



Highlights of [GAO-10-186T](#), a testimony before the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, Committee on Armed Services, House of Representatives

Why GAO Did This Study

Improvised explosive devices (IED) are the number-one threat to troops in Iraq and Afghanistan, accounting for almost 40 percent of the attacks on coalition forces in Iraq. Although insurgents' use of IEDs in Iraq has begun to decline, in Afghanistan the number of IED incidents has significantly increased. The Joint IED Defeat Organization (JIEDDO) was created to lead, advocate, and coordinate all DOD efforts to defeat IEDs. Its primary role is to provide funding to the military services and DOD agencies to rapidly develop and field counter-IED solutions. Through fiscal year 2009, Congress has appropriated over \$16 billion to JIEDDO. In addition, other DOD components, including the military services, have devoted at least \$1.5 billion to the counter-IED effort—which does not include \$22.7 billion for Mine Resistant Ambush Protected vehicles.

This testimony is based on a report that GAO is issuing today as well as preliminary observations from ongoing work that GAO plans to report in early 2010. In the report being issued today, GAO is recommending that JIEDDO (1) improve its visibility of counter-IED efforts across DOD, (2) develop a complete plan to guide the transition of initiatives, and (3) define criteria for its training initiatives to help guide its funding decisions. DOD generally concurred with GAO's recommendations and noted actions to be taken.

View [GAO-10-186T](#) or key components. For more information, contact William Solis at (202) 512-8365 or SolisW@GAO.gov.

WARFIGHTER SUPPORT

Challenges Confronting DOD's Ability to Coordinate and Oversee Its Counter-Improvised Explosive Device Efforts

What GAO Found

Since its creation, JIEDDO has taken several steps to improve its management of counter-IED efforts. For instance, GAO's ongoing work has found that JIEDDO has been improving the management of its efforts to defeat IEDs, including developing and implementing a strategic plan that provides an overarching framework for departmentwide efforts to defeat IEDs, as well as a JIEDDO-specific strategic plan. Also, as noted in the report GAO is issuing today, JIEDDO and the services have taken steps to improve visibility over their counter-IED efforts, and JIEDDO has taken several steps to support the ability of the services and defense agencies to program and fund counter-IED initiatives.

However, several significant challenges remain that affect DOD's ability to oversee JIEDDO. Some of these challenges are identified in GAO's report being released today along with recommendations to address them. For example, one challenge is a lack of full visibility by JIEDDO and the services over counter-IED initiatives throughout DOD. Although JIEDDO and various service organizations are developing and maintaining their own counter-IED initiative databases, JIEDDO and the services lack a comprehensive database of all existing counter-IED initiatives, which limits their visibility over counter-IED efforts across the department. In addition, JIEDDO faces difficulties coordinating the transition of funding responsibility for joint counter-IED initiatives to the services, due to gaps between JIEDDO's transition timeline and DOD's base budget cycle. JIEDDO's initiative transitions also are hindered when service requirements are not fully considered during JIEDDO's acquisition process. JIEDDO also lacks clear criteria for defining what counter-IED training initiatives it will fund and, as a result, has funded training activities that may have primary uses other than defeating IEDs. Additionally, GAO's ongoing work has identified other oversight challenges. For example, JIEDDO lacks a means as well as reliable data to gauge the effectiveness of its counter-IED efforts. GAO's work has identified several areas in which data on the effectiveness and progress of IED-defeat initiatives are unreliable or inconsistently collected. In some cases, data are not collected in-theater because the initiatives may not be designed with adequate data-collection procedures. Another challenge facing JIEDDO is its inconsistent application of its counter-IED initiative acquisition process, allowing initiatives to bypass some or all of the process's key review and approval steps. Further, JIEDDO lacks adequate internal controls to ensure DOD that it is achieving its objectives. For example, in July 2009, JIEDDO reported that its internal controls system had a combination of deficiencies that constituted a material weakness. Such a weakness could adversely affect JIEDDO's ability to meet its objectives. Finally, JIEDDO has not developed a process for identification and analysis of the risks it faces in achieving its objectives from both external and internal sources, and it has not assessed its performance over time or ensured that the findings of audits and other reviews have been promptly resolved. As GAO completes its ongoing work it expects to issue a report with recommendations to address these issues.