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September 28, 2010

The Honorable Carl Levin
Chairman
The Honorable John McCain
Ranking Member
Committee on Armed Services
United States Senate

The Honorable Ike Skelton
Chairman
The Honorable Howard P. McKeon
Ranking Member
Committee on Armed Services
House of Representatives

Subject: Weapons of Mass Destruction: Actions Needed to Track Budget Execution for Counterproliferation Programs and Better Align Resources with Combating WMD Strategy

Combating weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and their means of delivery is one of the greatest challenges the United States faces.¹ Traditionally, the use of WMD—which include chemical, biological, radiological, or nuclear weapons—has been constrained by the logic of deterrence and of diplomacy, but these constraints may be of less utility in preventing the use of WMD by rogue states or terrorist groups. The Department of Defense (DOD) assigns top priority to dissuading, deterring, and defeating those who seek to harm the United States directly, especially extremist enemies with WMD.

In 1994, Congress established an interagency committee, now known as the Counterproliferation Program Review Committee (CPRC), with a variety of duties related to coordinating the activities and programs of federal agencies that address improvements in the U.S. government's efforts to combat WMD.² The Secretary of Defense, as chairman of the CPRC, is required to report its findings biennially.³ The Departments of Energy, State, and Homeland Security and the Office of the Director of National Intelligence are also members of the CPRC, and must provide it with access to information on all pertinent programs,

¹ Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Publication 3-40, *Combating Weapons of Mass Destruction* (June 10, 2009) I-1.

² National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 1994, Pub. L. No. 103-160, §1605 (1993) (as amended) (22 U.S.C. § 2751 note).

³ National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 1995, Pub. L. No. 103-337, §1503 (1994) (as amended) (22 U.S.C. § 2751 note).

Report Documentation Page

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projects, and activities.⁴ The Assistant to the Secretary of Defense for Nuclear and Chemical and Biological Defense Programs, as chairman of the CPRC Standing Committee, compiles the report of the CPRC and submits it to Congress biennially.

GAO has reported extensively in recent years on nonproliferation and consequence management – two of the three pillars of combating WMD. Our most recent report on the third pillar, counterproliferation, was issued in 2000.⁵ DOD defines counterproliferation as “those actions taken to defeat the threat and/or use of WMD against the United States, our military forces, friends, and allies.”

House Armed Services Committee Report 111-166 accompanying the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2010, directed GAO to assess and report on DOD and interagency counterproliferation activities, including the extent to which (1) existing strategies for the combating WMD mission are effective and the strategic framework encompasses a common lexicon, (2) DOD has developed comprehensive plans that are integrated across combating WMD mission areas, and (3) counterproliferation programs and related funding support DOD plans and strategies.⁶

In response to discussions with your staff, this report focuses on the extent to which DOD counterproliferation programs and related funding support DOD plans and strategies.⁷ You asked us to focus on the third objective at this time, to inform Congress as it deliberates on the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2011. We expect to issue our final report, which will address all three objectives, later this year.

Scope and Methodology

To assess the extent to which counterproliferation programs and related funding support DOD plans and strategies, we reviewed the reports of the CPRC since 2004 and data from the Future Years Defense Program. We also reviewed capability-based assessments on the counterproliferation mission areas and other inputs to the Joint Requirements Oversight Council and the Interagency Combating WMD Database of Responsibilities, Authorities, and Capabilities. We also interviewed officials from the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics; the Office of Cost Assessment and Program Evaluation, the Joint Staff; the Joint Requirements Office for Chemical Biological Radiological and Nuclear Defense; and the U.S. Strategic Command. We reviewed several analyses that had identified capability gaps and shortfalls in counterproliferation programs in order to determine whether the gap lists were consistent with one another. We also analyzed data from the CPRC reports and the Future Years Defense Program in order to assess trends in counterproliferation spending. This report analyzes strategies and budget information published as of March 2010, but our final report will incorporate any new or revised information that may be published in the coming months. To assess the reliability of the data, we spoke with a key DOD official responsible for incorporating DOD inputs into the report, and we determined that the data were sufficiently reliable for our purposes.

⁴ The membership of the CPRC was most recently updated by § 1256 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2008, Pub. L. No. 110-181 (2008).

⁵ GAO, *Weapons of Mass Destruction: DOD's Efforts Should Be More Integrated and Focused*, GAO/NSIAD-00-97 (Washington, D.C., May 26, 2000).

⁶ H. Rep. No. 111-166, at 362-363 (2009).

⁷ This is an unclassified version of a previously-issued classified report.

We conducted this performance audit from August 2009 through May 2010 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 obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives.

Summary

Although DOD compiles a biennial list of programs “strongly related to combating WMD” and related costs, it cannot identify with precision what proportion of its resources are devoted specifically to counterproliferation. One of the key elements of an effective national strategy is identifying resources and investments necessary to execute that strategy. However, the CPRC report provides information on only budget requests; it does not provide any data on budget authority or actual outlays. In addition, visibility over how the department’s resources support its counterproliferation strategies is limited, in part because those resources are not comprehensively aligned with gaps in counterproliferation capabilities identified by the Joint Staff based on inputs from the combatant commands and other DOD sources. Moreover, efforts across DOD to align resources with identified gaps in its ability to carry out its counterproliferation strategy have not been fully integrated into DOD’s budget process. Although the 2009 CPRC report shows what mission areas the various programs/program elements are responsive to, it does not show what functional capability gaps they are designed to mitigate. As a result, the report does not present congressional decision makers with a clear portrait of how counter-WMD gaps translate into DOD funding priorities. We are recommending that DOD report actual appropriations and expenditures as well as budget requests related to counterproliferation in the CPRC report and that DOD align prioritized counterproliferation capability gaps with programs and resources.

Background

Congress has long been concerned about the spread and threat of weapons of mass destruction. In response, the federal government has developed a strategy at the national and government-wide levels for combating WMD. This includes assigning responsibility throughout DOD and coordinating the combating WMD efforts of U.S. government departments and agencies.

Congress established a commission, in 1996, to assess the organization of the federal government to combat the proliferation of WMD.⁸ The commission recommended, among other things, that the President ensure that the federal government formulate a strategy for combating WMD. In December 2002, the White House published the *National Strategy to Combat Weapons of Mass Destruction*, which identifies three pillars of effort for combating WMD: counterproliferation, nonproliferation, and consequence management. The strategy includes a statement that U.S. military and civilian agencies must possess the full range of operational capabilities to counter the threat and use of WMD by states and terrorists against the United States, U.S. military forces, and friends and allies. The strategy listed three specific counterproliferation capabilities that the United States would need in order to deter and defend against the full range of possible WMD employment scenarios: interdiction, deterrence, and defense and mitigation. In February 2006, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs

⁸ Intelligence Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 1997, Pub. L. No. 104-293, §§ 711-717 (1996).

of Staff published the *National Military Strategy to Combat Weapons of Mass Destruction*, which drew on the 2002 national strategy. The chairman wrote that the military strategic goal for combating WMD is to ensure that the United States, its Armed Forces, allies, partners and interests are neither coerced nor attacked with WMD. The strategy further described eight mission areas that collectively strengthen the three pillars. These eight mission areas are security cooperation and partnership activities, threat reduction cooperation, consequence management, interdiction, elimination, passive defense, active defense, and offensive operations.⁹

Responsibility for achieving the broad goal of combating WMD is spread throughout DOD. Four Under Secretaries of Defense, the Assistant to the Secretary of Defense for Nuclear and Chemical and Biological Defense Programs, defense agencies, the military services, Joint Staff, and geographic and functional combatant commands are all assigned combating WMD responsibilities.¹⁰ For example, the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics is tasked to develop a comprehensive research, development, and acquisition strategy for the eight mission areas to combat WMD. The Secretaries of the Military Departments organize, train, equip, and otherwise prepare their respective forces to combat WMD, means of delivery, and related materials. The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff serves as the principal military advisor to the President, the National Security Council, and the Secretary of Defense regarding combating WMD activities. The Commanders of the Combatant Commands are to be prepared to perform combating WMD missions in permissive, uncertain, and hostile environments and coordinate efforts with other U.S. government agencies, partners, friends, and allies, as directed. In 2005, the Secretary of Defense assigned U.S. Strategic Command as the lead combatant command for the combating WMD mission, and assigned it the tasks of synchronizing DOD planning and advocating for combating WMD capabilities. To accomplish this mission, the U.S. Strategic Command established the Center for Combating WMD later that year to plan, advocate and advise on WMD-related matters.

The Under Secretary of Defense (Comptroller) is responsible for administering DOD planning, programming, and budgeting systems, as well as supervising and directing the formulation and presentation of DOD budgets. The Director, Cost Assessment and Program Evaluation, has responsibilities for providing analysis, advice, and recommendations to the Planning and Programming phases of the Planning, Programming, Budgeting, and Execution system, as well as for managing its program review phase.

Identification of capabilities needed by combatant commanders is done through the Joint Capabilities Integration and Development System. This system supports the acquisition process by identifying and assessing capability needs and associated performance criteria to be used as a basis for acquiring the right capabilities. The process starts with the development of a Capabilities-Based Assessment, which identifies and validates capability gaps, and may recommend types of solutions to address the capability gap.

DOD also coordinates its efforts with other federal agencies. DOD compiles combating WMD efforts by U.S. Government departments and agencies in its Interagency Combating WMD Database of Responsibilities, Authorities, and Capabilities System, which the Defense Threat Reduction Agency and U.S. Strategic Command's Center for Combating WMD

⁹ Department of Defense, *National Military Strategy to Combat Weapons of Mass Destruction* (Washington, D.C., February 2006), 22-27.

¹⁰ DOD Directive 2060.02, *Department of Defense (DOD) Combating Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) Policy* (Apr. 19, 2007).

developed and maintains. The National Security Council has endorsed the database and directed all U.S. government departments and agencies to work with the Center for Combating WMD in populating and validating their respective combating WMD information in the system.

Proportion of DOD Resources Used for Counterproliferation Programs and Relationship between Those Resources and Strategies or Budget Requests Are Unclear

DOD Cannot Precisely Identify What Proportion of Its Resources Are Specifically Devoted to Counterproliferation

Although DOD compiles a biennial list of combating WMD programs and related costs, it cannot identify with precision what proportion of its resources are devoted specifically to counterproliferation. The biennial CPRC report is the principal executive branch report on activities and programs that provide technologies and capabilities to combat WMD. Although the CPRC reports budget requests, not budget authority or actual outlays, DOD officials told us that the CPRC reports are the only compilation of combating WMD programs and budgets within DOD. The biennial report contains a list of programs and other activities that “directly support, or are strongly related to, the area of combating WMD” and related budget requests that are summarized by WMD mission area.¹¹ These mission areas are components of the three pillars for combating WMD as set forth in the *National Strategy to Combat WMD*. Table 1 shows the three pillars and their corresponding mission areas.

Table 1: Pillars for Combating WMD

Pillars	Mission Areas
Nonproliferation	Security Cooperation and Partner Activities
	Threat Reduction Cooperation
Counterproliferation	Interdiction
	Elimination
	Offensive Operations
	Active Defense
	Passive Defense
Consequence Management	Consequence Management

Source: DOD

Note: The CPRC includes “intelligence” as a ninth “area for capability enhancement” along with the eight mission areas.

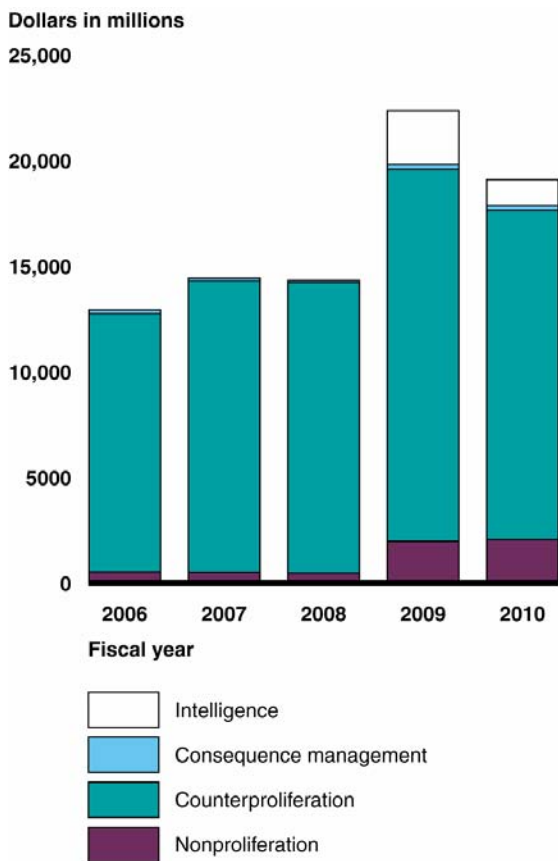
Although the CPRC reports contain a large amount of information about requested funding for counterproliferation programs, limitations to the CPRC data prevent DOD from being able to identify its resources for counterproliferation with precision. First, some programs span multiple mission areas. For example, in the 2009 report, 43 out of 228 programs supported at least two mission areas, and 12 supported more than two mission areas. Antibiotics or vaccines against biological agents were listed in both the passive defense and consequence management areas, and consequently, as elements of both the counterproliferation and consequence management pillars. The total funding for each

¹¹ The CPRC reports use the term Areas for Capability Enhancement —broad and comprehensive areas for combating WMD that provide a framework for reviewing progress, assessing combating WMD requirements, and measuring investment in technologies and capabilities for combating WMD. They reflect the *National Military Strategy to Combat WMD* mission areas and strategic enablers.

mission area can vary, depending how funding for these programs is allocated. Second, some programs span counterproliferation and other DOD missions. For example, hardened and deeply buried target defeat is included in the offensive operations mission area, but the capability could also be used to hold non-WMD targets at risk. Moreover, such programs both leverage and depend on much larger investments, such as intelligence assets and command and control infrastructure. Third, with respect to intelligence programs, the report only contains data on selected DOD intelligence programs that are related to combating WMD. No annex was published about “special compartmented information” or other special access programs, despite the statutory requirement to include such an annex, which might have provided information on the full range of programs in DOD and national intelligence programs. Hence, budget amounts contained in the CPRC report should be considered approximate.

According to the CPRC report, DOD requested about \$19.1 billion in fiscal year 2010 funding for all programs strongly related to combating WMD. Figure 1 illustrates the CPRC’s alignment of DOD’s fiscal years 2006 through 2010 budget request for these programs, by pillar.

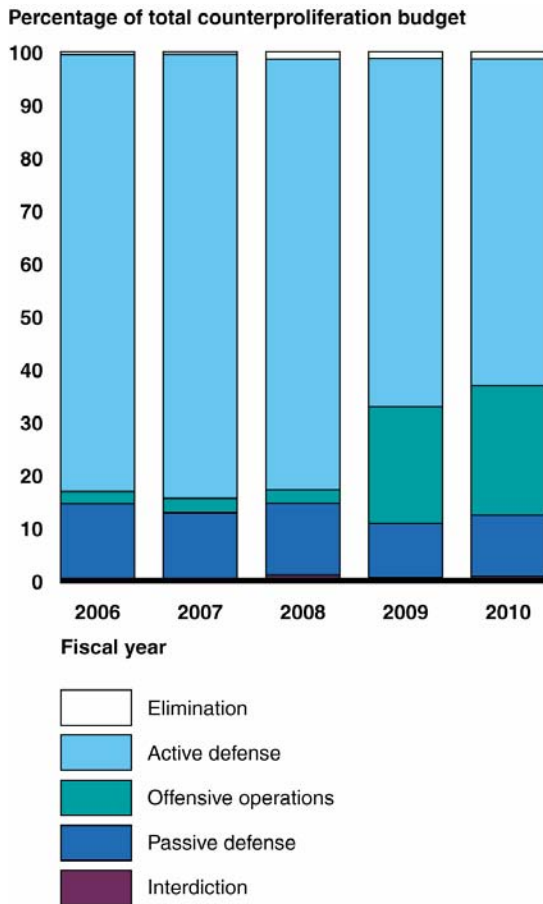
Figure 1: DOD Budget Requests for Combating WMD, Fiscal Years 2006 Through 2010



Source: Counterproliferation Program Review Committee, *Report on Activities and Programs for Countering Proliferation and NBC Terrorism* (July 2009).

Figure 2 shows the CPRC’s estimates of budget requests since 2006 (when the CPRC began to report budget data by mission area) for each of the five combating WMD mission areas most strongly related to counterproliferation.

Figure 2: Relative Percentage of Budget Requests for Counterproliferation Mission Areas



Source: Counterproliferation Program Review Committee, *Report on Activities and Programs for Countering Proliferation and NBC Terrorism* (May 2005, May 2006, May 2007, and July 2009).

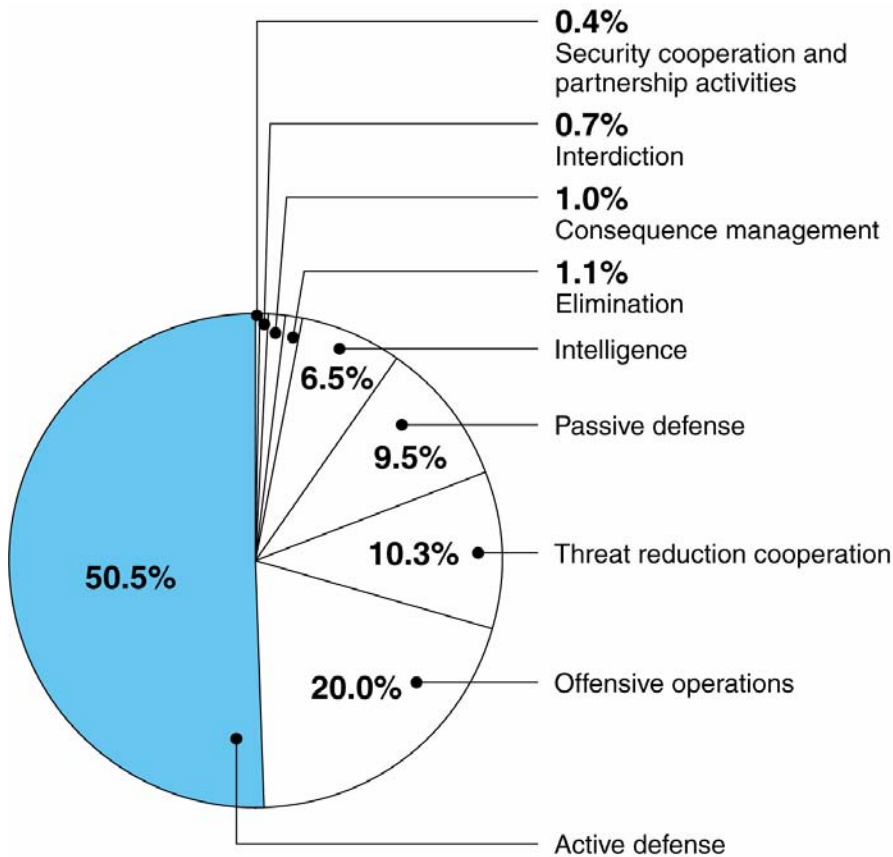
Notes: The increase in the Offensive Operations mission area after fiscal year 2008 is related to the first-time inclusion of funding for DOD nuclear strike force capabilities. In cases where programs were listed under multiple mission areas, funding was tabulated under the first-listed, or primary, mission area.

Figure 2 also illustrates that – according to the CPRC report – aside from offensive operations, shares of reported requests for each mission area have not changed significantly since 2006, and active defense – which includes ballistic missile defense – has accounted for more than 60 percent of total counterproliferation requests each year. Offensive operations, which are actions to disrupt, neutralize, or destroy a weapon of mass destruction before it can be used, or to deter subsequent use of such weapons, primarily encompass conventional and strategic nuclear forces. The 2009 CPRC report states that U.S. nuclear forces contribute uniquely and fundamentally to strategic deterrence through their ability to impose costs and deny benefits to an adversary in an exceedingly rapid and devastating manner.

WMD active defense includes, but is broader than, missile defense. It is “active measures to defeat an attack with chemical, biological, radiological, or nuclear weapons by employing actions to divert, neutralize, or destroy those weapons or their means of delivery while en route to their target.” Examples of activities are missile defense, air defense, special operations, and security operations, capabilities which become more critical as the adversary develops a WMD employment capability. Figure 3 depicts CPRC data indicating the relative

percentage of DOD resources that the CPRC estimates were devoted to each of the eight combating WMD mission areas, plus intelligence, in the fiscal year 2010 budget request.

Figure 3: Estimated Fiscal Year 2010 Combating WMD Budget Request by Mission Area



Source: Counterproliferation Program Review Committee, *Report on Activities and Programs for Countering Proliferation and NBC Terrorism* (July 2009).

DOD requested about \$8.6 billion in funding for programs unique to active defense for fiscal year 2010. Of this, about \$6.7 billion was for ballistic missile defense research and development programs out of a total of about \$7.1 billion for ballistic missile defense programs.

Budget Requests for Combating WMD Do Not Fully Relate to Appropriations and Expenditures

We have found from prior work that an effective national strategy identifies what the strategy will cost, identifies the sources and types of resources and investments needed to execute that strategy, and designates where those resources and investments should be targeted.¹²

Although the CPRC report provides information on budget requests, it does not provide any data on budget authority or actual outlays. We found that for the passive defense mission area, there are DOD reports that link budget requests to authorizations or outlays, and there are some data for other counterproliferation mission areas, but no single source of DOD

¹² GAO, *Defense Management: Comprehensive Strategy and Annual Reporting Are Needed to Measure Progress and Costs of DOD's Global Posture Restructuring*, GAO-06-852 (Washington, D.C., Sept. 13, 2006).

budget information links counterproliferation programs to spending information. As a result, it may be more difficult for the CPRC to fulfill some of its statutory purposes, such as optimizing funding and establishing priorities for programs and funding.

DOD Counterproliferation Resources Are Not Clearly Aligned with Strategies

DOD has – as part of its own internal efforts and as part of the CPRC – made progress in delineating the kinds of programs it has pursued for counterproliferation. For example, the *2009 Report to Congress on Weapons and Capabilities to Defeat Hardened and Deeply Buried Targets* relates key performance parameters for some counterproliferation programs to planned and actual funding.¹³ However, DOD does not clearly demonstrate how the resources it devotes to “programs strongly related to combating WMD” support counterproliferation strategies. As we have reported in the past,¹⁴ increased globalization, changing security threats, and rapid technological advances have prompted fundamental changes in the environment in which DOD operates and have placed a premium on effective accountability and maintaining transparency. However, both within and outside of DOD, visibility over how the department’s resources support the counterproliferation elements of its combating WMD strategies is limited – not only because DOD cannot clearly identify what resources it devotes to its counterproliferation mission areas, but also because those resources are not comprehensively aligned with gaps in counterproliferation capabilities.

Over the past 4 years, the Joint Staff has prepared capabilities-based assessments of the eight combating WMD mission areas and has identified gaps.¹⁵ As part of this process, the Joint Staff assessed potential solutions in each mission area and categorized them broadly by affordability, identifying solutions as either no, very low, low, medium, or high cost. In the midst of the joint staff’s assessment process, U.S. Strategic Command, in its role as global integrator and synchronizer of combating WMD efforts, also developed a Joint Capabilities Document that included a prioritized list of 35 combating WMD capability gaps that were integrated across all eight mission areas. DOD has used the Joint Capabilities Document as input into the budget process, but the document’s role is to prioritize requirements, not to calculate the costs to fulfill them. Moreover, some DOD and Joint Staff officials said that the Joint Capabilities Document was of limited utility because it was prepared before all of the corresponding assessments were complete, whereas such products were supposed to document the results of capabilities-based assessments.¹⁶

DOD has prepared two other assessments—the Joint Staff Capability Gaps Assessment and the Combating WMD Strategic Global Assessment—that are mostly but not entirely consistent with the Joint Capabilities Document, which identified several key gaps in the eight mission areas. The key shortfalls as identified in the Joint Staff Capability Gaps Assessment [2011-2015] that explicitly are related to combating WMD missions are scattered through a prioritized list of 85 DOD-wide gaps that were derived from the lists of priorities submitted by the combatant commands in fiscal year 2009 and other DOD inputs

¹³ Departments of Defense and Energy and Director of National Intelligence, *2009 Report to Congress on Weapons and Capabilities to Defeat Hardened and Deeply Buried Targets* (Washington, D.C., January 2010).

¹⁴ GAO, *DOD Financial Management: Integrated Approach, Accountability, Transparency, and Incentives Are Keys to Effective Reform*, GAO-02-537T (Washington, D.C: Mar. 20, 2002).

¹⁵ The assessment for active defense included only air and missile defense.

¹⁶ Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Instruction 3170.01F, *Joint Capabilities Integration and Development System* (Washington, D.C., May 1, 2007), 2. (superseded by CJCSI 3170.01G, *Joint Capabilities Integration and Development System* (Washington, D.C., Mar. 1, 2009)).

on operational needs and gaps. For example, there are several shortfalls that have WMD ramifications but are not specifically listed as combating WMD shortfalls. The key shortfalls that the combatant commands identified in the Joint Staff's 2009 Combating WMD Strategic Global Assessment are a mixture of mission areas and discrete capabilities: intelligence, foreign consequence management, building partnership capacity, cooperative threat reduction, and standoff detection and policy.

Our prior work on effective national strategies has found that such a strategy might include guidance for implementing parties to manage their resources and investments according to an assessment of risks and begin to address the difficult but crucial issues about who pays and how such efforts will be funded and sustained in the future. However, efforts across DOD to align resources with identified gaps in its ability to carry out its counterproliferation strategy have not been integrated into DOD's budget process. Although the 2009 CPRC report shows what mission areas the various programs/program elements are responsive to, it does not show what functional capability gap they are designed to mitigate. Because the report includes only limited information on intelligence and detection programs, it is also difficult to determine how vigorously these gaps are being addressed. Further, while the CPRC reports include budget requests for individual programs, relative budget amounts cannot be used to determine the importance placed on specific programs because of disparities in the costs of solutions and the likelihood that it will be more expensive to mitigate some shortfalls than others. As a result, the department's biennial report does not provide the appropriate officials in the executive branch or congressional decision makers with a clear portrait of how DOD's combating WMD gaps translate into funding priorities.

Conclusions

DOD has made progress in integrating the elements of combating WMD and attempting to define the resources that are allotted to each of the three pillars: nonproliferation, counterproliferation, and consequence management. DOD's inability to precisely determine how budgets are allocated among multiple combating WMD mission areas or pillars, or to be sure in all cases what proportion of spending for a particular program element goes to combating WMD programs, is due in part to the difficulty of the task, and we are not convinced that the effort required to improve DOD's accuracy in this area would provide a corresponding benefit. Therefore, we are not presently making recommendations on this issue. However, other limitations of the CPRC report and other means that DOD uses to show how resources support strategy make it difficult for Congress to understand how resources appropriated for counterproliferation programs are being expended and what effect those resources are having on combating WMD programs and overall counterproliferation efforts. Without a clearer portrait of combating WMD shortfalls and their relation to funding priorities, Congress will be limited in its ability to relate DOD budget requests to the effectiveness of DOD's combating WMD strategy.

Recommendations for Executive Action

To improve DOD's ability to track program execution for combating WMD programs as a whole, we recommend that the Secretary of Defense direct the Assistant to the Secretary of Defense for Nuclear and Chemical and Biological Defense Programs, as Chairman of the CPRC Standing Committee, to show actual appropriations and expenditures as well as budget requests when reporting programs in the CPRC report.

To improve DOD's ability to align resources with its combating WMD strategy, we recommend that the Secretary of Defense direct the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics, in coordination with the Under Secretary of Defense (Comptroller) and Assistant to the Secretary of Defense for Nuclear and Chemical and Biological Defense Programs, to more clearly relate prioritized capability gaps to programs and resources in the CPRC report or other appropriate forum.

Agency Comments

In written comments on a draft of this report, DOD concurred with our recommendations. DOD's comments are reprinted in the enclosure.

We are sending copies of this report to the Secretary of Defense, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Secretaries of the Army, Navy, and Air Force, and the Commandant of the Marine Corps.

If you or your staffs have any questions about this report, please contact Davi D'Agostino at (202) 512-5431 or dagostinod@gao.gov. Key contributors to this report were Joseph Kirschbaum, Assistant Director; Susan Ditto; James Driggins; David Keefer; Alberto Leff; Gregory Marchand; Sally Newman; Rebecca Shea; and Edwin Yuen.



Davi M. D'Agostino
Director
Defense Capabilities and Management

Enclosure

Enclosure I: Comments from the Department of Defense



GLOBAL STRATEGIC
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Ms. Davi M. D'Agostino
Director, Defense Capabilities and Management
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441 G Street, N.W.
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Dear Ms. D'Agostino:

This is the Department of Defense (DoD) response to the unclassified GAO Draft Report, GAO-10-755R, "*Weapons of Mass Destruction: Actions Needed to Track Budget Execution for Counterproliferation Programs and Better Align Resources With Combating WMD Strategy*," dated June 25, 2010 (GAO Code 351500).

DoD has reviewed the draft report and concurs without comment.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment. Any further questions can be directed to the Action Officer Ms. Laura Gross at (703) 571-2326.

Sincerely,

Kenneth B. Handelman
Acting



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