February 2009

HUMAN CAPITAL

Opportunities Exist to Build on Recent Progress to Strengthen DOD's Civilian Human Capital Strategic Plan

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Highlights

Highlights of GAO-09-235, a report to Congressional Requesters

HUMAN CAPITAL

Opportunities Exist to Build on Recent Progress to Strengthen DOD's Civilian Human Capital Strategic Plan

Why GAO Did This Study

Having the right number of civilian personnel with the right skills is critical to achieving the Department of Defense's (DOD) mission. With more than 50 percent of its civilian workforce (about 700,000 civilians) eligible to retire in the next few years, DOD may be faced with deciding how to fill numerous mission-critical positions—some involving senior leadership. The National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year (FY) 2006 requires DOD to develop a strategic human capital plan, update it annually through 2010, and address eight requirements. GAO previously found that DOD's 2007 plan did not meet most requirements. The 2007 NDAA added nine requirements to the annual update to shape DOD's senior leader workforce. GAO was asked to assess the extent to which DOD's 2008 update addressed (1) the 2006 human capital planning requirements, (2) the 2007 senior leader requirements, and (3) key factors that may affect civilian workforce planning. GAO analyzed the update, compared it with the requirements, and reviewed factors identified in the update and prior GAO work.

What GAO Recommends

GAO recommends that DOD (1) develop performance plans for the new management offices that monitor its human capital updates and senior leader workforce and (2) include, in its next update, strategies to address factors that may affect its workforce plan. DOD partially concurred with GAO's recommendations.

To view the full product, including the scope and methodology, click on GAO-09-235. For more information, contact Brenda S. Farrell, (202) 512-3604, farrellb@gao.gov.

What GAO Found

While DOD's 2008 update to its strategic human capital plan, when compared with the first plan, shows progress in addressing the FY 2006 NDAA requirements, the update only partially addresses each of the act's requirements. For example, DOD identified 25 critical skills and competencies—referred to as enterprisewide mission-critical occupations, which included logistics management and medical occupations. The update, however, does not contain assessments for over half of the 25 occupations, and the completed assessments of future enterprisewide mission-critical occupations do not cover the required 10-year period. Also, DOD's update included analyses of "gaps," or differences between the existing and future workforce for about half of the 25 occupations. Finally, DOD's update partially addressed the act's requirements for a plan of action for closing the gaps in DOD's civilian workforce. Although DOD recently established a program management office whose responsibility is to monitor DOD's updates to the strategic human capital plan, the office does not have and does not plan to have a performance plan—a road map—that articulates how the NDAA requirements will be met. Until such a plan is developed, DOD may not be able to design the best strategies to address the legislative requirements and meet its civilian workforce needs.

DOD's 2008 update and related documentation address four of the nine requirements in the FY 2007 NDAA for DOD's senior leader workforce and partially address the remaining five. For example, the update identifies a plan of action to address, among other things, changes in the number of authorized senior leaders. However, the update noted that DOD had conducted only initial leadership assessments as a first step in identifying some of its needs, capabilities, and gaps in the existing or projected senior leader workforce and stated that the final assessments would not be completed until the summer of 2009. Although DOD recently established an executive management office to manage the career life cycle of DOD senior leaders, as well as the FY 2007 NDAA requirements, this office has not and does not plan to develop a performance plan to address the NDAA-related requirements.

While DOD's 2008 update identified some key factors that could affect civilian workforce plans, such as base closures and legislation requiring the use of government employees for certain functions, it does not include strategies for addressing these factors. For example, the update noted that DOD may consider using government employees to perform, among other things, an activity performed by a contractor when an economic analysis shows DOD civilian employees are the low-cost providers, but DOD does not provide a strategy for doing so. Further, GAO's body of work has noted a similar factor not discussed in DOD's update—DOD's extensive reliance on contractors and its long-standing challenges in developing a civilian workforce strategy to address the use of contractors and the appropriate mix of contractors and civilians. Without strategies that address key factors like the use of contractors, DOD may not have the right number of people, in the right place, at the right time, and at a reasonable cost to achieve its mission in the future.

United States Government Accountability Office

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Abbreviations

BRAC	Base Realignment and Closure
CIVFORS	Civilian Forecasting System
CPP	Civilian Personnel Policy
CSLP	Civilian Strategic Leader Program
DISA	Defense Information Systems Agency
DLA	Defense Logistics Agency
DLAMP	Defense Leadership and Management Program
DOD	Department of Defense
DSLDP	Defense Senior Leader Development Program
ECQ	Executive Core Qualifications
ELDP	Executive Leadership Development Program
FY	Fiscal Year
GS	General Schedule
NDAA	National Defense Authorization Act
OPM	Office of Personnel Management
OSD	Office of the Secretary of Defense
OUSD(P&R)	Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness
PME	Professional Military Education
QDR	Quadrennial Defense Review
TRADOC	United States Army Training and Doctrine Command
WASS	Workforce Analysis Support System

February 10, 2009

The Honorable E. Benjamin Nelson
United States Senate

The Honorable Lindsey Graham
United States Senate

Having the right number of federal civilian personnel with the right skills is critical to achieving the Department of Defense's (DOD) mission. With more than 50 percent of its total civilian workforce (about 700,000 civilians) becoming eligible to retire in the next few years,[1] DOD may be faced with deciding how to fill numerous mission-critical positions—positions that involve developing policy, providing intelligence, and acquiring weapon systems. Some of these positions also involve leadership roles that require hiring or promoting individuals to serve as senior leaders. However, in a 2006 report on civil service governmentwide, the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) reported that 90 percent of all federal executives in the civil service would be eligible for retirement over the next 10 years. The report further noted that, if a significant number of these civil servants were to retire, it could result in a loss of leadership continuity, institutional knowledge, and expertise in the federal government.[2] DOD has also stressed the need for leadership in human capital management and the need for an up-to-date human capital strategy to address these workforce changes in its 2006 Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR).[3] Since 2001, we have listed federal human capital management as a high-risk area, and in our 2009 High-Risk Series we stated that ample opportunities remained for improving strategic human capital management to respond to 21st century challenges.[4]

In recent years, Congress has passed legislation requiring DOD to conduct human capital planning efforts for the department's overall civilian

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[1]DOD officials noted that this figure includes various types of retirement eligibilities for its civilians, including early retirement.

[2] U.S. Office of Personnel Management, Results From the 2006 Federal Human Capital Survey (2006).

[3]Department of Defense, *Quadrennial Defense Review Report* (Feb. 6, 2006).

[4]GAO, *High Risk Series: An Update*, GAO-09-271 (January 2009).

GAO-09-235 DOD's Update to Its Civilian Human Capital Plan

workforce and its senior leaders. For example, in section 1122 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2006 (FY 2006 NDAA), Congress directed DOD to develop and submit to the Senate and House Armed Services Committees a strategic plan to shape and improve the department's civilian employee workforce. The act stipulated eight requirements for the plan.[5] This plan was to, among other things, include assessments of (1) existing critical skills and competencies in DOD's civilian workforce, (2) future critical skills and competencies needed over the next decade, and (3) any gaps in the existing or future critical skills and competencies identified. In addition, DOD was to submit a plan of action for developing and reshaping the civilian employee workforce to address any identified gaps, as well as specific recruiting and retention goals and strategies on how to train, compensate, and motivate civilian employees. The act required DOD to submit its original plan to Congress by January 6, 2007, and to provide updates to its civilian human capital strategic plan no later than March 1 for each year from 2007 through 2010. We assessed DOD's original plan (which DOD submitted to Congress on November 6, 2007) and noted that it partially addressed two of the eight statutory requirements.[6] For example, while DOD's plan listed current critical skills that DOD called enterprisewide mission-critical occupations,[7] it lacked a "gap analysis"—an assessment of the difference between the existing and future critical skills and competencies of the civilian workforce. We recommended that DOD provide Congress a plan that addresses all of the legislative requirements. DOD disagreed, noting that its response to the congressional reporting requirements reflected a centralized enterprisewide strategic perspective---as opposed to providing the information specified by law such as recruiting and retention goals.

In October 2006, section 1102 of the John Warner National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2007 (FY 2007 NDAA) was enacted. This act required DOD to include in its March 1, 2008, update to the civilian human capital strategic plan, an assessment of the senior management, functional, and technical personnel, and a plan of action for improving

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[5]Pub. L. No. 109-163, § 1122 (2006).

[6]GAO, *The Department of Defense's Civilian Human Capital Strategic Plan Does Not Meet Most Statutory Requirements*, GAO-08-439R (Washington, D.C.: Feb. 6, 2008).

[7]According to DOD officials, enterprisewide mission-critical occupations are used in DOD's updated strategic plan to refer to both critical skills and competencies.

them.[8] The act stipulates nine requirements for the update. The update was to include assessments of (1) the needs of DOD for senior leaders, (2) the capability of DOD's existing senior leader workforce to meet DOD mission requirements, and (3) the gaps in DOD's existing or projected civilian workforce that should be addressed to ensure continued access to the senior leader workforce that DOD needs. DOD was to also submit a plan of action to address the gaps identified in its assessment. This plan was to include, among other things, (1) any legislative or administrative action that may be needed to adjust the requirements applicable to DOD's senior leader workforce, (2) any changes in the number of personnel authorized, (3) any changes in the rates or methods of pay, and (4) specific strategies for developing, training, deploying, compensating, motivating, and designing career paths and career opportunities for its senior leadership. DOD officials stated that the latter would encompass some parts of talent management[9] and succession planning.[10] On June 24, 2008, DOD submitted its update to the original human capital strategic plan.[11]

In response to your request, we reviewed DOD's first update to the 2007 civilian human capital strategic plan. As agreed with your staff, we are reporting on the extent to which DOD's 2008 update addressed (1) the FY 2006 NDAA's human capital planning requirements, (2) the FY 2007

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[8]For the purposes of this report, senior management, functional, and technical personnel will be referred to as the senior leader workforce. Section 1102 covered senior management, functional, and technical personnel (including scientists and engineers) and includes the following categories of DOD civilian personnel: (1) appointees in the Senior Executive Service under section 3131 of title 5, United States Code; (2) persons serving in positions described in section 5376(a) of title 5, United States Code; (3) highly qualified experts appointed pursuant to section 9903 of title 5, United States Code; (4) scientists and engineers appointed pursuant to section 342(b) of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 1995 (Pub. L. No. 103-337 (1994)), as amended by section 1114 of the Floyd D. Spence National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2001 (as enacted into law by Pub. L. No. 106-398 (2000)); (5) scientists and engineers appointed pursuant to section 1101 of the Strom Thurmond National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 1999 (5 U.S.C. 3104 note); (6) persons serving in the Defense Intelligence Senior Executive Service under section 1606 of title 10, United States Code; (7) persons serving in Intelligence Senior-Level positions under section 1607 of title 10, United States Code.

[9]DOD defines talent management as the deliberate management of the career life cycle (recruitment, selection, development, performance management, succession and sustainment of talent, and separation).

[10]DOD officials state that talent management and succession planning are components of designing career paths and career opportunities for its senior leadership.

[11]Implementation Report for the DOD Civilian Human Capital Strategic Plan 2006-2010 (May 2008).

NDAA's senior management-related human capital and succession planning requirements, and (3) other factors that may affect human capital planning for its civilian workforce.

To examine the extent to which DOD's 2008 update addresses civilian human capital planning requirements in the 2006 and 2007 acts, we obtained and analyzed the update and compared it with the legislative requirements. We considered a requirement to be "addressed" if DOD demonstrated, through verifiable evidence, that it met all aspects of a stipulated requirement in the legislation and considered a requirement to be "partially addressed" if DOD provided evidence that showed some aspects of the legislation had been met. While we did not assess the reliability of the data in DOD's workforce assessments and gap analyses, we have previously reviewed information on the workforce forecasting system used by DOD[12] and, during this review, we interviewed officials at OPM and DOD to obtain updated information on this system. We determined that the data were sufficiently reliable for the purposes of our review. Additionally, we interviewed officials in the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness' (OUSD [P&R]) Civilian Personnel Policy and the Civilian Personnel Management Service, along with officials from the individual services, the Defense Logistics Agency, and the Defense Information Systems Agency, about the update and ongoing human capital efforts within DOD. The latter include the Office of the Secretary of Defense's (OSD) ongoing efforts to establish a program management office that is responsible for, among other things, developing and monitoring overall civilian workforce trends, competency assessments, and gap analyses, particularly for the DOD enterprisewide mission-critical occupations.

To determine DOD's succession planning efforts for its senior management workforce, we analyzed applicable documents related to DOD's current efforts, along with our prior work on DOD's human capital planning efforts for senior leaders. To corroborate our understanding of DOD's efforts related to succession planning, we interviewed officials in

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[12]GAO, *DOD Personnel: Documentation of the Army's Civilian Workforce-Planning Model Needed to Enhance Credibility*, GAO-03-1046 (Washington D.C.: August 2003) and GAO, *DOD Civilian Personnel: Comprehensive Strategic Workforce Plans Needed*, GAO-04-753 (Washington D.C.: June 2004).

DOD's office for Civilian Personnel Policy and the components[13] about these matters. Among other things, we discussed DOD's efforts to establish an executive management office for talent management and succession planning at the OSD level. Finally, for our last objective, we identified and reviewed factors that would affect DOD's civilian workforce planning such as those that DOD identified in its update, and a factor previously identified in GAO's prior work—the department's reliance on contractors.

We conducted this performance audit from February 2008 to February 2009, 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 objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. For more information about our scope and methodology, see appendix I.

Results in Brief

While DOD has made progress in addressing the legislative requirements when compared to the first plan, the department's 2008 update to its civilian human capital strategic plan partially addresses each of the requirements in the FY 2006 NDAA. For example, DOD identified 25 enterprisewide mission-critical occupations,[14] which include logistics management, information technology management, and medical occupations such as physicians, nurses, and pharmacists. The update does not, however, contain an assessment of future enterprisewide mission-critical occupations that covers a 10-year period, as required in the law. DOD officials noted that its workforce assessments covered a 7-year period—which is in line with the department's budget. At the time of this review, DOD was just starting its assessment of future needs and had

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[13]Components refer to the military services and fourth-estate agencies. "Fourth-estate" agencies are all organizational entities in DOD that are not in the military departments or the combatant commands. These include OSD, the Joint Staff, the Office of the Inspector General of DOD, the defense agencies, and DOD field activities.

[14]As stated previously, DOD refers to critical skills and competencies as enterprisewide mission-critical occupations. These include information technology management, computer scientist, computer engineer, electronics engineer, contracting, logistics management, quality assurance, human resources management, general engineering, physical science, civil engineering, mathematician, physician, nurse, pharmacist, security administration, intelligence, police officer, financial management, accounting, auditing, budget analysis, foreign affairs, international relations, and language specialist.

developed projected trends for its enterprisewide mission-critical occupations to determine, among other things, overall workforce needs and retention goals for 11 of its 25 enterprisewide mission-critical occupations over a 7-year period. According to DOD, the department planned to complete its assessments of all 25 enterprisewide mission-critical occupations by the end of calendar year 2008; however, DOD did not provide additional information on these assessments before completion of this review. Additionally, DOD's 2008 update included information related to gap analyses for about half of its 25 enterprisewide mission-critical occupations. Further, DOD's update partially addressed the legislative requirements for a plan of action to develop and reshape the civilian employee workforce. OSD officials stated that they are working to more fully address all of the legislative requirements, and in November 2008, OUSD (P&R) officially established a program management office— whose responsibility is to, among other things, specifically monitor and review DOD's enterprisewide mission-critical occupation assessments, workforce trends, and gap analyses. While it is notable that the office has been established, at the time of our review, DOD officials stated that they did not have and did not plan to have a performance plan or "road map" to articulate how the department will fully address requirements of the FY 2006 NDAA. Our prior work has shown that key elements of a sound management approach contain performance plans that include establishing implementation goals and time frames, measuring performance, and aligning activities with resources.[15] Without such a plan, DOD and its components may not be able to design and fund the best strategies to address the legislative requirements and meet their workforce needs. To continue the progress the department has made and better focus DOD's civilian human capital strategic planning efforts, we are recommending that the Under Secretary of Defense direct the newly established program management office to develop a performance plan to articulate how it will fully address all of the requirements of the FY 2006 NDAA—to include developing assessments and gap analyses for each of its identified enterprisewide mission-critical occupations. In written comments on a draft of this report, DOD partially concurred with our recommendation and we address those comments in detail later in this report.

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[15]GAO, *Results-Oriented Cultures: Implementation Steps to Assist Mergers and Organizational Transformation*, GAO-03-669 (Washington, D.C.: July 2, 2003); and *Executive Guide: Effectively Implementing the Government Performance and Results Act*, GAO/GGD-96-118 (Washington, D.C.: June 1996).

DOD's 2008 update and related documentation address four of the nine requirements in the FY 2007 NDAA for DOD's senior leader workforce and only partially address the remaining five. For example, as required by legislation, the update and supporting documentation identify a plan of action for developing or reshaping the senior leader workforce that addresses, among other things, certain legislative actions and changes in the number of personnel authorized. Nevertheless, the plan partially addresses some of the remaining legislative requirements. For example, DOD has conducted initial leadership assessments as a first step in identifying some of its needs, capabilities, and gaps in the existing or projected senior leader workforce. DOD's update noted, however, that final assessments to identify specific needs, capabilities, and gaps will not be complete until the summer of 2009. Further, the update's plan of action partially addresses some legislative requirements related to specific strategies for developing, training, and designing career paths and opportunities—which, per DOD, are components of talent management and succession planning. [16] For example, DOD developed programs that are intended to provide senior leaders with targeted individual development and defense-focused leadership seminars, as well as a departmentwide effort to coordinate the management of its overall Senior Executive Service workforce.[17] With regard to succession planning, officials within DOD told us that their organization does not conduct departmentwide succession planning for its senior management workforce. DOD officials acknowledged that, while some work on the legislative requirements and succession planning for its senior management workforce had started, it was not complete, primarily because the newly formed executive management office for talent management and succession planning at the OSD level was not established until October 2008. At the time of our review, these officials stated that this new office, like the previously mentioned program management office, did not have and did not plan to have a performance plan that includes implementation goals and time frames, performance measures, and activities that are aligned with resources. As noted before, without such a plan, DOD and its components may not be able to design and fund the best strategies to address the legislative requirements and meet their workforce needs. We are therefore recommending that the Under

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[16]Department of Defense Directive 1403.03, *The Career Lifecycle of the Senior Executive Service Leaders Within the Department of Defense* (Oct. 25, 2007).

[17]According to DOD officials, this includes one talent management system for all of DOD and the defense agencies instead of the many systems that are currently used.

Secretary of Defense task the newly established executive management office, which is responsible for addressing the requirements of the FY 2007 NDAA, to develop a performance plan that includes establishing implementation goals and time frames, measuring performance, and aligning activities with resources. DOD partially concurred with this recommendation, and we address those comments in detail later in this report.

While DOD's update identified some factors that could affect civilian workforce planning, such as decisions made during its Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) process,[18] the update did not incorporate strategies for addressing these factors. For example, although DOD's update noted that BRAC has the potential to affect how, when, and where civilian positions are ultimately realigned relative to their original location, the update does not offer specific strategies for addressing how BRAC may affect projected trends and assessments for the civilian workforce. At the time of our review, OSD was developing strategies to address these factors. In addition, we have previously reported that DOD has experienced challenges in developing a civilian workforce strategy to address the extent of contractor use and the appropriate mix of contractors and government personnel.[19] For example, in 2003, we recommended that DOD consider the roles and mix of civilian and contractor employees in its civilian human capital strategic plans. DOD did not concur with this recommendation, noting that the use of contractors was just another tool to accomplish the department's mission and was not a separate workforce with separate needs to manage.[20] The 2006 QDR and DOD's 2008 update, however, recognize contractors as part of DOD's total force. We continue to believe that without strategies that address significant factors like the use of federal civilian personnel and contractors, DOD may not have the right people, in the right place, at the right time, and at a reasonable cost to achieve its mission in the future. We are, therefore, recommending that the Secretary of Defense incorporate, in future updates to DOD's civilian human capital strategic plan, strategies for addressing factors that could affect DOD's civilian workforce

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[18]To enable DOD to close unneeded bases and realign others, Congress passed BRAC legislation that instituted base closure rounds in 1988, 1991, 1993, 1995, and 2005.

[19]GAO, *DOD Needs to Reexamine its Extensive Reliance on Contractors and Continue to Improve Management and Oversight*, GAO-08-572T (Washington, D.C.: Mar. 11, 2008).

[20]GAO, *DOD Personnel: DOD Comments on GAO's Report on DOD's Civilian Human Capital Strategic Planning*, GAO-03-690R (Washington D.C.: Apr. 18, 2003).

planning—specifically, contractor roles and the effect contractors have on DOD's requirements for a civilian workforce. DOD partially concurred with this recommendation, and we addressed those comments in detail later in this report.

Background

DOD stressed the importance of strategic human capital management in its 2006 QDR. For example, it noted the importance of involving senior leadership in this area and stated that DOD must (1) compete effectively with the civilian sector for highly qualified personnel, (2) possess an up-to-date human capital strategy, and (3) have the authorities to recruit, shape, and sustain the force it needs.[21] Within the department, the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, who serves as the Chief Human Capital Officer for DOD, has overall responsibility for the development of DOD's civilian human capital strategic plan and competency-based workforce planning. The Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Civilian Personnel Policy has the lead role in developing and overseeing the implementation of the civilian human capital strategic plan.

In January 2006, section 1122 of the FY 2006 NDAA was enacted. It directed DOD to develop and submit to the Senate and House Armed Services Committees a strategic plan to shape and improve the DOD civilian employee workforce. The plan was to include eight requirements. These requirements included an assessment of

- the critical skills that will be needed in the future DOD civilian employee workforce to support national security requirements and effectively manage the department over the next decade,
- the critical competencies that will be needed in the future DOD civilian employee workforce to support national security requirements and effectively manage the department over the next decade,
- the skills of the existing DOD civilian employee workforce,
- the competencies of the existing DOD civilian employee workforce,
- the projected trends in that workforce based on expected losses due to retirement and other attrition, and
- gaps in the existing or projected DOD civilian employee workforce that should be addressed to ensure that the department has continued access to the critical skills and competencies needed to support national security requirements and effectively manage the department over the next decade.

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[21]Department of Defense, *Quadrennial Defense Review Report.*

Also, as part of its civilian human capital strategic plan, the act directed DOD to include a plan of action for developing and reshaping the DOD civilian employee workforce to address identified gaps in critical skills and competencies, including specific

- recruiting and retention goals, including the program objectives of the department to be achieved through such goals; and
- strategies for developing, training, deploying, compensating, and motivating the DOD civilian employee workforce and the program objectives to be achieved through such strategies.

In October 2006, the FY 2007 NDAA was enacted. Section 1102 of this act required DOD to include in its March 1, 2007, update a strategic plan to shape and improve its senior leader workforce.[22]

The plan was to include nine requirements. These nine requirements included an assessment of

- the needs of DOD for senior leaders in light of recent trends and projected changes in the mission and organization of the department and in light of staff support needed to accomplish that mission,
- the capability of the existing civilian employee workforce to meet requirements relating to the mission of the department, and
- gaps in the existing or projected civilian employee workforce of the department that should be addressed to ensure continued access to the senior leader workforce DOD needs.

Also, as part of its civilian human capital strategic plan, the act directed DOD to include a plan of action for developing and reshaping the senior leader workforce to ensure the department has continued access to the senior executives it needs. The plan of action is to include

- any legislative or administrative action that may be needed to adjust the requirements applicable to any category of civilian personnel identified or to establish a new category of senior management or technical personnel,
- any changes in the number of personnel authorized in any category of personnel identified that may be needed to address such gaps and effectively meet the needs of the department,
- any changes in the rates or methods of pay for any category of personnel identified that may be needed to address inequities and ensure that the

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[22]See footnote 8 for details of positions covered by section 1102.

department has full access to appropriately qualified personnel to address such gaps,

- specific recruiting and retention goals, including the program objectives of the department to be achieved through such goals,
- specific strategies for developing, training, deploying, compensating, motivating, and designing career paths and career opportunities for the senior leader workforce of the department, including the program objectives to be achieved through such strategies; and
- specific steps that the department has taken or plans to take to ensure that the senior leader workforce is managed in compliance with the requirements of section 129 of title 10, United States Code.[23]

To conduct the assessments of end strength[24] and projected trends in the civilian workforce based on expected losses due to retirement and other attrition as required in the legislation, the department used OPM's workforce forecasting software Workforce Analysis Support System (WASS) and Civilian Forecasting System (CIVFORS). WASS is used to evaluate workforce trends and can perform simple to complex analyses from counts and averages to trend analyses, using such characteristics as employee age, retirement plan participation, and historical retirement data. CIVFORS was adapted from an Army military forecasting model for civilian use in 1987 and uses data from DOD's Defense Civilian Personnel Data System (DCPDS).[25] CIVFORS is a life-cycle modeling and projection tool, which models most significant events, including personnel actions such as promotions, reassignments, and retirements. Officials can use a default projection model or create their own, which can be tailored to examine issues such as projected vacancies of hard-to-fill occupations or turnover in specific regions by occupation. The workforce forecasts are generated over a 7-year projection period, using the most recent 5 years of historical data. While CIVFORS is used at the DOD enterprisewide level, the department has not directed the components to use the system. As a result, components use various systems and approaches for their forecasts

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[23]Section 129 states that the civilian personnel of DOD will be managed each fiscal year solely on the basis of and consistent with (1) the workload required to carry out the functions and activities of the department and (2) the funds made available to the department for such fiscal year.

[24]For the purpose of its update, DOD defined end strength as the level of employment necessary to meet mission requirements.

[25]DCPDS is a human resources information system that supports civilian personnel operations in DOD. It allows DOD to use a single management information system for DOD civilian employees.

and trend analyses. For example, when we met with officials from the Defense Logistics Agency (DLA) they noted that while they had received training on WASS/CIVFORS, the agency was not currently using the program, though they were having discussions to determine if they wanted to use the system in the future. Currently, DLA conducts workforce analysis by reviewing past information to determine future needs and uses a commercial off-the-shelf business software package to assist in the analysis.

While DOD's 2008 Update Shows Progress, It Only Partially Addresses Each of the Fiscal Year 2006 Legislative Requirements

DOD has made progress in implementing the eight requirements in the FY 2006 NDAA as compared to its first plan; however, as seen in table 1, the 2008 update only partially addresses each of the eight requirements. For example, DOD—through the department's functional and human resource leadership—identified 25 enterprisewide mission-critical occupations but did not provide an assessment that covered a 10-year period as required by the FY 2006 NDAA. Additionally, DOD provided projected trend data related, for example, to expected losses due to retirement on 11 of the 25 enterprisewide mission-critical occupations. Furthermore, DOD's 2008 update only included gap analyses for about half of the 25 identified enterprisewide mission-critical occupations. DOD's update also partially addresses the legislative requirements for a plan of action to develop and reshape the civilian employee workforce. More importantly, the recently established program management office does not have a performance plan to articulate how it will address the legislative requirements.

Table 1: Summary of Extent to Which DOD's 2008 Update to Its Civilian Human Capital Strategic Plan Satisfies FY 2006 NDAA Legislative Requirements

Legislative requirement	Description	2007 Civilian human capital strategic plan[a]			2008 Update		
		Addresses	**Partially addresses**	**Does not address**	**Addresses**	**Partially addresses**	**Does not address**
1	An assessment of the critical skills that will be needed in the future DOD civilian employee workforce to support national security requirements and effectively manage the department over the next decade			✓		✓	

Legislative requirement	Description	2007 Civilian human capital strategic plan[a]			2008 Update		
		Addresses	Partially addresses	Does not address	Addresses	Partially addresses	Does not address
2	An assessment of the competencies that will be needed in the future DOD civilian employee workforce to support national security requirements and effectively manage the department over the next decade			✓		✓	
3	An assessment of the skills of the existing civilian employee workforce		✓			✓	
4	An assessment of the competencies of the existing DOD civilian employee workforce			✓		✓	
5	An assessment of the projected trends in that workforce based on expected losses due to retirement and other attrition			✓		✓	
6	An assessment of gaps in the existing or projected DOD civilian employee workforce that should be addressed to ensure that the department has continued access to the critical skills and competencies to support national security requirements and effectively manage the department over the next decade			✓		✓	
7	A plan of action for developing and shaping the DOD civilian employee workforce to address identified gaps in critical skills and competencies of the existing or projected civilian workforce, including specific recruiting and retention goals and the program objectives to be achieved through such goals			✓		✓	

Legislative requirement	Description	2007 Civilian human capital strategic plan[a]			2008 Update		
		Addresses	Partially addresses	Does not address	Addresses	Partially addresses	Does not address
8	A plan of action for developing and shaping the DOD civilian employee workforce to address identified gaps in critical skills and competencies of the existing or projected civilian workforce, including specific strategies for developing, training, deploying, compensating, and motivating the DOD civilian employee workforce and the program objectives to be achieved through such strategies		✓			✓	
Total		**0**	**2**	**6**	**0**	**8**	**0**

Source: GAO analysis of DOD data.

Notes: "Addresses" indicates that the agency has demonstrated, through verifiable evidence, that all aspects of the legislative requirement were covered. "Partially addresses" indicates that such evidence shows that some, but not all, aspects of the legislative requirement have been covered.

[a]The 2007 Civilian Human Capital Strategic Plan was analyzed and reported on in GAO report GAO-08-439R.

DOD's Update Partially Addresses the Legislative Requirements to Assess Existing and Future Critical Skills and Competencies and Projected Trends

DOD's 2008 update partially addresses the legislative requirements of the FY 2006 NDAA to assess existing and future critical skills and competencies over the next decade and projected trends of the DOD civilian employee workforce. For example, DOD identified—through the department's functional and human resource leadership—25 enterprisewide mission-critical occupations but did not provide an assessment of future enterprisewide mission-critical occupations that covered a 10-year period. As shown in table 2, DOD provided assessments of current and future enterprisewide mission-critical occupations and projected trend data in separate sections of its update. Specifically, the update had separate explanatory appendixes that addressed assessments for 12 of the 25 enterprisewide mission-critical occupations. These appendixes included assessment information compiled by OSD and the components.

The update also had two separate appendixes with OSD-identified workforce assessments for the department and the components, along with projected trends data related to expected losses from retirements and attrition for 11 of the 25 DOD enterprisewide mission-critical occupations.

These data were obtained from the WASS/CIVFORS analyses and are also presented in table 2.

Table 2: Information on Assessments and Projected Trends for DOD's Enterprisewide Mission-Critical Occupations

	Occupation title	Explanatory appendixes for enterprisewide mission-critical occupations	Assessments and projected trends information for enterprisewide mission-critical occupations
1	Information technology management	✓	✓
2	Computer scientist	✓	
3	Computer engineer	✓	✓
4	Electronics engineer	✓	
5	Contracting	✓	✓
6	Logistics management	✓	✓
7	Quality assurance		✓
8	Human resources management	✓	✓
9	General engineering		
10	Civil engineering	✓	✓
11	Physical science		
12	Mathematician		
13	Physician	✓	✓
14	Nurse	✓	✓
15	Pharmacist	✓	✓
16	Security administration		
17	Intelligence	✓	
18	Police officer		
19	Financial management		
20	Accounting		✓[a]
21	Auditing		
22	Budget analysis		
23	Foreign affairs		
24	International relations		
25	Language specialist		
Total addressed		**12**	**11**

Source: GAO analysis of DOD information.

Notes: The data are from DOD's 2008 Update to the 2007 Civilian Human Capital Strategic Plan.

Assessment of Existing and Future Critical Skills and Competencies

DOD's update provided assessments for 12 of the 25 existing and future critical skills and competencies, which OSD refers to as enterprisewide mission-critical occupations. As shown in table 2, DOD included explanatory appendixes on some of the enterprisewide mission-critical occupations, including information technology management, computer science, and logistics management. Specifically, these appendixes discussed various issues, including end strength[26] of the existing workforce for these 12 enterprisewide mission-critical occupations during fiscal year 2007. The update also contained two separate appendixes with OSD-identified workforce assessments for the department and the components, along with projected trends data related to expected losses from retirements and attrition for 11 of the 25 DOD enterprisewide mission-critical occupations.[27] The update noted that the department had just begun its assessments of the enterprisewide mission-critical occupations. It further noted that, to establish a baseline for its civilian workforce, the department decided to hold future workforce levels for the majority of the enterprisewide mission-critical occupations[28] at the then 2007 level of employment—"steady state"—through 2014. This "steady state" would be maintained by controlling gains like "new hires." For example, in the appendix that contained the contracting enterprisewide mission-critical occupation, DOD noted that the 2007 end strength level was 19,090 and that this steady state could be maintained at the fiscal year

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[26]As previously stated, for the purposes of the update, DOD defined end strength as the level of employment necessary to meet mission requirements.

[27]As seen in table 2, assessments in the various appendixes did not cover the same enterprisewide mission-critical occupations. Also, DOD's update contained workforce forecasts with projected trends for the entire DOD workforce and separate forecasts for the civilian workforce in the Army, Air Force, Navy, and fourth estate. These were not specific to any enterprisewide mission-critical occupations.

[28]OSD forecasted that 10 of the 11 enterprisewide mission-critical occupations would be maintained at a steady state, while the civil engineering mission-critical occupation was identified as having a gap in its workforce.

2007 end strength levels of 19,090 through 2014, by controlling gains like new hires.[29]

However, DOD's update does not include an assessment of its future enterprisewide mission-critical occupations that cover a 10-year period, as required by the FY 2006 NDAA. DOD officials told us that the modeling tool it used to assess its workforce, WASS/CIVFORS, only generates forecasts for a 7-year period, in line with the department's budget—the Future Years Defense Program.[30] DOD officials have noted that it is difficult to conduct workforce planning out to 10 years, especially in light of factors that cannot be predicted, like the Global War on Terror and economic factors. On the other hand, some factors that could affect human capital planning are known well in advance, such as eligibility for retirement and the development of weapons systems that could take more than 10 years.

Assessment of Projected Trends in the Critical Skills and Competencies of the Civilian Workforce Based on Expected Losses from Retirements and Other Attrition

As seen in table 2, DOD's update contained projected trend data on expected losses from retirement and other attrition for 11 of DOD's 25 enterprisewide mission-critical occupations and thus partially addressed the legislative requirement. Again, OSD used OPM's WASS/CIVFORS projection tool to fulfill the legislative requirement for DOD to assess the projected trends in the civilian workforce. WASS/CIVFORS was used to develop charts on workforce demographics for the 11 enterprisewide mission-critical occupations identified. For the medical occupations of physician, nurse, and pharmacist, as an example, the projected trends data show that the majority of the department's projected losses in the medical community were due to transfers to other federal agencies, movement to the private sector, or internal transfers within DOD components.

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[29]We have previously reported that inadequate numbers of trained personnel to oversee and manage contracts is a long-standing problem that continues to hinder DOD's management and oversight of contractors in deployed locations. GAO, *Military Operations: DOD Needs to Address Contract Oversight and Quality Assurance Issues for Contracts Used to Support Contingency Operations*, GAO-08-1087 (Washington, D.C.: Sept. 26, 2008).

[30]The Future Years Defense Program summarizes resources associated, by fiscal year, with DOD programs, as approved by the Secretary or the Deputy Secretary of Defense. For individual programs, this means that decision makers have visibility over planned funding for 4 or 5 years beyond the current budget year.

Assessment of Gaps in the Existing or Projected Critical Skills and Competencies of the Civilian Workforce

As seen in table 1, DOD has made progress in assessing the gaps in its civilian workforce since the publication of its 2007 civilian human capital strategic plan. Specifically, DOD's 2008 update notes that its approach to gap analysis has been both centralized at the OSD level—with focus on the enterprisewide mission-critical occupations—and decentralized within the components. While not clearly identified as a gap assessment in the update, DOD provided data, at the OSD centralized level, from WASS/CIVFORS that showed end strength being maintained at the 2007 level—steady state—through 2014 for 10 of the previously mentioned 11 enterprisewide mission-critical occupations. As stated before, the update noted that this steady state would be maintained by controlling gains[31] in its workforce. Specifically, of the 11 enterprisewide mission-critical occupations[32] for which OSD projected trends, OSD forecasted that 10 could be maintained at a steady state—for a baseline, as previously noted. We also note that, for the civil engineering enterprisewide mission-critical occupation, DOD did not project a steady state for this occupation but rather identified a gap, stating that the projected gains would not meet projected losses. With this steady state assumption, OSD assumes that its goals for projected total gains will be achieved. We note however, that if these gains—that is, new hires or transfers from other government agencies—are not attained, then a potential gap exists. Furthermore DOD officials told us these steady state projections do not incorporate changes in workforce requirements resulting from initiatives like the "Gansler report"—which identified a need for additional contracting officials.[33] We were told that the department would incorporate such changes in future updates. These changes could affect the size of the workforce.

At the time of our review, the department had asked the components and functional community managers[34] to validate the projected trends, which

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[31]DOD defined total gains as the number of new hires and gains from inactive status and transfers from government agencies.

[32]As noted in table 2, information for one of the 11 mission-critical occupations was specific to the fourth estate—accounting.

[33]Report of the Commission on Army Acquisition and Program Management in Expeditionary Operations, *Urgent Reform Required: Army Expeditionary Contracting* (Oct. 31, 2007).

[34]Functional community managers are responsible for, among other things, analysis of functional community workload requirements, environmental factors, attrition and retirement trends, staffing needs, and identifying skill gaps. They are also responsible for the development and implementation of strategies to address identified gaps.

was originally expected to be completed by July 1, 2008. However, DOD officials stated that the functional community managers had not yet validated OSD's projections because they had to be trained on WASS/CIVFORS first. DOD officials said this training occurred in September 2008. At the time of our review, the revised completion date to validate the projected trends was January 2009.

As previously stated, the update contained explanatory appendixes that specifically identified gap assessments for 6 enterprisewide mission-critical occupations: civil engineering, human resource management, information technology management, computer engineering, computer scientist, and logistics management. Various methods and tools were used for these assessments—from discussions about the gaps to use of tools other than WASS/CIVFORS. For example, OPM's Federal Competency Assessment Tool for Human Resources was used to conduct a competency gap assessment for the human resource management enterprisewide mission-critical occupation. Additionally, the assessment indicated that there were gaps in the employee relations and compensation competencies, among others. On the other hand, in the information technology appendix—which includes the enterprisewide mission-critical occupations information technology management, computer engineering, and computer scientist—a federal survey was used and administered to the information technology community. The assessment identified gaps in, among other areas, information systems security certification and network security.

DOD's update also included some competency gap analyses at the component level, in addition to the enterprisewide mission-critical occupation gap analyses. For example, DOD's update noted that the Defense Information Systems Agency (DISA) conducts gap analyses by having its employees do self-assessments to determine their proficiency level in the skills needed for their competency or career field. The update noted that all DISA employees are required to complete the competency gap assessment process and have a completed individual development plan. The update also stated that the Defense Threat Reduction Agency has completed the first competency gap assessment for 250 of its research and development workforce personnel.

DOD officials acknowledge that work on the gap analyses for its 25 enterprisewide mission-critical occupations is not complete and efforts at the component level are ongoing. In addition, the update notes that the department has developed a proposed plan to identify and address future gaps. As mentioned previously, the functional community managers were

tasked to validate and provide information for the projected trends; however, at the time of our review, some of the functional community managers were just established, and OSD officials said, as a result, the department published what it had.

As we previously reported, the absence of fact-based gap analyses can undermine an agency's efforts to identify and respond to current and emerging challenges.[35] Without including gap analyses for each of the areas DOD has identified as mission-critical, DOD and the components may not be able to design and fund the best strategies to fill their talent needs or to make the appropriate investments to develop and retain the best possible workforce.

DOD's Update Partially Addresses the Legislative Requirements for a Plan of Action

As seen in rows 7 and 8 of table 1, we found that DOD partially addressed the legislative requirements for a plan of action for developing and reshaping the civilian employee workforce to address the gaps in critical skills and competencies identified.

Plan of Action, Including Specific Recruiting and Retention Goals and the Program Objectives to Be Achieved through Such Goals

DOD's update contains recruiting and retention goals for 11 of the 25 enterprisewide mission-critical occupations, which were developed with the WASS/CIVFORS projection tool; however, as stated previously, these forecasts cover 7 years, not 10 years as required by the FY 2006 NDAA. At the time of this review, DOD was just starting the process for developing projected trends for its enterprisewide mission-critical occupations to determine, among other things, overall workforce needs and retention goals for 11 of its 25 enterprisewide mission-critical occupations over a 7-year period. DOD's update states that the department is in the process of identifying 10-year recruiting and retention goals for all of the enterprisewide mission-critical occupations and expects to complete this effort by the end of calendar year 2008; however, DOD did not provide additional information on these assessments before completion of this review. Furthermore, DOD's update does not link specific recruiting and retention goals to program objectives.

Additionally, DOD's update contains strategies for recruiting and retaining civilian employees in the appendixes that discuss the enterprisewide mission-critical occupations. For example, for the medical occupations, DOD formed the Tri-Service Medical Recruitment Workgroup in 2007 to,

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[35]GAO-04-753.

among other things, analyze current recruitment, hiring, and retention strategies for civilian health care positions. Some accomplishments of the workgroup include creation of a DOD medical recruitment sub-Web on the DOD Civilian Personnel Management Service Web site, guidance on the use of referral bonuses as a recruitment tool, and development of a handbook for recruiters and managers on compensation and hiring flexibilities.

Plan of Action Including Specific Strategies for Developing, Training, Deploying, Compensating, and Motivating the DOD Civilian Workforce and Program Objectives

DOD's update does contain some strategies for developing, training, deploying, compensating, and motivating the civilian workforce. Specifically, DOD's update discusses strategies to address workforce requirements in the explanatory appendixes, which cover 12 of the 25 enterprisewide mission-critical occupations identified. For example, the FY 2008 NDAA granted DOD the authority to implement a modified version of the Information Technology Exchange Program, which would allow DOD civilians in the IT community to conduct job details in the private sector.[36] However, because DOD has not completed its assessment of all 25 enterprisewide mission-critical occupations, any plan of action the department develops will not address gaps that have yet to be identified. While DOD's update contains an extensive list of strategies, it does not address the requirements of the law—that the strategies be specifically related to gaps in the enterprisewide mission-critical occupations. Furthermore, DOD's update does not link specific strategies for developing, training, deploying, compensating, and motivating the civilian workforce to program objectives.

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[36]Section 1109, Pub. L. No. 110-181 (2008). Section 209 of the E-Government Act of 2002 (Pub. L. No. 107-347) initially authorized the establishment of an Information Technology Exchange Program.

DOD's Recently Established Program Management Office Does Not Have a Performance Plan to Articulate How the Legislative Requirements Will Be Addressed

OSD officials stated that they are working to more fully address all of the legislative requirements, and in November 2008 OUSD (P&R) officially established a program management office[37]—whose responsibility is to, among other things, specifically monitor and review DOD's enterprisewide mission-critical occupation assessments, workforce trends, and gap analyses. According to DOD, the budget for this office included salary and benefits for 20 people and training for human resource consultants on strategic human capital management.

While it is notable the office has been established, at the time of our review, DOD officials stated that they did not have and did not plan to have a performance plan or "road map" to articulate how the department will fully address requirements of the FY 2006 NDAA. Additionally, we note that, prior to the establishment of this new office, the Program Executive Office for Strategic Human Capital Planning, per DOD officials, had responsibility to develop DOD's civilian human capital plan. It appears DOD has never had a performance plan to help manage this area. Our prior work has shown that key elements of a sound management approach contain performance plans that include establishing implementation goals and time frames, performance measures, and activities that are aligned with resources.[38] Without such a plan, DOD and its components may not be able to design and fund the best strategies to address the legislative requirements and meet their workforce needs.

[37]Department of Defense Instruction 1400.25, *DOD Civilian Personnel Management System: Volume 250, Civilian Strategic Human Capital Planning* (Nov. 18, 2008). This instruction assigns responsibilities regarding civilian personnel management in DOD, articulates strategic human capital management requirements (both for component and functional communities), and establishes assessments and accountability mechanisms to ensure strategic human capital management responsibilities are properly executed.

[38]See GAO-03-669 and GAO/GGD-96-118.

DOD's 2008 Update of Its Civilian Human Capital Strategic Plan Generally Addresses 2007 Legislative Requirements for DOD's Senior Leader Workforce

Of the nine requirements stipulated in the FY 2007 NDAA, DOD's update and related documentation addresses four and partially addresses the remaining five. Table 3 summarizes the legislative requirements and identifies the extent to which the civilian human capital strategic plan update addresses the requirements. Although DOD recently established, in October 2008, an executive management office responsible for talent management, succession planning, and other issues, this office is operating without a performance plan that establishes implementation goals and time frames, measures performance, and aligns activities with resources.

Table 3: Summary of Extent to Which DOD's 2008 Update Satisfies FY 2007 NDAA Legislative Requirements

Legislative requirement	Description	Addresses	Partially addresses	Does not address
1	An assessment of DOD's needs for senior management, functional, and technical personnel in light of recent trends and projected changes in the mission and organization of DOD and in light of staff support needed to accomplish that mission		✓	
2	An assessment of the capability of DOD's existing civilian employee workforce to meet requirements relating to DOD's mission		✓	
3	An assessment of gaps in DOD's existing or projected civilian employee workforce that should be addressed to ensure continued access to senior management, functional, and technical personnel		✓	
4	A plan of action including any legislative or administrative action that may be needed to adjust the requirements applicable to any category of civilian personnel identified or to establish a new category of senior leaders	✓		
5	A plan of action including any changes in the number of personnel authorized in any category of personnel identified that may be needed to address such gaps and effectively meet DOD's needs	✓		
6	A plan of action including any changes in the rates or methods of pay for any category of personnel identified that may be needed to address inequities and ensure that DOD has full access to appropriately qualified personnel to address such gaps and meet DOD's needs	✓		
7	A plan of action including specific recruiting and retention goals, including the program objectives of DOD to be achieved through such goals		✓	
8	A plan of action including specific strategies for developing, training, deploying, compensating, motivating, and designing career paths and career opportunities for DOD's senior management, functional, and technical workforce, including the program objectives to be achieved through such strategies		✓	

Legislative requirement	Description	Addresses	Partially addresses	Does not address
9	A plan of action including specific steps that DOD has taken or plans to take to ensure that DOD's senior management, functional, and technical workforce is managed in compliance with the requirements of section 129 of title 10, United States Code	✓		
Total		**4**	**5**	**0**

Source: GAO analysis of DOD data.

[a]See footnote 8 for details of positions covered by section 1102.

DOD's Update Addresses Four of Nine Legislative Requirements

DOD's 2008 update addresses four requirements of the FY 2007 NDAA—specifically, a plan of action that identifies (1) legislative or administrative actions needed, (2) changes in the number of personnel authorized, (3) changes in the rates or methods of pay, and (4) specific steps DOD has identified to ensure compliance with section 129 of title 10, United States Code.[39]

A Plan of Action Including Any Legislative or Administrative Action

At the time of our report, DOD officials said that the department has not determined whether additional legislative actions are needed. DOD's update, however, identifies the issuance of DOD Directive 1403.03, which established the policy for competency requirements and other requirements for the management of the career life cycle of senior executives. In addition, DOD Instruction 1400.25, issued in November 2008, established a competency-based approach to manage the life cycle of senior executive personnel from accession through separation.

A Plan of Action Including Any Changes in the Number of Personnel Authorized

DOD's update notes that the department has requested an increase in the number of Defense Intelligence Senior Executive Service personnel allowed under section 1606a of title 10. Specifically, the update noted that the department required an additional 100 allocations for Defense Intelligence Senior Executive Service personnel in the following agencies: Defense Intelligence Agency, National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency, Army, Air Force, Navy, Marine Corps, Defense Security Service, and Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence. Although the update states that this change will allow critical mission requirements to be met, we did not conduct a review of the department's analysis to determine its validity.

[39]10 U.S.C. § 129 (2008).

A Plan of Action Including Any Changes in the Rates or Methods of Pay	DOD's update describes the finalization of a common Senior Executive Service position tier structure,[40] which creates a framework for determining comparability in the management and compensation of executive positions. The update also includes new sourcing methods to fill positions within each tier using component talent management processes, which includes identifying candidates across the department who, based on annual talent reviews, have been identified as ready for an enterprise senior executive position.[41]
A Plan of Action Including Specific Steps DOD Has Taken or Plans to Take to Ensure Compliance with Section 129 of Title 10, United States Code	DOD's update describes a DOD Instruction that is being developed that is intended to address how DOD manages and allocates resources based on mission requirements, workload, and prescribed performance objectives, as prescribed by 10 U.S.C. §129. Specifically, section 129 of title 10 states that the civilian personnel of DOD will be managed each fiscal year solely on the basis of and consistent with (1) the workload required to carry out the functions and activities of the department and (2) the funds made available to the department for such fiscal year.

According to DOD's update, the new instruction will explain the manpower and resources that are allocated and managed to support the strategic objectives, daily operation, and effective and economical administration of the department. Further, where possible, measures of performance will be established as indicators of mission accomplishment and will be regularly monitored by management officials to ensure that budgeted manpower reflects the minimum necessary to achieve program objectives consistent with defense priorities. In addition, the instruction will cover the flexibilities to manage to a requirement and the budget. The update and DOD officials did not, however, give any indication as to when this instruction will be completed. |

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[40]Per a DOD directive-type-memorandum issued on April 28, 2008, DOD's tier structure sorts senior executive positions into three tiers based upon position characteristics, with Tier 1 positions generally having less complexity and effect on mission outcomes and Tier 3 positions having significant complexity, effect on mission outcomes, or influence on joint, national security matters.

[41]According to DOD, enterprise senior executives will have diverse experiences to provide expert-level perspective and understanding of national security matters.

DOD's Update Partially Addresses Five of Nine Legislative Requirements

DOD's 2008 update partially addresses the remaining five requirements of the FY 2007 NDAA. As seen in table 3, these include an assessment of the needs for, the capabilities of, and the gaps in the existing senior leader workforce; and a plan of action that includes specific recruiting and retention goals, along with specific strategies for developing, training, deploying, compensating, motivating, and designing career paths and career opportunities for the senior leader workforce.

Assessment of DOD's Needs for Senior Leaders

DOD's 2008 update notes that the department has not completely addressed this requirement and has ongoing work to do so through a baseline review of senior leadership positions. DOD officials said that the latter will include an assessment of the needs for senior leaders. DOD's update does, however, identify leadership capabilities needed as part of an overall assessment of the senior leader workforce and includes some competencies developed to address the changing environment in which DOD operates. Specifically, the update identifies the need for senior leaders to assimilate quickly, possess language skills and cultural awareness, understand interagency roles and responsibilities, and have an enterprise-spanning perspective, including knowledge of joint matters and network-centric concepts as new leadership capabilities.

Assessment of the Capability of the Senior Leader Workforce

The update acknowledges that work on this requirement is ongoing, and a DOD Instruction has been drafted that will clarify, when completed, DOD's official policy on the development and sustainment of its senior leader workforce. In addition, DOD officials have told us that the department began conducting a baseline review of its senior leader workforce in April 2008, and this review is expected to provide an assessment of the capability of existing executive talent. While work is ongoing, however, DOD's update provides projected trend data for the senior leader workforce, including retirements and other attrition, projecting that approximately 60 percent of DOD's senior leader workforce will be eligible to retire within the next 3 years.

Assessment of Gaps in the Existing or Projected Workforce

DOD's update partially addresses this requirement, and the update acknowledges that work on this requirement will be ongoing until the summer of 2009. Specifically, the update states that DOD conducted initial leadership competency assessments at the Senior Executive Service, manager, and supervisor levels, in 2007, using OPM's Web-based Federal Competency Assessment Tool for Managers. The update noted that the department identified competency gaps against DOD's Executive Core Qualifications in areas including: creativity, flexibility, strategic thinking, vision, conflict management, and oral and written communications. In addition, DOD's subject-matter experts and senior leaders, through

qualitative assessments, identified the following gaps: (1) lack of critical transformational leadership skills, (2) lack of enterprisewide approach to managing the talent pipeline for DOD leaders, and (3) the shortfall of excepted-service senior intelligence executives.

A Plan of Action Including Specific Recruiting and Retention Goals

DOD's update partially addresses this requirement. For example, the update identifies a 5-year goal for the number of employees in leadership positions and contains projected trends in senior leader workforce gains, accessions, total losses, and retirement over a 7-year period. In addition, DOD is reviewing federal travel entitlements, benefits, and allowances to promulgate policies that attract and retain senior leaders. For example, DOD is reviewing Overseas Benefits Allowances to ensure the allowances are attractive incentives for senior leaders. The update, however, does not identify specific program goals to be achieved through such efforts. In addition, although the update suggests that DOD has tracking measures that relate to recruitment and retention, it does not link specific recruiting and retention goals to program objectives.

A Plan of Action Including Specific Strategies for Developing, Training, Deploying, Compensating, Motivating, and Designing Career Paths and Career Opportunities

DOD's update and the implementation of DOD Directive 1403.03 partially address specific strategies for developing, training, deploying, compensating, motivating, and designing career paths and opportunities, which DOD officials stated are components of talent management and succession planning. The update does not, however, address specific strategies for deploying senior leaders.

- **Developing and Training**. DOD has developed the Defense Senior Leader Development Program (DSLDP), which is intended to provide senior leaders with, among other things, targeted individual development, professional military education, and defense-focused leadership seminars. This program is available to a small percentage of the DOD workforce and will replace the Defense Leadership and Management Program (DLAMP). According to DOD officials, DLAMP faced a number of problems, such as lack of involvement of senior leadership in the career path or progression of potential SES candidates, lack of interaction and camaraderie among participants, and no plan for use of employees or progression after graduation. These shortcomings were identified through participant feedback and studies conducted by DOD.

  Although the development of DSLDP seeks to address some of the challenges that faced DLAMP, some components and defense agencies have indicated they will not use DSLDP because they prefer using their own component or agency programs, which they said are more focused on the unique needs for their specific senior leaders.

In addition to DSLDP and other OSD-level leadership programs, the components and defense agencies have other leadership development programs, including but not limited to the Air Force's Civilian Strategic Leader Program, the Defense Information Systems Agency's Enterprise Leadership Development Program, and the Army Civilian University. For more information on selected leadership development programs throughout DOD, see appendix II.

- **Designing Career Path and Career Opportunities (Talent Management and Succession Planning)**. With regard to talent management and succession planning efforts, DOD officials stated that OSD does not conduct departmentwide succession planning for DOD's senior leader workforce. Nevertheless, DOD issued Directive 1403.03 in October 2007 establishing DOD policy to more effectively manage the career life cycle of DOD's Senior Executive Service leaders, which specifically covers succession planning for senior executives in the service components and defense agencies. DOD's 2008 update to its civilian human capital strategic plan states that succession planning efforts are currently being developed.

  Additionally, according to DOD officials, the executive management office for talent management and succession planning, which was not established until October 2008, will address these issues.[42] This office will provide guidance and tools for the departmentwide talent management programs. For example, OSD is exploring the use of a talent management system that will allow OSD and the components to centralize their talent management efforts in accordance with DOD guidance. Specifically, this guidance requires DOD and the components to coordinate such efforts for the Senior Executive Service workforce. DOD officials noted that until this office is fully operational they will be unable to completely address the legislative requirements and this guidance.
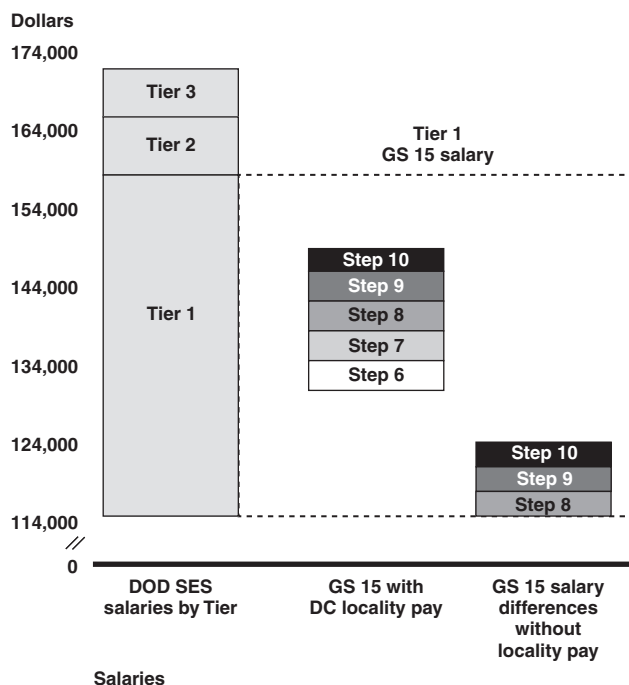
- **Compensating and Motivating Senior Executives**. In an effort to address compensation for and motivation of its Senior Executive Service workforce, DOD's update notes that the department issued a directive-type memorandum on April 28, 2008, establishing a common Tier Policy to help ensure transparency and comparability in the management and compensation of executive positions. Specifically, the DOD tier structure

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[42]DOD Directive 1403.03 calls for a talent management process to include competency assessments, diagnostics of individual executive talent, a longitudinal study of the senior leadership cadre, identification of additional resources needed to fill gaps, and other assessments.

is built upon the principle that DOD senior executive positions vary in terms of effect on mission, level of complexity, span of control, inherent authority, scope and breadth of responsibility, and influence in joint, national security matters. Under the three-tier structure, DOD senior executive positions will be sorted into three tiers based upon position characteristics, with Tier 1 positions generally having less complexity and effect on mission outcomes and Tier 3 positions having significant complexity, effect on mission outcomes, or influence on joint, national security matters. Responsible DOD officials told us that compensation levels within the tier system are common throughout the department.

According to DOD officials, however, while the common Tier Policy addresses compensation, the pay overlap of some General Schedule (GS) 15 employees and Senior Executive Service personnel could pose a challenge to recruiting for the Senior Executive Service workforce. Specifically, this overlap of pay, which involved DOD's Senior Executive Service, some GS-15 federal compensation, and some GS-15 compensation with Washington, D.C., locality, is shown in figure 1.

Figure 1: Pay Overlap of DOD's Senior Executive Service and General Schedule (GS) with and without D.C. Locality Pay, 2008

Source: GAO analysis of DOD and OPM data.

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Additionally, we have previously reported on other challenges related to Senior Executive Service compensation regarding pay compression—which occurred when their pay reached the statutory cap.[43]

DOD's Recently Established Executive Management Office Does Not Have a Performance Plan to Articulate How the Legislative Requirements Will Be Addressed

OSD officials acknowledged that, while some work on the legislative requirements and succession planning for its senior management workforce had started, it was not complete, primarily because the newly formed executive management office responsible for talent management, succession planning, and other issues at the OSD level was not established until October 2008. At the time of our review, these officials stated that this new office, like the program management office, did not have and did not plan to have a performance plan that included implementation goals and time frames, performance measures, and activities that are aligned with resources. As noted before, without such a plan, DOD and its components may not be able to design and fund the best strategies to address the legislative requirements and meet their workforce needs.

Although DOD Identified Some Factors That Could Affect Its Plan, the Update Does Not Include Strategies to Address These Factors

While DOD's update identified a number of factors that could affect civilian workforce plans, such as the effect of decisions made during BRAC[44] and the conversion of military positions to civilian positions,[45] it did not specifically incorporate strategies to address these factors. Importantly, the department did not consider a factor we previously identified—specifically, the department's reliance on contractors and the related human capital challenges associated with this reliance. For example, we previously identified the need to develop a civilian workforce strategy to address the extent of contractor use and the appropriate mix of contractors. The greater reliance on contractors requires a critical mass of civilian personnel with the expertise necessary to protect the government's interest and ensure effective oversight of contractor work.[46]

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[43]GAO, *Results-Oriented Management: Opportunities Exist for Refining the Oversight and Implementation of the Senior Executive Performance-Based Pay System*, GAO-09-82 (Washington D.C.: Nov. 21, 2008).

[44]To enable DOD to close unneeded bases and realign others, Congress enacted BRAC legislation that instituted base closure rounds in 1988, 1991, 1993, 1995, and 2005.

[45]DOD reported that tens of thousands of military personnel were performing tasks that were not military-essential and these tasks could be performed more cost-effectively by civilian or private-sector contract employees.

[46]GAO-08-572T and GAO-03-690R.

Without considering contractors as a factor in strategic human capital planning, DOD may not have the right number and appropriate mix of federal civilian employees and contractors it needs to accomplish its mission.

DOD's Update Identified Some Factors That Could Affect Its Civilian Human Capital Strategic Plan

The update identified a number of factors[47] that could affect the department's civilian human capital strategic plan. These included the execution of 2005 BRAC-round activities; military-to-civilian position conversions; and the "in-sourcing" requirement in the FY 2008 NDAA— that is, the requirement that certain positions be filled by federal civilian employees rather than contractors. The update, however, did not provide strategies for addressing these factors but stated that strategies were being developed.

Specifically regarding BRAC, the update noted that the process has the potential to affect how, when, and where positions are ultimately realigned relative to their original location. It further noted that if employees do not move, open positions and attrition could result, thus increasing the recruiting needs of the department. We have previously reported that implementing hundreds of BRAC actions by the statutory deadline of September 15, 2011, will present a challenge for DOD to realign about 123,000 military and civilian personnel to various installations across the country.[48]

The update also noted that the conversions of military positions to civilian positions could also affect the department's workforce projections. For example, it stated that a key aspect of maintaining the nation's "All-Volunteer" force was the use of DOD's military members in only those positions that are military-essential. It stated that since 2004, more than 55,000 military positions have been selected for conversion to civilian status in areas such as healthcare administrators. It further noted that the department needs to consider this potential increase in civilians as it plans and implements its human capital strategies for future years.

Additionally, the update noted that the management of the civilian workforce would also be affected by a new in-sourcing law—section 324

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[47]DOD called these factors environmental/mission influences.

[48]GAO, *Military Base Realignments and Closures: Cost Estimates Have Increased and Are Likely to Continue to Evolve*, GAO-08-159 (Washington, D.C.: Dec. 11, 2007).

of the FY 2008 NDAA.[49] The update mentioned that the department may consider using government employees to perform, among other things, a new mission requirement or an activity performed by a contractor when an economic analysis shows DOD civilian employees are the low-cost providers. The department further noted that the increased use of civilians to accomplish such critical work will put greater demands on its civilian human resources, policies, and practices.

We have previously reported a similar factor that has been a primary challenge for DOD—the department's increasing reliance on contractors. GAO's body of work has shown that DOD faces long-standing challenges with increased reliance on contractors to perform core missions. These challenges are accentuated in operations such as Iraq, where DOD has lacked adequate numbers of personnel to provide oversight and management of contractors.[50]

Key to meeting this primary challenge is developing workforce strategies that consider the extent to which contractors should be used and the appropriate mix of contractor and federal personnel. In 2003, we recommended that DOD develop a human capital strategic plan that considers contractor roles and the mix of federal civilian and contractor employees in these plans. DOD did not concur with this recommendation, at the time, noting that the use of contractors was just another tool to accomplish the department's mission and was not a separate workforce with separate needs to manage.[51] However, we noted that strategic planning for the civilian workforce should be undertaken in the context of the "total force," including contractors. The 2006 QDR and DOD's 2008 update recognize contractors as part of DOD's total workforce. We continue to believe that, without strategies that address DOD's reliance on contractors—a key part of DOD's workforce—the department may not have the right people, in the right place, at the right time, and at a reasonable cost to achieve its mission in the future.

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[49]This section amended chapter 146 of title 10 of the United States Code, by adding section 2463.

[50]GAO-08-572T and GAO-08-1087.

[51]GAO-03-690R.

Conclusions

According to DOD's projections, it is possible that the department could be faced, within the next few years, with replacing over 300,000 civilian employees. With the change in administration, the roles of these civilians are of particular importance because of the institutional knowledge they possess, as the military rotates, and as political appointees change. Also, it becomes imperative that DOD strategically manage this workforce to ensure resources are used effectively. While DOD has made good progress in developing its civilian human capital strategic plan, the recent update remains incomplete. For example, the update does not assess gaps in all of the enterprisewide mission-critical occupations identified by DOD. Also not included are strategies for addressing factors like BRAC and DOD's reliance on contractors. DOD's human capital strategic plan may not be as useful as it could be to ensure that DOD has the right number of people with the right skills to accomplish the department's mission. DOD is moving forward in making operational the two management offices it established in the fall of 2008—one to shape and monitor DOD's updated plans and the other to address, among other things, talent management and succession planning for the senior leader workforce. However, this progress comes without performance plans to help guide and gauge how the department is achieving its objective, which we have previously reported is a key element of a sound management approach.[52]

Recommendations for Executive Action

To continue the progress DOD has made with its human capital strategic planning efforts, we recommend that the Secretary of Defense direct the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness to take the following three actions:

- task the newly established program management office, which is responsible for addressing the requirements of the FY 2006 NDAA, to develop a performance plan that includes establishing implementation goals and time frames, measuring performance, and aligning activities with resources;
- task the newly established executive management office, which is responsible for addressing the requirements of the FY 2007 NDAA, to develop a performance plan that includes establishing implementation

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[52]GAO, *Military Personnel: Improvements Needed to Increase Effectiveness of DOD's Programs to Promote Positive Working Relationships between Reservists and Their Employers*, GAO-08-981R (Washington, D.C.: Aug. 15, 2008); GAO-03-669; and GAO/GGD-96-118.

goals and time frames, measuring performance, and aligning activities with resources; and

- incorporate, in future updates to its strategic human capital plan, strategies for addressing factors that could significantly affect DOD's civilian workforce plans—including contractor roles and the effect contractors have on requirements for DOD's civilian workforce.

Agency Comments and Our Evaluation

In commenting on a draft of our report, the Acting Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness partially concurred with our three recommendations. DOD's comments are reprinted in appendix III. DOD also provided technical comments on our draft report, which we incorporated, as appropriate into the report.

In written comments, DOD stated that the department had made great progress in its strategic human capital plan implementation—from its institutionalization in the department's philosophy to the actual conduct of workforce forecasting and competency assessments. The comments further stated that the department was disappointed that the complexity of its undertaking and accomplishments were not fully acknowledged in our report and trusted that this could be corrected in the final report. Our review was structured to assess the extent to which DOD's update addressed the FY 2006 and FY 2007 NDAA requirements and key factors that may affect civilian workforce planning. We note that our report acknowledges that DOD has made progress in addressing the FY 2006 NDAA requirements when compared with its first strategic human capital plan. Specifically, our report shows that the initial plan did not meet most of the statutory requirements, while the update partially addressed each requirement. We also noted some of DOD's accomplishments—including issuance of a DOD Instruction on strategic human capital management and training of component representatives on the OPM forecasting tool. However, our report also identified those areas where DOD has further work to do to enhance its civilian human capital strategic plan.

DOD partially concurred with our recommendation that the newly established program management office, which is responsible for addressing the requirements of the FY 2006 NDAA, develop a performance plan that includes establishing implementation goals and time frames, measuring performance, and aligning activities with resources. The department noted that our report said DOD does not have and does not plan to have a performance plan or road map for its newly formed civilian workforce readiness program office and that this statement was not correct. It further noted that, at the time of our review, the newly formed

program office was only a couple of months old and that the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness and the Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Civilian Personnel Policy had required the new office to develop both a performance plan and a road map—and that these efforts were in progress. We disagree. To the contrary, DOD officials did not provide any specific documentation from OUSD(P&R) or Civilian Personnel Policy requiring the new office to develop such plans, when asked about this plan. In fact, we were told that the department did not have a performance plan and that the Civilian Personnel Policy office, which had responsibility for the new program management office, normally does not produce such documents. We were further told that, essentially, any overall plan for the new office was scattered through several documents—including position descriptions, budget requests, and briefings to senior leadership. DOD also stated that, at the time of our review, the establishment of the civilian readiness office was only a couple of months old and its staffing was ongoing. We note however, that another office,[53] per DOD officials, had been addressing the FY 2006 NDAA requirements and that DOD did not provide us with a performance plan for that office either. After reviewing DOD's comments, we asked for additional documentation to support its statement that the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness and the Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Civilian Personnel Policy had required the development of a performance plan. DOD officials told us that while they have drafted a performance plan, they were unable to provide a copy because it is currently under review. In light of these circumstances, we believe it is imperative that DOD have a performance plan that provides additional guidance and measures to assess the extent to which the program management office is addressing the requirements of the FY 2006 NDAA.
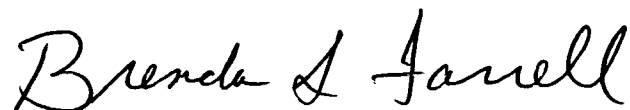
DOD also partially concurred with the recommendation to task the newly established executive management office, which is responsible for addressing the requirements of the FY 2007 NDAA, to develop a performance plan that includes establishing implementation goals and timeframes, measuring performance, and aligning activities with resources. The department stated that, at the time of our review, the executive management office was only a couple of months old. It further noted that OUSD(P&R) and the Deputy Under Secretary of Defense

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[53]This office was the Program Executive Office for Strategic Human Capital Planning under OUSD(P&R).

(Civilian Personnel Policy) had required the new office to develop both a performance plan (which measures performance and aligns activities to resources) and a road map (with implementation goals and timeframes). The department also noted that development of these documents was in progress. Again, DOD officials did not mention or provide GAO with any specific documentation from OUSD(P&R) or Civilian Personnel Policy requiring the new office to develop such plans. These actions, if performed, appear consistent with the intent of our recommendation to develop a performance plan that provides additional guidance and measures to assess the extent to which the executive management office is addressing the requirements of the FY 2007 NDAA.

DOD partially concurred with our recommendation to incorporate in future updates to its strategic human capital plan, strategies for addressing factors that could significantly affect DOD's civilian workforce plans—including contractor roles and responsibilities and the effect the use of contractors has on requirements for DOD's civilian workforce. The department stated that it has strategies in place to address recruitment and retention needs arising from factors affecting the DOD workforce, and that it will more closely align these strategies to the causal factors so the linkage is clearly evident. We believe these actions, once implemented, may meet the intent of our recommendations.

We are sending copies of this report to the appropriate congressional committees and the Secretary of Defense. In addition, this report will be available at no charge on the GAO Web site at http://www.gao.gov. If you or your staff have any questions about this report, please contact me at (202) 512-3604 or farrellb@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 major contributions to this report are listed in appendix IV.

Brenda S. Farrell
Director, Defense Capabilities and Management

Appendix I: Scope and Methodology

To determine the extent to which the Department of Defense's (DOD) 2008 update to its civilian human capital strategic plan addresses the statutory requirements established in section 1122 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2006 (FY 2006 NDAA) and section 1102 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2007 (FY 2007 NDAA), we obtained and reviewed DOD's May 2008 update. This document was approximately 400 pages and was titled "Implementation Report for the DOD Civilian Human Capital Strategic Plan." We developed a checklist based on the FY 2006 NDAA and FY 2007 NDAA legislative requirements, which enabled us to compare the requirements to DOD's updated plan. Two analysts independently assessed the DOD update using the checklist and assigned a rating to each of the elements from one of three potential ratings: "addresses," "partially addresses," or "does not address." According to our methodology, a rating of "addresses" was assigned if all elements of a legislative requirement were cited, even if specificity and details could be improved upon. Within our designation of "partially addresses," there was a wide variation between an assessment or plan of action that includes most of the elements of a legislative requirement and an assessment or plan of action that includes few of the elements of a legislative requirement. A rating of "does not address" was assigned when elements of a characteristic were not explicitly cited or discussed or any implicit references were either too vague or too general to be useful. Independent assessments between the two analysts were in agreement in the majority of the cases. When different initial ratings were given by the two analysts, they met to discuss and resolve differences in their respective checklist analyses and a senior analyst validated the results. On the basis of those discussions a consolidated final checklist was developed for both of the NDAAs.

We did not assess the reliability of the data in DOD's workforce assessments and gap analyses; however, we have previously reported information on the workforce forecasting system used by DOD. In addition, we interviewed officials at the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) to obtain updated information on the workforce forecasting systems DOD used to assess its civilian workforce and ascertained that the data were sufficiently reliable for the purposes of our review. We also interviewed officials in DOD offices for Civilian Personnel Policy (CPP), the Civilian Personnel Management Service, the Army, the Air Force, the Navy, the Defense Information Systems Agency, and the Defense Logistics Agency about the update and ongoing human capital efforts within DOD. We also discussed DOD's ongoing efforts to establish a program management office that is responsible for, among other things, monitoring and reviewing overall civilian workforce trends, competency assessments,

and gap analyses. Additionally, we talked with officials responsible for standing up the separate talent management offices within the components and defense agencies. These offices will coordinate talent management efforts with the Office of the Secretary of Defense. To determine DOD's succession planning efforts for its Senior Executive Service workforce, we analyzed applicable documents related to DOD's current efforts, along with our prior work on DOD's human capital planning efforts for senior executives. We also interviewed officials in DOD's offices for CPP, the individual services, and the components about these matters. Among other things, we discussed the department's efforts to establish an executive management office for talent management and succession planning at the OSD level.

Finally, we identified and reviewed factors that may affect DOD's civilian workforce planning such as those that DOD identified in its update. We also analyzed prior GAO reports examining other human capital challenges within DOD related to the department's reliance on contractors and discussed these matters with DOD and service officials. We conducted this performance audit from February 2008 to February 2009, 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 objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives.

Appendix II: Examples of DOD's and the Components' Senior Leader Development and Training Programs

DOD Programs

In 1997, in response to recommendations from the Commission on Roles and Missions of the Armed Forces, the Department of Defense (DOD) created its Defense Leadership and Management Program (DLAMP). This is a program aimed at preparing civilian employees for key leadership positions throughout the department.[1] DOD refers to DLAMP as a systematic program of "joint" civilian leader training, education, and development that provides the framework for developing civilians with a DOD-wide capability, substantive knowledge of the national security mission, and strong leadership and management skills.

Between 1997 and 2006, 1,894 participants were admitted to DLAMP, of which 1,132 completed senior-level professional military education, 480 graduated, 470 remained in the program, and 187 were selected for Senior Executive Service positions. Based on feedback from the components and program participants, DOD made modifications to the program and decided to end DLAMP in its current form in 2010. The modifications to DLAMP resulted in it being transitioned into a new program called Defense Senior Leader Development Program (DSLDP).

The modified approach in DSLDP focuses on developing senior civilian leaders to excel in the 21st century's joint, interagency, and multinational environment. DSLDP supports the governmentwide effort to foster interagency cooperation and information sharing by providing opportunities to understand and experience, first-hand, the issues and challenges facing leaders across DOD and the broader national security arena.

Table 4 shows the differences between DOD's DLAMP and DSLDP programs. For example, DLAMP was a self-paced program and DSLDP uses a cohort-based approach.

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[1]GAO, *Human Capital: Taking Steps to Meet Current and Emerging Human Capital Challenges*, GAO-01-965T (Washington, D.C.: July 17, 2001).

Table 4: Defense Leadership and Management Program and Defense Senior Leader Development Program

	Defense Leadership and Management Program (DLAMP)	Defense Senior Leader Development Program (DSLDP)	Observed differences based on program solicitation memos
Program duration	Self-paced (2 to 5 years)	Cohort-based (2 years)	DSLDP utilizes cohorts
Professional military education (PME)	Complete: a foundation course in national security policy, strategy, and decision making; a senior-level course in PME from one of the senior service schools or the National Defense University	Prepares candidates to take on additional responsibility, expands their knowledge of national security, complex policy, and operational challenges	None
Leadership courses	Two courses in executive leadership	Cohort-based seminars (3-5 days in length) with classroom learning and practical application	DSLDP provides cohort-based seminars and seeks to build camaraderie among candidates
Professional development	Encourages a joint or cross-component assignment as part of the program	Requires the candidate to have an Individual Development Plan	DSLDP requires a long-range plan for the candidate to address competency gaps
Allocations	Fiscal year 2006—Army 108, Navy 112, Air Force 58, fourth estate 42, and intelligence 30	Fiscal year 2008—Army 18, Navy 15, Air Force 12, fourth estate 10, and intelligence 5	DLAMP is scheduled to sunset in 2010; until then, the programs will coexist
Eligibility	GS-13 or above, baccalaureate degree or higher	GS-14 or above, baccalaureate degree or higher, and 1 year of significant leadership experience	DSLDP requires 1 year of significant leadership and is limited to GS-14 or above
Selection criteria	DOD components select candidates	Components nominate candidates. Nominees participate in an Executive Core Qualifications–based (ECQ) assessment center activity and a DOD selection board recommends selections to the Office of the Secretary of Defense	DSLDP requires nominees to participate in an ECQ-based assessment center activity and a selection board reviews nominations for selection
Application process	DLAMP Applicant Information Sheet, resume, qualification statement describing how the applicant meets each of the ECQs, a supervisor's recommendation, transcripts	DSLDP Information Sheet, resume, latest performance appraisal, current SF-50, statement of achievements, statement of interest, supervisor's assessment, transcripts	The DSLDP application process requires the latest performance appraisal and a statement of interest

Source: GAO analysis of DOD data.

In addition to DLAMP, DOD has revamped its Executive Leadership Development Program (ELDP), another program at the Office of the Secretary of Defense level designed to develop a pipeline of high-potential future leaders. The ELDP is a 10-month program for GS-12- to GS-14-equivalent civilian personnel. According to DOD, ELDP provides participants with exposure to roles and missions of the entire department and fosters an increasing understanding of today's warfighter.

Component-Specific Programs

Some of the individual components and fourth estate agencies have their own senior leader development programs, which are comparable to DLAMP and DSLDP. Below is a sample of the additional programs available to DOD civilians:

- The Air Force's Civilian Strategic Leader Program (CSLP), which is designed to provide senior civilian leaders the career management and development necessary to put them on par with similar general officers in the Air Force. The intent of the CSLP process is to build a corps of civilian personnel within the Air Force that have the potential to progress into the Senior Executive Service.
- The Defense Information Security Agency's (DISA) Enterprise Leadership Development Program provides leadership development and training to its senior executives. The program focuses on its GS-13 to GS-15 civilian employees with leadership potential. DISA also has a program called the Emerging Leaders Program, which focuses on GS-9 through GS-12 civilian employees.
- The Army Civilian University has been established to oversee and fully integrate an enterprise approach to education for civilians in support of the U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC). The university uses an integrated and TRADOC-complementary curriculum with a more standardized, competency-based approach to civilian education, training and leader development initiatives. The Army has also established the Army Senior Fellows Program to build a bench of future Army senior executives who are innovative, adaptive, interchangeable civilian leaders. This program is designed to (1) identify high-potential GS-14 and GS-15 employees through an Army Secretariat Board selection and (2) provide the employees with executive experience assignments and educational opportunities.
- The Defense Logistics Agency launched a new Enterprise Leader Development Program in fiscal year 2007 for supervisors and managers who hold critical leadership positions. The objective of this program is to increase participants' proficiency in six critical leadership competencies: integrity/honesty, leading people, external awareness, strategic thinking, executive-level communication, and human capital management.

Appendix III: Comments from the Department of Defense

UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
4000 DEFENSE PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301-4000

PERSONNEL AND
READINESS

Ms. Brenda S. Farrell
Director, Defense Capabilities and Management
U.S. Government Accountability Office
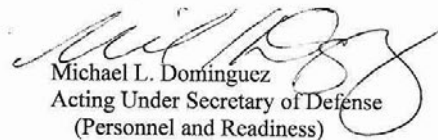Washington, DC 20548

Dear Ms. Farrell:

This is the Department of Defense (DoD) response to the GAO draft report, GAO-09-235, "HUMAN CAPITAL: Opportunities Exist to Build on Recent Progress to Strengthen DOD's Civilian Human Capital Strategic Plan," dated December 19, 2008. Enclosed are our specific comments and concerns.

With an institution of the size and complexity of the Department of Defense, which employs over 760,000 civilian employees in hundreds of decentralized commands/activities and in most career fields, it is unreasonable to expect that implementation of a comprehensive Strategic Human Capital Management (SHCM) plan could be completed in two years. Rather, such a large-scale implementation is an on-going journey, which the Department is travelling in a planned, collaborative manner with its Defense Components.

Nevertheless, the Department has made great progress in its SHCM plan implementation, from its institutionalization in the Department's management philosophy, to the actual conduct of workforce forecasting and competency assessment. I am disappointed that the complexity of the undertaking and the accomplishments achieved thus far are not more fully acknowledged in your report, and trust that this can be corrected in the final report.

Ms. Patricia Bradshaw, the Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Civilian Personnel Policy can answer any questions you may have on the Department's response. She can be reached at (703) 614-9487.

Sincerely,

Michael L. Dominguez
Acting Under Secretary of Defense
(Personnel and Readiness)

Enclosure:
As stated

GAO DRAFT REPORT - DATED DECEMBER 19, 2008
GAO CODE 351173/GAO-09-235

"HUMAN CAPITAL: Opportunities Exist to Build on Recent Progress to Strengthen
DoD's Civilian Human Capital Strategic Plan"

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE COMMENTS
TO THE RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATION 1: The GAO recommends that the Secretary of Defense direct
the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness to task the
newly established program management office, which is responsible for addressing the
requirements of the NDAA for Fiscal Year 2006, to develop a performance plan that
includes establishing implementation goals and timeframes, measuring performance,
and aligning activities with resources.

DOD RESPONSE: Partially concur. The GAO report indicates the Department does not
have, and does not plan to have, a performance plan or road map for its newly formed
civilian workforce readiness program office, which will be working the Department's
Strategic Human Capital Management (SHCM) plan. This is incorrect. At the time of
the GAO engagement, the establishment of the civilian readiness office was only a
couple of months old and its staffing was ongoing. The Under Secretary of Defense
(Personnel and Readiness) and the Deputy Under Secretary of Defense (Civilian
Personnel Policy) have required for the newly-formed office, the development of both a
performance plan, which measures performance and aligns activities to resources, and
a road map, with implementation goals and timeframes; development of these
documents is in progress.

RECOMMENDATION 2: The GAO recommends that the Secretary of Defense direct
the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness to task the
newly established executive management office, which is responsible for addressing the
requirements of the Fiscal Year 2007 NDAA, to develop a performance plan that
includes establishing implementation goals and timeframes, measuring performance,
and aligning activities with resources.

DOD RESPONSE: Partially concur. At the time of the GAO engagement, the
establishment of the executive management office was only a couple of months old.
The Under Secretary of Defense (Personnel and Readiness) and the Deputy Under
Secretary of Defense (Civilian Personnel Policy) have required for the newly-formed
office, the development of both a performance plan, which measures performance and
aligns activities to resources, and a road map, with implementation goals and
timeframes; development of these documents is in progress.

RECOMMENDATION 3: The GAO recommends that the Secretary of Defense direct
the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness to

incorporate, in future updates to its strategic human capital plan, strategies for addressing factors that could significantly impact DoD's civilian workforce plans—including contractor roles and the effect contractors have on requirements for DoD's civilian workforce.

DOD RESPONSE: Partially Concur. The Department has strategies in place to address the recruitment and retention needs arising from factors impacting the DoD workforce. In future updates, however, the Department will more closely align these strategies to the causal factors, so the linkage is clearly evident.

The following additional comments are provided regarding the GAO report.

See comment 1.

1. The report mentions several times the need for the Department to address contractor/civilian mix. However, this issue was not included as part of the GAO interviews or fact-finding. The Department has in place several initiatives, outside of Civilian Personnel Policy, that address this issue and requests the opportunity to present information in its regard.

See comment 2.

2. The report also mentions several times the need for increased contract oversight. Again, this issue was not included as part of the GAO interviews or fact-finding. The Department also has ongoing initiatives relevant to this issue and requests the opportunity to present information in its regard.

See comment 3.

3. The GAO engagement on the Department's Strategic Human Capital Management (SHCM) plan was bifurcated between an independent GAO review of the acquisition SHCM plan and an independent GAO review of the remaining part of the plan. This bifurcation, unfortunately, has led to a report that does not fully address the entirety of the Department's SHCM efforts.

See comment 4.

4. The Department's efforts to institutionalize Strategic Human Capital Management Planning are not addressed in the report. Institutionalization of the effort is foundational to successful implementation, and efforts in this regard should be noted in the report. These efforts have been planned and undertaken by Department leadership to ensure Strategic Human Capital remains in the forefront of all Departmental mission planning, both current and future. As discussed and presented to the GAO representatives, these institutionalization efforts include:

See comment 5.

    i. Issuance of a DoD Instruction, signed by the USD(P&R) on Strategic Human Capital Management (SHCM), which outlines roles and responsibilities, articulates SHCM requirements, both by Component and by Functional Communities, and establishes an assessment and accountability mechanism to ensure SHCM responsibilities are properly executed.

    ii. Negotiation with the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) on licensing costs for DoD enterprise-wide use of the WASSCIVFORE forecasting tool; final licensing costs were received on 12 January 2009.

See comment 6.

See comment 7.

     iii. Training of Component representatives on the Office of Civilian Personnel Management Forecasting Tool

     iv. Formulation, submission and authorization of a budget for a SHCM Program Office, known as the Civilian Readiness Cell, which included salary and benefits for 20 personnel, and training for HR Consultants on SHCM.

     v. Development of mission and function statements, and organization charts for a Civilian Readiness (SHCM) Program Office.

     vi. Recruitment for, and selection of, SHCM staff.

     vii. Development of a training curriculum for HR consultants on SHCM.

     viii. Issuance of a Memorandum from the USD(P&R) to the USDs, tasking them to appoint Functional Community Managers (FCM)

     ix. Initiation of a Community of Practice for FCMs and conduct of periodic meetings with them.

     x. Development of a seven-step SHCM model and a pilot of the model within the Information Technology, Financial Management and Logistics communities. Pilot is gearing up to start 3rd Quarter FY 09.

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE GENERAL COMMENTS

See comment 8.

1. Highlights Section, Summary Page. The statistic that more than 50 percent of the DoD Civilian workforce is eligible to retire in the next few years is correct. However, it is somewhat misleading, as that figure includes both those eligible for optional and early retirement. By 2012, 26% of the DOD workforce will be eligible for optional retirement, and 20% will be age 59.9, which is the average age of a DoD optional retiree.

See comment 9.

2. Summary Page. GAO's assertion that the Department's forecasting was for a seven year vice 10 year period is correct. However, the Department believes that a seven year forecast is valid and should be acceptable for Human Capital Planning purposes, especially since it mirrors DoD's budget planning cycle.

See comment 10.

3. Summary Page/ Page 6, Para 1/ Page 21, Last Para. The GAO report indicates the Department does not have, and does not plan to have, a performance plan or road map for its newly formed civilian workforce readiness program office, which will be working the Department's SHCM plan. This is incorrect. The formation of the civilian readiness office is only a couple of months old and its staffing is still ongoing. There will definitely be both a performance plan and a road map for the office; they were just not complete at the time of the GAO engagement.

See comment 11.

4. Summary Page. The GAO report discusses at length the Department's mix of contractors and civilians. This issue, however, was not discussed during the GAO interviews and, thus, GAO was not privy to the Department's ongoing efforts to ensure the contractor/civilian mix is appropriate. If this issue is included as part of the report, the Department would like the opportunity to provide GAO an overview of its ongoing initiatives in this area.

See comment 12.

5. Page 5, Para 1. GAO report discusses the, "Department's reliance on contractors". This issue was not raised by GAO representatives in their discussions with DoD staff and thus was not addressed by DoD. A meeting with appropriate DoD and GAO staff should be arranged to discuss this issue so that GAO can be provided salient information in its regard.

See comment 13.

6. Page 6, Para 1. The GAO report indicates forecasting was only done for the eleven mission critical occupations (MCOs). This is incorrect. The Department conducted workforce forecasting for: 1) the entire DoD workforce; 2) the entirety of the Department of the Army, Air Force and Navy; and 3) for eleven of its mission critical occupations. In addition, forecasting was completed by the Acquisition Community for seven mission critical acquisition career fields representing 86% (over 100,000 members) of the DoD acquisition workforce.

See comment 14.

7. Page 6, Para 1, Line 7/Page 19, Para 2. The GAO report indicates the Department did a gap analyses for about half of its 25 enterprise-wide mission occupations. It is not clear to what gap analyses this is referring. If the report is referring to a competency gap analysis, the report is misleading. As indicated in DoD's response to Congress, on pages 2-15 thru 2-25 of the DoD report, competency assessments were done on many occupational series, covering thousands of personnel.

See comment 15.

8. Page 6, Para 1, Line 9. The GAO report indicates that the DoD report partially addressed a plan of action to develop and reshape the civilian workforce. Chapter 3 of DoD's response to Congress, which is aligned by the Department's Human Capital Goals, comprehensively outlines the current and future strategies DoD is deploying to develop and reshape its workforce. Under each Human Capital goal, the report clearly delineates recruitment programs and initiatives, including innovative pipeline activities; retention programs and initiatives; and development opportunities. The Department's recruitment, retention and development activities do not focus solely on the MCOs; rather, they are widespread and cover most of the Department's occupations.

See comment 16.

9. Page 14, Para 2. It is correct the DoD report to Congress had appendices on 12 of the MCOs. However, as was discussed during the GAO interviews, this does not reflect the totality of the Department's efforts. The Department's acquisition community has strategic plans in place for seven of its mission critical acquisition career fields, covering 112, 000 civilian personnel. These plans address the FY08 implementation of Section 852 of the Defense Acquisition Workforce Development Fund, and discuss, in detail, recruitment and retention strategies and goals. Although the acquisition strategic human capital management report is being submitted to Congress separate from the main

See comment 17.

See comment 18.

report, it is part of the Department's overall SHCM plan and should be considered in the GAO assessment.

10. Page 16, Footnote 28/Page 33, Para 3. The acquisition community has conducted a human capital analysis of the acquisition program management, contract management, and quality assurance career fields, and has undertaken initiatives to strengthen those workforces. Information on these initiatives, the DoD Panel on Contracting Integrity 2007 Report to Congress (submitted January 2008)(Section 813), and the DoD Task Force on Contracting and Contract Management in Expeditionary Operations 2008 Report to Congress, should be included in, or referenced to, the GAO report to provide a complete picture of the Department's SHCM initiatives related to contract oversight.

11. Page 31, Last Para. Chapter 3 of DoD's report to Congress addressed recruitment and development strategies to meet DoD Civilian Workforce needs. Recruitment strategies are key to ensuring the successful conversion of military positions to civilian, refreshing position pipelines incident to projected retirements, and readying a supply of candidates to meet in-sourcing requirements; thus, the Department believes it indeed has strategies in place to address emergent recruitment needs.

GAO Comments

The following are GAO's comments on specific sections in the Department of Defense's (DOD) letter sent on January 23, 2009. The specific sections are entitled, "The following additional comments are provided regarding the GAO report" and "DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE GENERAL COMMENTS."

1. DOD states that contractor issues were not a part of our interviews and fact finding for this review. However, as identified in the DOD notification letter, other challenges and emerging issues facing DOD's Senior Executive Service (SES) workforce in the human capital area was a key question included in this review. Our approach included reviewing our prior work, analyzing DOD's update, interviewing OSD and component officials about these issues, and discussing our potential findings with them. These officials noted that contractor reliance was a major challenge for the department, and we noted that the DOD 2008 update did not mention this as one of the challenges and, thus, did not provide a strategy. As noted in our report we assessed the extent to which the update addressed key factors like the reliance on contractors.

2. DOD states that our report mentions the need for increased contract oversight and that this issue, again, was not part of our interviews or fact-finding. See comment 1.

3. DOD stated that our review was bifurcated between an independent GAO review of the defense acquisition workforce section and a review of the remaining part of the update to DOD's plan. This is not correct. This review focused on how DOD's 2008 update submitted to Congress addressed the Fiscal Year (FY) 2006 and 2007 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) and key factors that could affect civilian human capital planning. According to section 851 of the FY 2008 NDAA, DOD was required to include a section on the defense acquisition workforce planning efforts in its 2008 update, but it did not. This review focused on DOD's 2008 update. A separate GAO review is looking at, among other things, the defense acquisition workforce requirements in the FY 2008 NDAA.

4. DOD stated that we did not address the department's efforts to institutionalize strategic human capital management planning. We disagree. As we state in the report, the objectives for our review were to assess the extent to which DOD's update addressed the FY 2006 and FY 2007 NDAA requirements and key factors that may affect civilian workforce planning and our report was, therefore, structured accordingly. Our report did, however, note some of DOD's efforts—including issuance of a DOD Instruction on Strategic Human Capital Management and training for component representatives on the Office of Personnel Management's forecasting tool.

5. DOD's comments provided a list of institutionalized efforts that included issuance of a DOD Strategic Human Capital Management instruction. This information is referenced in our report.

6. DOD's comments provided a list of institutionalized efforts that mentioned training of component representatives on the Office of Personnel Management forecasting tool. This information is referenced in our report.

7. DOD's comments provided a list of institutionalized efforts that mentioned formulation, submission, and authorization of a budget for the strategic human capital management program office. We added some of this information to our report.

8. DOD's comments noted that our report said that more than 50 percent of the DOD civilian workforce is eligible to retire in the next few years and noted that this statement was correct but misleading because the figure included optional and early retirement. We have revised our report accordingly.

9. DOD's comments said that our assertion that the department's forecasting was for a 7-year period and not a 10-year period is correct; however, the department believes that a 7-year forecast is valid and should be acceptable because it mirrors DOD's budget planning cycle. We provided DOD's perspective in our report but note that the FY 2006 NDAA requires a 10-year forecast.

10. The department noted that our report said DOD does not have and does not plan to have a performance plan or road map for its newly formed civilian workforce readiness program office and that this statement was not correct. It further noted that, at the time of our review, the newly formed program office was only a couple of months old, its staffing was still in progress, and there would definitely be both a performance plan and a road map for the office. The department stated that these were just not complete at the time of the GAO engagement. We disagree. To the contrary, DOD did not provide us with any specific documentation that a performance plan was in progress during our review. In fact, we were told that the department did not have a performance plan and the Civilian Personnel Policy office, which has responsibility for the new program management office, normally does not produce such documents. We were further told that, essentially, any overall plan for the new office was scattered through several documents—including position descriptions, budget requests, and briefings to senior leadership.

11. DOD stated that our report discussed DOD's mix of contractors and civilians and this was not discussed during our interviews. We disagree. See comment 1.

12. DOD's comments state that our report discussed the department's reliance on contractors and this was not raised in discussions with DOD. We disagree. See comment 1.

13. DOD's comments assert that our report incorrectly states that the department did forecasting only for eleven mission-critical occupations and this was not correct. We have revised the report accordingly.

14. DOD states that our report indicates that the department did a gap analysis for about half of its 25 enterprisewide mission-critical occupations, but it was not clear to what gap analyses this was referring. It further noted that, if the report was referring to a competency gap assessment, it was misleading and noted that the update had discussed competency assessments on pages 2-15 through 2-25 of its update. We note that our report states that 11 gap assessments were done with the forecasting tool---10 of which DOD identified as "steady state" and one with an actual gap. We further noted that the update also discussed other gap assessments for six enterprisewide mission-critical occupations. We note that only one of these was not previously identified as one of the 11 mission-critical occupations with gap assessments—this was the computer science mission-critical occupation. We also clarified that competency gap assessments were done at the component levels and provided examples in the body of our report.

15. DOD states that our report indicates DOD's update partially addressed a plan of action to develop and reshape the civilian workforce and note that while its recruitment, retention and development activities did not focus solely on its mission-critical occupations, the strategies are widespread and cover most of the department's occupations. We note, however, that the law required the plan to address identified gaps in its "critical" skills and competencies or what DOD has identified as enterprisewide mission-critical occupations.

16. While DOD acknowledged our report correctly stated that its update contained appendixes on 12 mission-critical occupations, it believed that we did not reflect the totality of the Departments efforts because the acquisition workforce section was not considered in the GAO assessment. As stated in comment 3, information from the section on defense acquisition workforce planning was not included in our report because it was not completed during the course of our review.

17. DOD's comments stated that the acquisition community had conducted a human capital analysis and undertaken initiatives to strengthen this workforce and these should be included in the GAO report. We disagree. See comment 3.

18. DOD stated that chapter 3 of its update addressed recruitment and development strategies to meet DOD civilian workforce needs—noting

that strategies were key to ensuring the successful conversion of military positions to civilians and readying a supply of candidates to meet in-sourcing requirements. Accordingly, the department noted that it believed it indeed had strategies in place to address emergent recruitment needs. We note however that the introduction and executive summary of the update noted several factors we discussed as challenges and stated that strategies, at the time of our review, were being developed—and, as stated previously, contractor reliance was not identified as a challenge in the update.

Appendix IV: GAO Contact and Staff Acknowledgments

GAO Contact

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Acknowledgments

In addition to the contact name above, Marion Gatling, Assistant Director; Andrew Curry; Michael Hanson; Mae Jones; Amber Lopez; Lonnie McAllister; Brian Pegram; Charlie Perdue; Terry Richardson; and Nicole Volchko made major contributions to this report.

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