



Highlights of [GAO-08-523T](#), a testimony before the Subcommittee on Readiness, Committee on Armed Services, House of Representatives

Why GAO Did This Study

The Department of Defense (DOD) is the single largest U.S. energy consumer. About three-fourths of its total consumption consists of mobility energy—the energy required for moving and sustaining its forces and weapons platforms for military operations.

GAO was asked to discuss DOD's efforts to manage and reduce its mobility energy demand. This testimony addresses (1) energy issues that are likely to affect DOD in the future, (2) key departmental and military service efforts to reduce demand for mobility energy, and (3) DOD's management approach to guide and oversee these efforts. This testimony is based primarily on work conducted for a report that GAO issued today ([GAO-08-426](#)) on DOD's management of mobility energy.

What GAO Recommends

In the report GAO issued today, GAO recommended that DOD establish an overarching organizational framework to improve the department's ability to address mobility energy challenges. The framework should include an executive-level Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) official accountable for mobility energy matters, a comprehensive strategic plan, and improvements to DOD's business processes. The military services should designate executive-level focal points to establish effective communication and coordination among OSD and the military services. DOD partially concurred with the recommendations.

To view the full product, click on [GAO-08-523T](#). For more information, contact William M. Solis at (202) 512-8365 or solisw@gao.gov.

DEFENSE MANAGEMENT

Overarching Organizational Framework Could Improve DOD's Management of Energy Reduction Efforts for Military Operations

What GAO Found

Several issues, such as rising fuel costs, worldwide energy demand, and the high fuel burden during operations, underscore the importance of energy to DOD. Fuel costs for DOD are substantial and the volatility of world oil prices will likely continue to affect the department—which may require DOD to make difficult trade-offs such as redirecting funds from ongoing programs to pay for needed fuel. Other energy issues that are likely to affect DOD in the future are the increased U.S. dependence on foreign oil, projected increases in the worldwide demand for oil, and uncertainties about world oil supplies. Furthermore, DOD's high fuel requirements on the battlefield can place a significant logistics burden on military forces, limit the range and pace of operations, and add to mission risks, including exposing supply convoys to attack. Given these issues, DOD must be well positioned to effectively manage energy demands for military operations.

DOD has initiatives under way to reduce mobility energy demand. At the department level, OSD created a task force to address energy security concerns. In addition, the Deputy Secretary of Defense included energy in DOD's list of the top 25 transformational priorities for the department as part of its initiative to pursue targeted acquisition reforms. Each of the military services also has its own initiatives under way. The Army is addressing fuel consumption at forward-deployed locations by developing foam-insulated tents and temporary dome structures that are more efficient to heat and cool, reducing the demand for fuel-powered generators. The Navy has established an energy conservation program to encourage ships to reduce energy consumption. The Air Force has developed an energy strategy and undertaken initiatives to determine fuel-efficient flight routes, reduce the weight on aircraft, optimize air refueling, and improve the efficiency of ground operations. The Marine Corps has initiated research and development efforts to develop alternative power sources, such as hybrid power, and improve fuel management.

While these and other mobility energy reduction efforts are under way, DOD lacks elements of an overarching organizational framework to guide and oversee these efforts. Specifically, GAO found that DOD's current approach to mobility energy lacks (1) a single executive-level OSD official who is accountable for mobility energy matters, (2) a comprehensive strategic plan for mobility energy, and (3) an effective mechanism to provide for communication and coordination of mobility energy efforts among OSD and the military services as well as leadership and accountability over each military service's efforts. GAO also found that DOD has made limited progress in incorporating fuel efficiency as a consideration in key business processes—which include developing requirements for and acquiring new weapons systems. With a mobility energy overarching organizational framework in place, DOD would be better positioned to reduce its significant reliance on petroleum-based fuel and to address the energy challenges of the 21st century.