



Highlights of [GAO-04-330](#), a report to the Chairman, Subcommittee on Emerging Threats and Capabilities, Committee on Armed Services, U.S. Senate

Why GAO Did This Study

The Defense Threat Reduction Agency (DTRA), within the Department of Defense (DOD), plays a key role in addressing the threats posed by weapons of mass destruction (WMD). Since the September 11, 2001, attacks, the visibility of DTRA's role has increased as federal agencies and military commanders have looked to the agency for additional support and advice.

GAO was asked to report on DTRA's (1) mission and the efforts it undertakes to fulfill this mission; (2) relationship with other government entities, specifically the Department of Energy and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS); and (3) process that it uses to prioritize resources and assess progress toward organizational goals.

What GAO Recommends

GAO recommends that the Director of DTRA improve the agency's annual performance report by comparing the agency's actual performance against planned goals and, where appropriate, explain why goals were not met and the agency's plan to address these unmet goals in the future.

DTRA agreed with the GAO recommendation that it improve its annual performance report. DTRA stated that it is refining its performance report methodology to better address the linkage of reported performance to planned goals and future efforts.

www.gao.gov/cgi-bin/getrpt?GAO-04-330.

To view the full product, including the scope and methodology, click on the link above. For more information, contact Joseph A. Christoff at (202) 512-8979.

WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION

Defense Threat Reduction Agency Addresses Broad Range of Threats, but Performance Reporting Can Be Improved

What GAO Found

Since its establishment in 1998, DTRA has worked to address the threat of WMD. DTRA addresses WMD threats through four core functions: threat control, threat reduction, combat support, and technology development. The agency supports the implementation of arms control treaties by conducting inspections in other countries and by supporting inspections of U.S. facilities, reduces the threat of WMD by eliminating and securing weapons and materials in the former Soviet Union, supports military commanders by providing technical and analytical support regarding WMD, and develops technologies that support efforts to address the WMD threat.

DTRA also uses its specialized capabilities and services in various ways to support other government efforts to address WMD threats. DTRA has a formal relationship with Energy to maintain the U.S. nuclear weapons stockpile. DTRA's relationship with DHS is subject to the broader DOD-DHS relationship and may change as the relationship between DOD and DHS evolves.

The agency uses a strategic planning process modeled on the Government Performance and Results Act of 1993 (GPRA) to prioritize its resources and assess progress toward its organizational goals. DTRA's planning process identifies long-term goals, establishes short-term objectives by which to measure progress in meeting goals, and collects data to assess progress. DTRA's planning process is influenced by funding, most of which is appropriated for specific programs. GAO found that the performance report resulting from its internal review summarized DTRA's accomplishments and activities but did not compare them with established goals and objectives nor explain the actions needed to achieve or modify these unmet goals as called for under GPRA.

DTRA's Four Core Functions to Address WMD Threats

Threat control	Threat reduction	Combat support	Technology development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitates and escorts foreign inspection teams' visits to U.S. and U.S. overseas facilities subject to arms control agreements Provides DOD support to United Nations inspection and monitoring activities Conducts intrusive arms control inspections under the terms of arms control treaties and agreements Assists efforts to counter WMD smuggling across borders in the former Soviet Union 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eliminates Russian WMD Strengthens security at Russian nuclear weapons transportation and storage facilities Eliminates any WMD assets found in Iraq Eliminates strategic submarines, bombers, and missiles Provides employment for Russian WMD scientists, such as at former biological weapons research facilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conducts assessments of DOD and other facilities' vulnerability to terrorist attacks Maintains the security and safety of the nuclear weapons stockpile Provides a continuous resource to answer WMD-related questions Helps commanders plan attacks against suspected WMD sites—what weapons to use, when to carry out the attack, and how to attack the site—to mitigate the potential WMD effects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develops sensor technologies to detect WMD for use on the battlefield or to support arms control efforts Develops capabilities to assess, analyze, and mitigate the effects of WMD Develops specialized weapons, such as bunker busting bombs Researches persistence of various chemical and biological agents under a variety of conditions

Sources: GAO and DTRA.