its Executive Agents are effective in meeting their intended purpose and may be missing opportunities to better manage its resources and activities department-wide.

Recommendations for Executive Action

We recommend that DOD's Deputy Chief Management Officer take the following three actions:

- strengthen its approach to track DOD Executive Agents to ensure that its list and contact information are current and complete;
- verify that the OSD Principal Staff Assistants for all DOD Executive Agents have completed their required assessments every 3 years; and
- issue implementing guidance that OSD Principal Staff Assistants should document the assessments of DOD Executive Agents, including documenting how the assessments address the DOD Executive Agents' continued need, currency, and effectiveness and efficiency in meeting end-user needs.

Agency Comments

We provided a draft of this report to DOD for review and comment. In written comments, which are summarized below and reprinted in appendix II, DOD concurred with our recommendations. In addition, DOD provided technical comments, which we have incorporated into the report as appropriate.

In its written comments, DOD stated that it plans to take several actions to implement the recommendations by the end of the first quarter of fiscal year 2018. Specifically, DOD stated that it will task the OSD Principal Staff Assistants to review the DOD Executive Agents under their cognizance, validate existing information, identify inaccuracies, and provide updated points of contact. In addition, DOD plans to issue guidance to the OSD Principal Staff Assistants to provide documentation of assessments completed in the last three years, and direct the OSD Principal Staff Assistants to initiate an assessment if one has not been completed in the last three years. Furthermore, this guidance will task OSD Principal Staff Assistants to conduct, document, and provide copies of these assessments for each DOD Executive Agent. Finally, DOD stated that the Deputy Chief Management Officer, once informed by the completed assessments of DOD Executive Agents, will take the necessary actions to enhance DOD Executive Agent oversight.

We are sending copies of this report to the appropriate congressional committees, the Secretary of Defense, and the Deputy Chief Management Officer. In addition, the report is available at no charge on the GAO website at <http://www.gao.gov>.

If you or your staff have any questions about this report, please contact me at (213) 830-1011 or vonaha@gao.gov. Contact points for our Offices of Congressional Relations and Public Affairs may be found on the last page of this report. GAO staff who made key contributions to this report are listed in appendix III.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Andrew J. Von Ah', with a stylized, cursive script.

Andrew J. Von Ah
Director, Defense Capabilities and Management

Appendix I: List of Department of Defense (DOD) Executive Agents

The Office of the Deputy Chief Management Officer (ODCMO) maintains a list of DOD Executive Agents. The list includes information about each DOD Executive Agent, such as the title of the DOD Executive Agent assignment, the office assigned as the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) Principal Staff Assistant, the department official who designated the DOD Executive Agent, and the date of the DOD Executive Agent assignment. To describe the number of DOD Executive Agents, we analyzed DOD’s list and DOD issuances designating the DOD Executive Agent assignment, and contacted department officials of each DOD Executive Agent. Below are four tables listing the DOD Executive Agent responsibilities assigned to the Secretary of the Army (see table 2), the Secretary of the Air Force (see table 3), the Secretary of the Navy, including the Marine Corps (see table 4), and the heads of other DOD components (see table 5).

Table 2: List of 38 Department of Defense (DOD) Executive Agents Assignments Designated to the Secretary of the Army, as of May 2017

DOD Executive Agent Assignment	Office of the Secretary of Defense Principal Staff Assistant
U.S. Military Entrance Processing Command	Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness
Armed Services Blood Program Office	Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness
Chemical and Biological Defense Program	Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics
Classified DOD Executive Agent (2003)	Under Secretary of Defense for Policy
Commander’s Emergency Response Program	Under Secretary of Defense for Policy ^a
Contract Linguist Program	Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness
Contracting for Operation New Dawn/Operation Enduring Freedom, Kuwait and Pakistan	Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics
Cyber Training Ranges	Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness
Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center	Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness
Department of Defense Biological Select Agents and Toxins Biosecurity Program	Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics ^b
Department of Defense Biological Select Agent and Toxin Biosafety Program	Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics
Training, Certification, and Physical Fitness Standards for Civilian Police Officers and Security Guards	Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness

**Appendix I: List of Department of Defense
(DOD) Executive Agents**

DOD Executive Agent Assignment	Office of the Secretary of Defense Principal Staff Assistant
Department of Defense Combat Feeding Research and Engineering Program	Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics
Department of Defense Detainee Operations Policy	Under Secretary of Defense for Policy
Investigation and Reporting of Reportable Incidents Against U.S. Personnel (DOD Law of War Program)	General Counsel
Department of Defense Level III Corrections	Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness
Department of Defense Passport and Passport Agent Services	Office of the Deputy Chief Management Officer
Department of Defense Personnel Support to the United Nations	Under Secretary of Defense for Policy
Department of Defense Biometrics	Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics
Emergency Response to Transportation Mishaps	Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics
Financial Disclosure Management–Ethics Reporting System	General Counsel
Forensics	Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics
Department of Defense Presence in the Georgia-U.S. Biosurveillance and Research Center	Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics ^c
Homeowners Assistance Program	Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics
Joint Center for International Security Force Assistance	Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff
Management of Land-Based Water Resources in Support of Contingency Operations	Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics
Medical Research for Prevention, Mitigation, and Treatment of Blast Injuries	Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics
Military Assistance to Safety and Traffic	Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics
Military Ground-Based Counter Radio- Controlled Improvised Explosive Device Electronic Warfare Technology ^d	Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics
Military Postal Service and Official Mail Program	Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics
Multinational Force and Observers Sinai	Under Secretary of Defense for Policy
Operation of After Government Employment Advice Repository	General Counsel

**Appendix I: List of Department of Defense
(DOD) Executive Agents**

DOD Executive Agent Assignment	Office of the Secretary of Defense Principal Staff Assistant
Registry of Members of the Armed Forces Exposed to Fumes of Burning Oil in Connection with Operation Desert Storm	Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness
Recovered Chemical Warfare Material Program within the United States	Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics
Recruiting Facilities Program	Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness
Specified DoD Support to Scouting Organizations and the American Red Cross	Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness
Unexploded Ordnance Center of Excellence	Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics
Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation	Under Secretary of Defense for Policy

Source: GAO analysis of Department of Defense information. | GAO-17-601

^aThe Office of the Deputy Chief Management Officer's (ODCMO) list identifies the OSD Principal Staff Assistant as the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy. However, the documentation for this DOD Executive Agent assigned oversight responsibility to both the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy and the Comptroller. Officials representing the DOD Executive Agent stated in their completed questionnaire responses that the OSD Principal Staff Assistant was the Under Secretary of Defense (Comptroller). Deputy Secretary of Defense Memorandum, *Management of the Commander's Emergency Response Program* (May 10, 2010); Under Secretary of Defense, Comptroller, Memorandum, *Commander's Emergency Response Program (CERP) Guidance* (May 9, 2007).

^bThe DOD Executive Agent for Biological Select Agents and Toxins Biosecurity Program was established in January 2017 and was therefore not on ODCMO's original list, provided to us in July 2016. The Deputy Secretary of Defense memorandum designating the Secretary of the Army as the DOD Executive Agent of this assignment did not identify a OSD Principal Staff Assistant. However, the memorandum recommended that this assignment be aligned with a similar assignment for the Biological Select Agents and Toxins Biosafety program. Deputy Secretary of Defense Memorandum, *Designation of the Department of Defense Executive Agent for the Biological Select Agents and Toxins Biosecurity Program* (Jan. 3, 2017). The OSD Principal Staff Assistant for the biosafety program is the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics, and Army officials stated that they are assuming that the OSD Principal Staff Assistant is the same for both the biosecurity and biosafety programs.

^cODCMO's list identifies the OSD Principal Staff Assistant as the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics. However, the Deputy Secretary of Defense memorandum designating this DOD Executive Agent assignment stated that an office reporting to the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics, in conjunction with an office reporting to the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, will review the plan to develop a DOD directive assigning the Army as the DOD Executive Agent. In the questionnaire response, the DOD Executive Agent respondent did not know who served as the OSD Principal Staff Assistant.

^dAlthough DOD Directive 5101.14 designated the Secretary of the Navy as the DOD Executive Agent, the Secretary of the Army acts as the DOD Executive Agent. Deputy Secretary of Defense Memorandum, *Designation of the Secretary of the Army as the Department of Defense Executive Agent for Military Ground-Based Counter Radio-Controlled Improvised Explosive Device Electronic Warfare Technology* (Dec. 1, 2013) (designating the Secretary of the Army as the DOD Executive Agent); DOD Directive 5101.14, *DOD Executive Agent and Single Manager for Military Ground-Based Counter Radio-Controlled Improvised Explosive Device Electronic Warfare (CREW) Technology* (June 11, 2007) (incorporating change 1, July 12, 2012) (certified current through June 11, 2014).

Table 3: List of 21 Department of Defense (DOD) Executive Agent Assignments Designated to the Secretary of the Air Force, as of May 2017

DOD Executive Agent Assignment	Office of the Secretary of Defense Principal Staff Assistant
Active Duty Determinations for Civilians or Contractual Groups	Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness
Anti-Tamper	Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics
Armed Forces Entertainment	Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness
Common Data Link Research and Development	Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics
Defense Cyber Crime Center	Chief Information Officer
Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute	Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness
Defense Language Institute English Language Center	Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness
Defense Production Act Title III Program	Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics
Department of Defense Foreign Clearance Program	Under Secretary of Defense for Policy
Department of Defense Military Working Dog Program	Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness
Designating and Naming Military Aerospace Vehicles	Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics
Digital and Multimedia Forensics	Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics
Federal Legal Information Through Electronics	General Counsel
Global Positioning System Program	Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics
Concepts Development and Management Office	Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence
Modeling & Simulation Objectives in the Air and Space Natural Environment ^a	Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics
Support to National Science Foundation Division of Polar Programs	Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness
R-2508 Complex Enhancement Program	Director, Operational Test and Evaluation ^b
Space Test Program	Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics
U.S. Southern Command Counterdrug Forward Operating Locations at Curaçao/Aruba	Under Secretary of Defense for Policy

**Appendix I: List of Department of Defense
(DOD) Executive Agents**

DOD Executive Agent Assignment	Office of the Secretary of Defense Principal Staff Assistant
Unified Platform and the Cyber Situational Awareness and Battle Management System	Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics

Source: GAO analysis of Department of Defense information. | GAO-17-601

^aAccording to officials from the Office of the Deputy Chief Management Officer (ODCMO), Air Force, and the DOD Modeling and Simulation Coordination Office, there used to be other organizations designated as DOD Executive Agents for other modeling and simulation areas. However, according to DOD Directive 5000.59, these DOD Executive Agents were to transition to Coordination Agents. Air Force officials stated that the transition to the new terminology would take place with the issuance of an instruction and the cancellation of the directive, which are being held until the reorganization of the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics is complete. DOD Directive 5000.59, *DOD Modeling Simulation (M&S) Management* (Aug. 8, 2007).

^bThe OSD Principal Staff Assistant was recorded as the Director, Operational Test and Evaluation, on ODCMO's original list. However, the documentation for this DOD Executive Agent did not specify an OSD Principal Staff Assistant. *Memorandum of Agreement between the Department of Transportation Federal Aviation Administration and the Department of the Air Force for Implementation of the R-2508 Complex Enhancement Program* (Apr. 11, 1979).

Table 4: List of 9 Department of Defense (DOD) Executive Agent Assignments Designated to the Secretary of the Navy (including the Marine Corps), as of May 2017

DOD Executive Agent Assignment	Office of the Secretary of Defense Principal Staff Assistant
Defense Activity for Non-Traditional Education Support	Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness
Defense Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome Prevention Program	Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness
Defense Resources Management Institute	Under Secretary of Defense (Comptroller)/Chief Financial Officer
Development and Maintenance of the "Catch a Serial Offender" Program Server and Searchable Database	Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness
Force Protection of Military Sealift Assets	Under Secretary of Defense for Policy ^a
High School News Service	Assistant Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs ^b
Maritime Domain Awareness	Under Secretary of Defense for Policy
Non-Lethal Weapons	Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics
Printed Circuit Board and Interconnect Technology	Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics

Source: GAO analysis of Department of Defense information. | GAO-17-601

^aThe OSD Principal Staff Assistant was recorded as the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy on the Office of the Deputy Chief Management Officer's (ODCMO) original list. However, the documentation for this DOD Executive Agent did not specify an OSD Principal Staff Assistant. Secretary of Defense Memorandum, *DOD Executive Agent for Force Protection of Military Sealift Assets* (Oct. 3, 2003).

**Appendix I: List of Department of Defense
(DOD) Executive Agents**

Furthermore, since we found that this designation's status was unclear, we were unable to verify this information.

^bODCMO's list identifies the OSD Principal Staff Assistant as the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs. However, the documentation for this DOD Executive Agent did not identify an OSD Principal Staff Assistant. Furthermore, as discussed above, this designation's status was unclear.

Table 5: List of 13 Department of Defense (DOD) Executive Agent Assignments Designated to the Heads of Other Department of Defense (DOD) Components, as of May 2017

Department of Defense Component	DOD Executive Agent Assignment	Office of the Secretary of Defense Principal Staff Assistant
Defense Information Systems Agency	Information Technology Standards	Chief Information Officer
Defense Intelligence Agency	Security of Department of Defense Personnel at U.S. Missions Abroad	Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence
Defense Logistics Agency	Bulk Petroleum	Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics
Defense Logistics Agency	Construction and Barrier Materiel	Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics
Defense Logistics Agency	Defense Logistics Management Standards	Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics
Defense Logistics Agency	Medical Materiel	Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics
Defense Logistics Agency	Subsistence	Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics
Defense Security Cooperation Agency	Department of Defense Regional Centers for Security Studies	Under Secretary of Defense for Policy
Defense Threat Reduction Agency	Weapons of Mass Destruction Elimination Operations in Iraq	Under Secretary of Defense (Comptroller)/Chief Financial Officer ^a
Defense Threat Reduction Agency	Weapons of Mass Destruction Elimination Operations in Libya	Under Secretary of Defense for Policy
Department of Defense Test Resource Management Center	Cyber Test Ranges	Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics
Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness	Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program	Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness ^b

**Appendix I: List of Department of Defense
(DOD) Executive Agents**

U.S. Transportation Command	Customs and Border Clearance Program	Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics
--------------------------------	---	--

Source: GAO analysis of Department of Defense information. | GAO-17-601

^aThe DOD Executive Agent for Weapons of Mass Destruction Elimination Operations in Iraq was missing from the Office of the Deputy Chief Management Officer's (ODCMO) original list, provided to us in July 2016. The Secretary of Defense memorandum designating the Director of the Defense Threat Reduction Agency as the DOD Executive Agent of this assignment did not specifically identify an OSD Principal Staff Assistant. However, the memorandum stated that the Under Secretary of Defense (Comptroller) shall issue such instructions as may be necessary to implement this memorandum. Secretary of Defense Memorandum, *Designation of Director, DTRA as Department of Defense Executive Agent for Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) Elimination Operations in Iraq* (Mar. 7, 2003).

^bSection 582 of Public Law 110-181 directed the Secretary of Defense to designate the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness as the DOD Executive Agent for the Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program. DOD Instruction 1342.28, designating the DOD Executive Agent assignment, does not indicate which office serves as the OSD Principal Staff Assistant. DOD Instruction 1342.28, *DOD Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program (YRRP)* (Mar. 30, 2011). ODCMO's list identifies the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness as the OSD Principal Staff Assistant. According to DOD officials, there would be no other OSD Principal Staff Assistant to oversee this Executive Agent except for the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness.

Appendix II: Comments from the Department of Defense



DEPUTY CHIEF MANAGEMENT OFFICER
9010 DEFENSE PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, DC 20301-9010

September 11, 2017

Mr. Andrew J. Von Ah
Director, Defense Capabilities and Management
U.S. Government Accountability Office
441 G Street, NW
Washington, DC 20548

Dear Mr. Von Ah:

This is the Department of Defense (DoD) response to the Government Accountability Office (GAO) Draft Report, GAO-17-601, "DEFENSE MANAGEMENT: DoD Needs to Improve Its Oversight of Executive Agents," dated July 24, 2017 (GAO Code 100985). We concur with the recommendations and provide the attached official written comments for inclusion in the report.

The Department appreciates the opportunity to respond to your draft report. We look forward to continued cooperation and dialog toward our common goal of improving application and oversight of DoD Executive Agent designations, which are important management arrangements in the DoD.

Should you have any questions, please contact Ms. Jennifer Cole, 703-614-1447, jennifer.s.cole12.civ@mail.mil.

Sincerely,

TILLOTSON.DAVID
D.III.1109966815

David Tillotson III
Acting

Enclosure:
As stated

GAO DRAFT REPORT DATED JULY 24, 2017
GAO-17-601 (GAO CODE 100985)

“DEFENSE MANAGEMENT: DOD NEEDS TO IMPROVE ITS OVERSIGHT OF
EXECUTIVE AGENTS”

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE COMMENTS
TO THE GAO RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATION 1: The GAO recommends that the Secretary of Defense direct the Deputy Chief Management Officer develop an approach to track DoD Executive Agents to ensure that DoD’s list and contact information are current and complete.

DoD RESPONSE: Concur. The Office of the Deputy Chief Management Officer will continue to refine the list of DoD Executive Agent designations posted on the DoD Executive Agent website. To further inform our tracking effort, we will task the Office of the Secretary of Defense Principal Staff Assistants to review DoD Executive Agents under their cognizance, validate existing information, identify inaccuracies, and provide updated points of contact. We anticipate completing this action, in tandem with actions taken to address Recommendations 2 and 3, by the end of the First Quarter of Fiscal Year 2018.

RECOMMENDATION 2: The GAO recommends that the Secretary of Defense direct the Deputy Chief Management Officer verify that the Principal Staff Assistants for all Executive Agents have completed their required assessments every three years.

DoD RESPONSE: Concur. While DoD Directive 5101.1, “DoD Executive Agent,” codifies the responsibility of the Office of the Secretary of Defense Principal Staff Assistants to review and assess the DoD Executive Agent designations under their cognizance, we recognize that additional guidance and oversight would be helpful. To this end, the Office of the Deputy Chief Management Officer will issue guidance to the Office of the Secretary of Defense Principal Staff Assistants to provide documentation of assessments completed in the last three years, or direct the Office of the Secretary of Defense Principal Staff Assistants to initiate an assessment of those arrangements that have not been evaluated in the last three years. We anticipate completing this action by the end of the First Quarter of Fiscal Year 2018. The results of this effort will generate recommendations for the disposition of DoD Executive Agent arrangements (continue, modify, or cancel), which may require Deputy Secretary of Defense decision (e.g., decisions to modify or cancel an existing DoD Executive Agent arrangement must be approved by the Secretary or Deputy Secretary of Defense) and/or updates to relevant DoD Issuances. This effort will also require the identification of appropriate points of contact to facilitate compliance with Recommendation 1. Once this comprehensive review is complete, it will allow us to reset the DoD Executive Agent baseline inventory, make necessary updates to the DoD Executive Agent website, and fulfill and officially record the periodic assessment requirement, as established in DoDD 5101.1.

RECOMMENDATION 3: The GAO recommends that the Secretary of Defense direct the Deputy Chief Management Officer issue implementing guidance that the Office of the Secretary of Defense Principal Staff Assistants should document the assessments of the Executive Agents, including documenting how the assessments address the Executive Agents' continued need, currency, and effectiveness and efficiency in meeting end user needs.

DoD RESPONSE: Concur. As noted in the response to Recommendations 1 and 2, the Office of the Deputy Chief Management Officer will issue guidance to the Office of the Secretary of Defense Principal Staff Assistants to conduct, document, and/or provide copies of these assessments for each DoD Executive Agent. The guidance will provide a template for the assessment that will facilitate compliance with all three recommendations. We anticipate completing this action by the end of the First Quarter of Fiscal Year 2018. Informed by the these assessments, the Deputy Chief Management Officer will take the necessary action to update/refine process and procedural improvements that will enhance DoD Executive Agent oversight. Lastly, the Office of the Deputy Chief Management Officer will review the current standardized language regarding DoD Executive Agent assessments that exists in certain Office of the Secretary of Defense Principal Staff Assistants' chartering directive to ensure this language is accurate and appropriate and is consistently included in all applicable chartering directives during ongoing updates.

Appendix III: GAO Contact and Staff Acknowledgments

GAO Contact

Andrew Von Ah, (213) 830-1011 or vonaha@gao.gov

Staff Acknowledgments

In addition to the individual named above, key contributors to this report were Tina Won Sherman (Assistant Director), Angeline Bickner, Carolynn Cavanuagh, Tim DiNapoli, Mae Frances Jones, Lori Kmetz, Kirsten Lauber, Shari Nikoo, Daniel Ramsey, Michael Silver, and Matthew Ullengren.

GAO's Mission

The Government Accountability Office, the audit, evaluation, and investigative arm of Congress, exists to support Congress in meeting its constitutional responsibilities and to help improve the performance and accountability of the federal government for the American people. GAO examines the use of public funds; evaluates federal programs and policies; and provides analyses, recommendations, and other assistance to help Congress make informed oversight, policy, and funding decisions. GAO's commitment to good government is reflected in its core values of accountability, integrity, and reliability.

Obtaining Copies of GAO Reports and Testimony

The fastest and easiest way to obtain copies of GAO documents at no cost is through GAO's website (<http://www.gao.gov>). Each weekday afternoon, GAO posts on its website newly released reports, testimony, and correspondence. To have GAO e-mail you a list of newly posted products, go to <http://www.gao.gov> and select "E-mail Updates."

Order by Phone

The price of each GAO publication reflects GAO's actual cost of production and distribution and depends on the number of pages in the publication and whether the publication is printed in color or black and white. Pricing and ordering information is posted on GAO's website, <http://www.gao.gov/ordering.htm>.

Place orders by calling (202) 512-6000, toll free (866) 801-7077, or TDD (202) 512-2537.

Orders may be paid for using American Express, Discover Card, MasterCard, Visa, check, or money order. Call for additional information.

Connect with GAO

Connect with GAO on [Facebook](#), [Flickr](#), [LinkedIn](#), [Twitter](#), and [YouTube](#). Subscribe to our [RSS Feeds](#) or [E-mail Updates](#). Listen to our [Podcasts](#). Visit GAO on the web at www.gao.gov and read [The Watchblog](#).

To Report Fraud, Waste, and Abuse in Federal Programs

Contact:

Website: <http://www.gao.gov/fraudnet/fraudnet.htm>

E-mail: fraudnet@gao.gov

Automated answering system: (800) 424-5454 or (202) 512-7470

Congressional Relations

Katherine Siggerud, Managing Director, siggerudk@gao.gov, (202) 512-4400, U.S. Government Accountability Office, 441 G Street NW, Room 7125, Washington, DC 20548

Public Affairs

Chuck Young, Managing Director, youngc1@gao.gov, (202) 512-4800 U.S. Government Accountability Office, 441 G Street NW, Room 7149 Washington, DC 20548

Strategic Planning and External Liaison

James-Christian Blockwood, Managing Director, spel@gao.gov, (202) 512-4707 U.S. Government Accountability Office, 441 G Street NW, Room 7814, Washington, DC 20548



Please Print on Recycled Paper.