



Highlights of [GAO-07-596T](#), testimony before the Subcommittee on Air and Land Forces, Committee on Armed Services, House of Representatives

Why GAO Did This Study

As operations overseas continue, DOD is experiencing a growing demand for intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) assets to provide valuable information in support of military operations. While the 2006 Quadrennial Review emphasized the need for the ISR community to improve the integration and management of ISR assets, DOD plans to make significant investments in ISR capabilities for the future. Congress has been interested in DOD's approach for managing and integrating existing assets while acquiring new systems.

This testimony addresses preliminary observations based on GAO's ongoing work regarding (1) the status of DOD initiatives intended to improve the management and integration of ISR requirements and challenges DOD faces in implementing its initiatives, (2) DOD's approach to managing current ISR assets to support military operations, and (3) the status of selected ISR programs in development and the potential for synergies between them.

GAO's ongoing work included document review, interviews with officials at relevant organizations, observations of some U.S. Central Command operations, and review of 13 airborne ISR development programs.

www.gao.gov/cgi-bin/gettrpt?GAO-07-596T.

To view the full product, including the scope and methodology, click on the link above. For more information, contact David D'Agostino at (202) 512-5431 or dagostinod@gao.gov, Sharon Pickup at (202) 512-9619 or pickups@gao.gov, or Michael Sullivan at (202) 512-4841 or sullivanm@gao.gov

INTELLIGENCE, SURVEILLANCE, AND RECONNAISSANCE

Preliminary Observations on DOD's Approach to Managing Requirements for New Systems, Existing Assets, and Systems Development

What GAO Found

DOD's important first steps to formulate a strategy for improving the integration of future ISR requirements include developing an ISR Integration Roadmap and designating ISR as a test case for its joint capability portfolio management concept. DOD developed a statutorily required ISR Roadmap that catalogues current ISR capabilities. GAO's preliminary work, however, has shown that the Roadmap does not (1) identify future requirements, (2) identify funding priorities, or (3) measure progress. Also, the Roadmap does not yet clarify what ISR requirements are already filled or possibly saturated, identify critical gaps for future focus, or define requirements for meeting the goal of global persistent surveillance. DOD's second initiative to improve the integration of the services' ISR programs is assigning management of ISR issues as a test case of its joint capability portfolio management concept. The intent of the test case is to explore whether managing groups of ISR capabilities across DOD will enable interoperability of future capabilities and reduce redundancies and gaps. Although in its early stages, GAO identified challenges, such as the extent to which the services will adopt suggestions from portfolio managers.

DOD's approach to managing its current ISR assets limits its ability to optimize its use of these assets. U. S. Strategic Command is charged with making recommendations to the Secretary of Defense on how best to allocate to combatant commanders theater-level assets used to support operational requirements. While it has visibility into the major ISR programs supporting theater-level requirements, it does not currently have visibility into all ISR assets. Also, the commander responsible for ongoing joint air operations does not currently have visibility over how tactical assets are being tasked. Nor do tactical units have visibility into how theater-level and ISR assets embedded in other units are being tasked. Further, DOD lacks metrics and feedback to evaluate its ISR missions. Without better visibility and performance evaluation, DOD does not have all the information it needs to validate the demand for ISR assets, to optimize the capability offered by these assets, to achieve a joint approach to employing its ISR assets, and to acquire new systems that best support warfighting needs.

Opportunities exist for different services to collaborate on the development of similar weapon systems as a means for creating a more efficient and affordable way of providing new capabilities to the warfighter. We have identified development programs where program managers and services are working together to gain these efficiencies and where less collaborative efforts could lead to more costly stovepiped solutions. Additionally, most of the 13 airborne ISR development programs that we reviewed had either cost growth or schedule delays. These problems resulted from not following a knowledge-based approach to weapon system development as provided for in Defense policy. In some cases, delay in delivering new systems to the warfighter led to unplanned investments to keep legacy systems relevant.