



Highlights of [GAO-07-60](#), a report to the Ranking Minority Member, Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, and Ranking Minority Member, Subcommittee on National Security and International Relations, House of Representatives

Why GAO Did This Study

The high use of the National Guard for federal overseas missions has reduced equipment available for its state-led domestic missions, at the same time it faces an expanded array of threats at home. The massive state-led, federally funded response to Hurricane Katrina illustrates the Guard's important role in responding to the effects of large-scale, multistate events as well as the difficulty of working with multiple state and federal agencies. To address congressional interest in the Guard's domestic preparedness, GAO assessed the extent to which (1) the Guard's domestic equipment requirements have been identified, (2) the Department of Defense (DOD) measures and reports to Congress the equipment readiness of non-deployed Guard forces for domestic missions, and (3) DOD actions address the Guard's domestic equipping challenges. GAO examined the National Guard's plans and equipment status and included case studies in California, Florida, New Jersey, and West Virginia.

What GAO Recommends

GAO recommends updating the National Guard Bureau's charter and civil support regulation and improved reporting of the Guard's domestic readiness. DOD partially agreed to report on plans to assess domestic readiness but disagreed with our other recommendations. GAO reiterates the need for changes in matters for congressional consideration.

www.gao.gov/cgi-bin/getrpt?GAO-07-60.

To view the full product, including the scope and methodology, click on the link above. For more information, contact Janet A. St. Laurent at (202) 512-4402 or stlaurentj@gao.gov.

RESERVE FORCES

Actions Needed to Identify National Guard Domestic Equipment Requirements and Readiness

What GAO Found

The types and quantities of equipment the National Guard needs to respond to large-scale terrorist events and natural disasters have not been fully identified because the multiple federal and state agencies that would have roles in responding to such events have not completed and integrated their plans. The Homeland Security Council has developed 15 catastrophic scenarios to guide federal and state governments in planning their response activities. While DOD is responsible for equipping the Guard for its federal missions and states plan for the National Guard's activities within their borders, neither is comprehensively planning for the Guard's role in responding to events like the national planning scenarios that may involve more than one state and be federally funded. Such planning has not been completed primarily because there is no formal mechanism for facilitating planning for the Guard's role in large-scale events. As a liaison between the Army, the Air Force, and the states, the National Guard Bureau is well positioned to facilitate state planning for National Guard forces. The bureau has facilitated some limited interstate planning for multistate events, although neither its charter nor its civil support regulation identifies this activity as its responsibility. Until the bureau's charter and its civil support regulation are revised to define its role in facilitating state planning for multistate events, such planning for the National Guard's role in these events may remain incomplete, and the National Guard may not be prepared to respond as efficiently and effectively as possible.

DOD does not routinely measure or report to Congress the equipment readiness of nondeployed National Guard forces for domestic missions. DOD's legacy readiness reporting system and its annual National Guard equipping report to Congress address warfighting readiness but do not address the Guard's domestic missions. While DOD has recognized the need for greater visibility over the Guard's domestic capabilities, its process and measures for assessing the Guard's domestic readiness have not yet been fully defined. Until DOD reaches agreement on a specific approach for measuring readiness for domestic missions and requirements are defined, it will remain unclear whether the Guard is equipped to respond effectively to the consequences of a large-scale terrorist attack or natural disaster.

DOD is taking some actions to address National Guard equipment challenges but the extent to which these actions will improve the Guard's domestic capabilities is uncertain because DOD has not finalized specific plans to implement and fund several initiatives. Some officials in case study states expressed concerns about the adequacy of equipment for nondeployed units under current Army plans. For example, until the Army defines the types and amounts of equipment that nondeployed Army National Guard units can expect to retain on hand within the United States, National Guard officials in the states may be hampered in their ability to plan and train for responding to large-scale domestic events.