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Highlights

Highlights of [GAO-06-364](#), a report to the Chairman, Subcommittee on National Security, Emerging Threats, and International Relations, Committee on Government Reform, House of Representatives

Why GAO Did This Study

The Joint Strike Fighter (JSF) program is the Department of Defense's (DOD) largest international cooperative effort to develop and produce a major weapon system. Due to the breadth of international participation, the number of export authorizations needed to share information with partner governments, solicit bids from suppliers, and execute contracts is expected to far exceed past transfers of advanced military technology.

In July 2003, GAO reported that managing these transfers and partner expectations while avoiding delays has been a key challenge and recommended that industrial planning tools be developed and used to anticipate time frames for national disclosure and technology transfer decisions. This report examines DOD's response to this recommendation and identifies the practices DOD is using to expedite license processing and avoid program delays.

www.gao.gov/cgi-bin/getrpt?GAO-06-364.

To view the full product, including the scope and methodology, click on the link above. For more information, contact Ann Calvaresi-Barr (202) 512-4841 or calvaresibarra@gao.gov.

JOINT STRIKE FIGHTER

Management of the Technology Transfer Process

What GAO Found

Agencies have taken four key actions to expedite the processing of licenses for transferring technology to partner countries and foreign suppliers. Each of these practices is intended to anticipate time frames needed for the processing of licenses or avoid delays to the JSF program schedule.

- In response to GAO's 2003 recommendation, the JSF Program Office instructed the prime contractor to develop an international industrial plan that identifies the type of license needed to transfer certain technologies to foreign industry. The contractor's plan provides mechanisms for anticipating "need" dates for submitting license applications and for identifying and addressing potential issues related to the releasability of classified information, technologies, or systems. In addition to the contractor's plan, DOD has developed guidance calling for industrial planning tools in all programs with significant international involvement.
- Agencies involved in the JSF program are expediting the processing of license applications by dedicating staff to the JSF licensing process, providing consultation to applicants on draft licenses, administering a prescreening process for the transfer of low technology and nonsensitive items, and allowing addendums to be attached to license applications.
- The JSF prime contractor and agency officials have used options available to them under the International Traffic in Arms Regulations, such as Global Project Authorization (GPA) and an exemption used in obtaining foreign contractor bids and proposals, to help facilitate the export control process and avoid program delays. While GPA is designed to approve exports within 5 days, its use has been limited.
- Due to the early involvement of international partners in the design phase of the program, decisions related to the releasability of classified information, technologies, or systems to partner countries have been addressed as they arise throughout the development of the system.

Joint Strike Fighter



Source: JSF Program Office.