



Highlights of [GAO-03-482](#), a report to Subcommittee on Financial Management, the Budget, and International Security, U.S. Senate

Why GAO Did This Study

Terrorists and countries of concern may be able to gain access to poorly secured weapons of mass destruction at sites throughout Russia. To address this threat to U.S. national security, the Departments of Defense (DOD) and Energy (DOE) have obligated more than \$1.8 billion since 1992.

GAO was asked to report on U.S. programs to help improve security at sites where Russia stores (1) weapons-usable nuclear material, (2) nuclear warheads, (3) dangerous biological pathogens, and (4) chemical weapons. For each area, GAO assessed U.S. plans to address security threats at sites in Russia, U.S. progress in implementing those plans, and the primary challenges facing DOD and DOE.

What GAO Recommends

GAO recommends that DOE re-evaluate its plans for securing Russia's nuclear material, and with DOD, develop an integrated plan to ensure coordination of efforts to secure Russia's nuclear warheads.

GAO also recommends that DOD develop criteria to guide efforts to secure biological pathogens and revisit its decision not to secure additional chemical weapons sites.

DOD agreed with 3 of our 4 recommendations. DOD did not agree to improve security at additional chemical weapons sites. DOE did not comment on our recommendations.

www.gao.gov/cgi-bin/getrpt?GAO-03-482.

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

WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION

Additional Russian Cooperation Needed to Facilitate U.S. Efforts to Improve Security at Russian Sites

What GAO Found






The Departments of Defense and Energy have made slow progress in helping improve the security of sites in Russia with weapons of mass destruction against the threat of theft or diversion because Russia is not providing needed access to many sites. Unfortunately, there is little reason to believe this situation will change in the near future.

DOE plans to help secure Russia's weapons-usable nuclear material by 2008; however, the department lacks access to many sites. As a result, most of DOE's expenditures in the past 2 years went to functions other than securing buildings, such as maintaining previously installed equipment and developing nuclear security regulations. While important, these efforts do not advance DOE's objective of protecting all buildings with weapons-usable nuclear material.

DOD and DOE have pursued different approaches to securing nuclear warhead sites. DOE recently scaled back its plans, and the two agencies will face coordination issues, such as deciding which agency will secure sites in both of their plans.

DOD has made little progress in securing dangerous pathogens at the 49 sites where Russia and the United States have collaborative programs. Russia has consistently refused DOD access to sites and has closed some sites to U.S. security programs. Negotiations on a bilateral agreement to implement this assistance have also stalled.

DOD's efforts to secure chemical weapons have focused on a destruction facility that will not be complete until 2006. It may be 40 years before Russia's nerve agent stockpile can be destroyed. DOD has improved security at two sites, but two thirds of Russia's stockpile remains vulnerable to theft.

Type of weapon of mass destruction	Progress	Key challenges
 Nuclear Material	38 percent of material protected	DOE lacks access to most of remaining nuclear material
 Nuclear Warheads DOE	33 of 36 Navy sites protected	Unclear jurisdiction over many warhead sites
 DOD	34 percent of fencing installed to address external threats at 52 locations	Russia has not provided access to sites or funding for programs
 Biological pathogens	Two sites against external threats	Russia has closed access to several sites; DOD lacks bilateral agreement with Russia for this work
 Chemical weapons	Two nerve agent sites protected against external threats	DOD has no plans to secure three other nerve agent sites

Source: GAO.