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WARFIGHTER SUPPORT

DOD's Urgent Needs Processes Need a More Comprehensive Approach and Evaluation for Potential Consolidation

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Why GAO Did This Study

Forces in Iraq and Afghanistan have faced significant risks of mission failure and loss of life due to rapidly changing enemy threats. In response, the Department of Defense (DOD) established urgent operational needs processes to rapidly develop, modify, and field new capabilities, such as intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR) technology, and counter–improvised explosive devices (IED) systems. However, GAO, the Defense Science Board, and others have raised concerns about the effectiveness, efficiency, and oversight of DOD's various urgent needs processes. GAO conducted this review to determine (1) what various entities exist within DOD for responding to urgent operational needs, and the extent to which there is fragmentation, overlap, or duplication; (2) the extent to which DOD has a comprehensive approach for managing and overseeing its urgent needs activities; and (3) the extent to which DOD has evaluated the potential for consolidations. To conduct this review, GAO examined DOD's urgent needs processes and collected and analyzed data from urgent needs entities.

What GAO Recommends

GAO recommends that DOD develop comprehensive guidance that, among other things, defines roles, responsibilities, and authorities across the department and designates a focal point to lead urgent needs efforts. GAO also recommends that DOD evaluate potential options for consolidation. DOD concurred with the recommendations.

View GAO-11-273 or key components. For more information, contact William M. Solis, (202) 512-8365 or solisw@gao.gov.

What GAO Found

Over the past two decades, the fulfillment of urgent needs has evolved as a set of complex processes within the Joint Staff, the Office of the Secretary of Defense, each of the military services, and the combatant commands to rapidly develop, equip, and field solutions and critical capabilities to the warfighter. GAO identified at least 31 entities that manage urgent needs and expedite the development of solutions to address them. Moreover, GAO found that some overlap exists. For example, there are numerous points of entry for the warfighter to submit a request for an urgently needed capability, including through the Joint Staff and each military service. Additionally, several entities have focused on developing solutions for the same subject areas, such as counter-IED and ISR capabilities, potentially resulting in duplication of efforts. For example, both the Army and the Marine Corps had their own separate efforts to develop counter-IED mine rollers.

DOD has taken steps to improve its fulfillment of urgent needs, but the department does not have a comprehensive approach to manage and oversee the breadth of its activities to address capability gaps identified by warfighters in-theater. Steps DOD has taken include developing policy to guide joint urgent need efforts and working to establish a senior oversight council to help synchronize DOD's efforts. Federal internal control standards require detailed policies, procedures, and practices to help program managers achieve desired results through effective stewardship of public resources. However, DOD does not have a comprehensive, DOD-wide policy that establishes a baseline and provides a common approach for how all joint and military service urgent needs are to be addressed. Moreover, DOD lacks visibility over the full range of its urgent needs efforts. For example, DOD cannot readily identify the cost of its departmentwide urgent needs efforts, which is at least $76.9 billion based on GAO's analysis. Additionally, DOD does not have a senior-level focal point to lead the department's efforts to fulfill validated urgent needs requirements. Without DOD-wide guidance and a focal point to lead its efforts, DOD risks having duplicative, overlapping, and fragmented efforts, which can result in avoidable costs.

DOD also has not comprehensively evaluated opportunities for consolidation across the department. GAO's Business Process Reengineering Assessment Guide establishes that such a comprehensive analysis of alternative processes should be performed, to include a performance-based, risk-adjusted analysis of benefits and costs for each alternative. In an effort to examine various ways the department might improve its fulfillment of urgent needs, GAO identified and analyzed several potential consolidation options, ranging from consolidation of all DOD urgent needs entities to more limited consolidation of key functions. Until DOD comprehensively evaluates its strategic direction on urgent needs, it will be unaware of opportunities for consolidation as well as opportunities for increased efficiencies in its fulfillment of urgent needs.

Contents

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Congressional Committees

Over the course of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, U.S. forces have encountered changing adversarial tactics, techniques, and procedures, which challenged the Department of Defense (DOD) to quickly develop and provide new equipment and new capabilities to address evolving threats. Further, U.S. troops faced shortages of critical items, including body armor, tires, and batteries. DOD's goal was to provide solutions to urgent warfighter needs as quickly as possible to prevent loss of life or mission failure. DOD had to look beyond traditional acquisition procedures, to expand the use of existing processes to meet urgent needs, and to develop new processes and entities designed to be as responsive as possible to urgent warfighter requests. In addition to requests for equipment from DOD's existing stocks, warfighters have requested new capabilities, such as: technology to counter improvised explosive devices (IED); intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) technology to provide increased situational awareness; and command and control equipment to enhance operations on the battlefield.

In meeting urgent needs, it is important for DOD to efficiently use the department's financial resources. Our past work on weapons acquisition has shown that the department has often pursued more programs than its resources can support.[1] Our work also has shown that DOD has had difficulty translating needs into programs, which often has led to cost growth and delayed delivery of needed capabilities to the warfighter.

Over the past 5 years, DOD has sponsored several reviews of its abilities to rapidly respond to and field urgently needed capabilities in the 21st century security environment. One completed by the Defense Science Board in July 2009 identified more than 20 rapid-reaction programs and organizations addressing DOD urgent warfighter needs.[2] Another study,

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[1]GAO, *Defense Acquisition: DOD's Requirements Determination Process Has Not Been Effective in Prioritizing Joint Capabilities*, GAO-08-1060 (Washington, D.C.: Sept. 25, 2008).

[2]*Report of the Defense Science Board Task Force on the Fulfillment of Urgent Operational Needs* (Washington, D.C.: Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics, July 2009).

completed by the Defense Science Board in September 2009, estimated that these programs spent more than $50 billion[3] over the period 2005 to 2009.[4] Moreover, the Defense Science Board found that DOD had done little to adopt urgent needs as a critical, ongoing DOD institutional capability essential to addressing future threats, and it provided DOD with recommendations on potential organizational and programmatic consolidations in July and September 2009.

DOD's 2010 Quadrennial Defense Review cited that the department's institutions and processes needed reforms to better support the urgent needs of the warfighter; buy weapons that are usable, affordable, and truly needed; and ensure that taxpayer dollars are spent wisely and responsibly. In addition, in 2007 DOD established a Chief Management Officer position to ensure that core business operations are optimally aligned to support the department's warfighting mission and that performance goals and measures are established for improving and evaluating overall economy, efficiency, and effectiveness of the department, among other functions. Also, in August 2010, the Secretary of Defense initiated a major effort to instill a culture of savings, and set a goal to identify $100 billion in savings over a 5-year period.

Our previous work has highlighted challenges with the department's management and oversight of its urgent operational needs organizations and processes.[5] In April 2010, we reported that DOD's guidance over its joint urgent needs processes was fragmented and outdated, and the department was unable to fully assess how well those processes addressed

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[3]The Defense Science Board notes that the figure is dominated by the combination of the Joint Improvised Explosive Device Defeat Organization (JIEDDO) and the Mine Resistant Ambush Protected (MRAP) vehicle program, which in combination represent approximately 80 percent of this expenditure.

[4]*Report of the Defense Science Board 2008 Summer Study on Capability Surprise*, vol. I: Main Report (Washington, D.C.: Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics, September 2009).

[5]GAO, *Warfighter Support: Actions Needed to Improve Joint Improvised Explosive Device Defeat Organization's System of Internal Control*, GAO-10-660 (Washington, D.C.: July 1, 2010); *Warfighter Support: Improvements to DOD's Urgent Needs Processes Would Enhance Oversight and Expedite Efforts to Meet Critical Warfighter Needs*, GAO-10-460 (Washington, D.C.: Apr. 30, 2010); *Warfighter Support: Actions Needed to Improve Visibility and Coordination of DOD's Counter-Improvised Explosive Device Efforts*, GAO-10-95 (Washington, D.C.: Oct. 29, 2009); and *Warfighter Support: Challenges Confronting DOD's Ability to Coordinate and Oversee Its Counter-Improvised Explosive Devices Efforts*, GAO-10-186T (Washington, D.C.: Oct. 29, 2009).

critical deficiencies or to measure the effectiveness of fielded solutions.[6] Likewise, in October 2009, we reported and testified on DOD's need to improve visibility and coordination of its counter-IED efforts.[7]

We conducted this review under the authority of the Comptroller General to conduct evaluations on his own initiative, in light of continuing congressional interest in the department's ability to adequately fulfill urgent needs and our prior findings regarding the department's oversight and management of its urgent needs processes.[8] In addition, Title II of Public Law Number 111-139 requires GAO to identify government programs, agencies, offices, and initiatives with duplicative goals and activities and to report those findings to Congress.[9] Our objectives for this review were to determine (1) what entities exist within DOD for responding to urgent operational needs and to what extent, if any, there is fragmentation, overlap, or duplication in their missions, roles, and responsibilities; (2) to what extent DOD has a comprehensive approach for managing and overseeing its various activities to address urgent needs identified by warfighters in-theater; and (3) to what extent has DOD comprehensively evaluated its urgent needs entities and processes and identified potential for consolidations.

To determine and describe the various entities within DOD that respond to urgent operational needs and to what extent, if any, there is fragmentation, overlap, or duplication, we used a data-collection instrument to obtain information from DOD and military service entities identified in our scope regarding their role in the urgent needs process, including how urgent needs are submitted, validated, funded, and tracked, and how fielded capabilities are sustained, transitioned, or terminated. We also analyzed prior Defense Science Board reports that identified entities involved in the process, and interviewed DOD and military service officials to gain an understanding of mission, role, and responsibility as well as to gain insight into other entities that may have a role in the fulfillment of urgent needs. To determine the extent to which DOD has a comprehensive approach for managing all of its various urgent needs processes, we analyzed strategic management guidance as well as conducted comparative analysis of DOD

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[6]GAO-10-460.

[7]GAO-10-95; GAO-10-186T.

[8]Pub. L. No. 110-417, § 801 (2008); S. Rep. No. 111-201, § 811 (2010).

[9]Pub. L. No. 111-139, § 201 (2010).

and military service policies for meeting urgent operational needs. We interviewed DOD and military service officials to gain an understanding of the department's efforts to satisfy urgent warfighter requirements as well as the metrics used to evaluate the effectiveness of urgent needs solutions. To determine the extent to which DOD has comprehensively evaluated its urgent needs entities and processes, we interviewed key officials from various DOD and military service entities as well as officials from selected combatant commands to gain an understanding of how joint urgent operational needs and service-based urgent needs are fulfilled. Using this information, together with analysis of prior reports and studies and the responses from our data-collection instrument, we developed potential consolidation options for the department to consider. We analyzed these options in terms of their potential capacity to gain increased efficiencies in the visibility, coordination, management, and oversight of the department's urgent needs processes as well as to reduce the potential for duplication, overlap, and fragmentation.

We conducted this performance audit from February 2010 through March 2011 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 audit objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. For additional details on how we performed our review, see appendix I.

Background

Evolving Threats in Iraq and Afghanistan Highlighted Need for DOD to Fill Capability Gaps Rapidly

As evidenced by evolving threats in Iraq and Afghanistan, enemy forces have exploited capability gaps in the technology, systems, and equipment used by U.S. forces. Such tactics made it evident that U.S. warfighters were not always equipped to deal with the fast-changing tactics, techniques, and procedures of the enemy. For example, one of the most publicized of these adversarial capabilities was the use of IEDs. While U.S. forces responded initially by changing tactics and techniques by purchasing equipment locally, the department then determined it needed to more quickly develop and deploy new capabilities. Some of DOD's efforts to rapidly address counter-IED and other significant capability gaps include the following:

- Counter-IED Solutions—Congress provides funding for joint urgent needs related to countering IEDs through the Joint Improvised Explosive Device Defeat Organization (JIEDDO), an organization that reports directly to the Deputy Secretary of Defense. Congress has appropriated nearly $16 billion through fiscal year 2009 to JIEDDO. JIEDDO has funded many counter-IED solutions to support the warfighter, including electronic jammers to block radio-frequency signals that detonate IEDs. However, in our prior work, we found that JIEDDO lacked full visibility over all counter-IED initiatives throughout DOD, faced difficulties with transitioning its counter-IED initiatives to the military services, and lacked criteria for selecting which counter-IED training initiatives it will fund, which affect its training investment decisions. We recommended that DOD improve its visibility over all of DOD's counter-IED efforts, work with the military services to develop a complete transition plan for initiatives, and define criteria for funding training initiatives.[10] DOD agreed with these recommendations and identified several actions it had taken or planned to take to address them.
- Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (ISR) Technology—DOD's ISR systems—including manned and unmanned airborne, space-borne, maritime, and terrestrial systems—play critical roles in supporting military operations and national security missions. Effective ISR data can provide early warning of enemy threats as well as enable U.S. military forces to increase effectiveness, coordination, and lethality, and demand has increased for ISR capabilities to support ongoing military operations. To meet this growing demand, DOD is making sizeable investments in ISR systems and related ISR capabilities.[11] We have reported since 2005 that DOD's ISR activities are not always well integrated and efficient, effectiveness may be compromised by lack of visibility into operational use of ISR assets, and agencies could better collaborate in the acquisition of new capabilities.[12] In January 2010, we recommended that DOD develop overarching guidance for sharing intelligence information and that the military services develop plans with timelines that prioritize and identify

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[10]GAO-10-95; GAO-10-186T.

[11]GAO, *Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance: DOD Can Better Assess and Integrate ISR Capabilities and Oversee Development of Future ISR Requirements*, GAO-08-374 (Washington, D.C.: Mar. 24, 2008).

[12]GAO, *Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance: Overarching Guidance Is Needed to Advance Information Sharing*, GAO-10-500T (Washington, D.C.: Mar. 17, 2010); GAO-08-374; *Unmanned Aircraft Systems: Advanced Coordination and Increased Visibility Needed to Optimize Capabilities*, GAO-07-836 (Washington, D.C.: July 11, 2007); *Defense Acquisitions: Greater Synergies Possible for DOD's Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance Systems*, GAO-07-578 (Washington, D.C.: May 17, 2007).

the types of ISR data they will share.[13] DOD agreed with these recommendations and noted actions it planned to take to address them.

- Command and Control Equipment—Urgently needed assets may include, but are not limited to, satellite communication equipment for military personnel who require a method for communicating with each other in remote areas without established infrastructure, or distributed tactical communication systems for warfighters in Afghanistan because current handset devices do not operate adequately in the mountainous terrain. To meet this demand, solutions are being sought from various sources that include commercial off-the-shelf technology, other types of technology, and other sources. We have reported on the challenges associated with availability of such technology, including lengthy delays in the approval and order processes.[14] To address these and other urgent needs–related challenges, we made several recommendations to improve DOD's ability to assess how well its processes are meeting critical warfighter needs, address challenges with training, make decisions about when to use its rapid acquisition authority, and make reprogramming decisions to expedite fielding of solutions. DOD generally concurred with our recommendations and agreed to take several actions to address them.

The Department's Processes to Fulfill Urgent Needs Have Evolved

Over the past two decades, the fulfillment of urgent needs has evolved as a set of complex processes—within the Joint Staff, the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD), each of the military services, as well as the combatant commands—to rapidly develop, equip, and field solutions and critical capabilities to the warfighter. DOD's experience in Iraq and Afghanistan led to the expanded use of existing urgent needs processes, the creation of new policies, and the establishment of new organizations intended to be more responsive to urgent warfighter requests.[15]

As shown in table 1 below, significant events in the expansion of DOD's efforts to respond to and fulfill urgent operational needs began in the late

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[13]GAO, *Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance: Establishing Guidance, Timelines, and Accountability for Integrating Intelligence Data Would Improve Information Sharing*, GAO-10-265NI (Washington, D.C.: Jan. 22, 2010). This report is not available through GAO's Web site. Copies of this report are available upon request by calling (202) 512-6000, toll free (866) 801-7077, or TDD (202) 512-2537.

[14]GAO-10-460.

[15]For the purposes of this report, entities include organizations, offices, programs, agencies, and task forces.

1980s but increased rapidly after the onset of the Global War on Terrorism in late 2001.

Table 1: Timeline of Significant Events within DOD and the Military Services to Fulfill Urgent Needs

Year	Event
1987	• Operational Needs Statement process established by the Army to provide a way for unit commanders to identify urgent needs for new materiel or new capabilities.
	• Commander of the U.S. Special Operations Command received acquisition authority specific to the command to develop, acquire, and fund special operations–peculiar equipment.
1994	• Rapid Response Process established by the Air Force to address critical capability gaps or shortfalls that could result in "loss of life" or prevent mission accomplishment.
1995	• Capabilities Development Directorate established by the Marine Corps to lead the operation of the Expeditionary Force Development System, a process to determine service requirements and prioritize resources.
2002	• Rapid Equipping Force organization established by the Army's Vice Chief of Staff to combine and integrate capability development functions that cross staff elements and major commands.
	• Combating Terrorism Technology Task Force, under the direction of the DOD Director of Defense Research and Engineering, formed following the events of September 11, 2001, and later renamed the Rapid Reaction Technology Office.
	• Rapid Fielding Initiative established in Program Executive Office Soldier after forces deploying to Afghanistan were not equipped with proper items for theater.
2003	• Army Improvised Explosive Device Task Force established by the Army Chief of Staff to address the escalating use of IEDs. It was later transformed into a joint entity, called JIEDDO, under the authority of the Deputy Secretary of Defense.
	• National Defense Authorization Act provided that the Secretary of Defense prescribe procedures for rapid acquisition and deployment of items that are under development or commercially available and urgently needed to respond to significant and urgent safety situations.[a]
2004	• Joint Rapid Acquisition Cell established by the Deputy Secretary of Defense in the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics to act as the DOD focal point to prioritize, identify solutions, facilitate funding, and work with the appropriate components to resolve issues that hinder rapid response of validated joint urgent operational needs.
	• Counter-Rocket Artillery Mortar capability development began at the Army's Chief of Staff's direction to find a solution for the indirect fire threat.
2005	• DOD established the Joint Urgent Operational Need (JUON) process to respond to urgent needs associated with combat operations in Afghanistan and Iraq and the war on terror.
	• The Joint Rapid Acquisition Cell used Iraqi Freedom Funds to fund joint urgent operational needs until 2008.
	• National Defense Authorization Act amendment gave the Secretary of Defense rapid acquisition authority to waive, under certain circumstances, any provision of law, policy, directive, or regulation that would unnecessarily impede the rapid acquisition and deployment of equipment that is urgently needed to eliminate a combat capability deficiency that has resulted in combat fatalities.[b]

Year	Event
2006	• JIEDDO established by and reporting directly to the Deputy Secretary of Defense to lead, advocate, and coordinate all DOD actions in support of combatant commands and their respective Joint Task Forces' efforts to defeat IEDs as weapons of strategic influence.[c]
	• Rapid Reaction Technology Office formed after the attacks on September 11, 2001, as the Combating Terrorism Technology Task Force. Reporting to the Director, Defense Research and Engineering, this shift was to focus on capabilities to counter insurgency and irregular warfare.
	• Army Asymmetric Warfare Office established by the Secretary of the Army to integrate military and civilian disciplines to rapidly organize, train, and equip Army formations to defeat asymmetric[d] threats.[e]
	• Established within the Army's Asymmetric Warfare Office, the Asymmetric Warfare Group is a focal point to identify asymmetric threats and enemy and friendly vulnerabilities. The group influences the Army's capability for adaptation across the entire Doctrine, Organization, Training, Materiel, Leadership and Education, Personnel, and Facilities spectrum.[f]
	• Established within the Army's Asymmetric Warfare Office, the Improvised Explosive Device Defeat Division, renamed the Adaptive Networks Threats and Solutions Division in 2008, is the Army's focal point for counter-IED JUONs emerging from JIEDDO.
	• Biometrics Task Force established under the Army Chief Information Officer G-6 to lead the development and implementation of biometrics technology for the combatant commands, military services, and agencies.
2007	• Mine Resistant Ambush Protected (vehicle) Task Force established by Secretary of Defense to accelerate the development of vehicles to counter IEDs.
	• Urgent Needs Process established by the Navy to institute rapid acquisition processes to streamline the dialogue between the requirements and acquisition communities to expedite technical, programmatic, and financial solutions.
	• Navy's Rapid Development and Deployment Office established in the Office of Naval Research along with a Rapid Action Team process to execute Rapid Development and Deployment projects and provide technical assessment of all Navy and Marine Corps urgent needs requests.
2008	• Intelligence, Surveillance, Reconnaissance Task Force established by the Secretary of Defense to identify and overcome bottlenecks and barriers related to rapidly acquiring and fielding ISR capabilities.
	• Base Expeditionary Targeting and Surveillance Sensors–Combined system created based on combining eight joint urgent operational needs submitted by the Central Command.
2009	• Rapid Fielding Directorate established under the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics to rapidly transition innovative concepts into critical capabilities that counter unconventional and time-sensitive threats.
2010	• Biometrics Task Force redesignated as the Biometrics Identity Management Agency, making it a permanent entity reporting to the Army's Deputy Chief of Staff, G-3/5/7.
2011	• Section 803 of the Ike Skelton National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2011 (the FY 2011 NDAA) amended the existing rapid acquisition authority. Previously, the authority could be used to eliminate deficiencies that resulted in combat fatalities. The amended section now permits the use of the authority to acquire and deploy certain supplies to eliminate deficiencies that result in combat casualties, rather than just combat fatalities. The amendment also increased from $100 million to $200 million the amount that can be used annually to acquire the supplies necessary to address such deficiencies.[g]
	• Section 804 of the FY 2011 NDAA, among other things, requires the Secretary of Defense to review the processes for the fielding of capabilities in response to urgent operational needs, consider improvements to those processes, and report to the congressional defense committees in January 2012.[h]

Source: GAO analysis of DOD data.

[a]Pub. L. No. 107-314, § 806 (2002).

[b]Pub. L. No. 108-375, § 811 (2004).

[c]Department of Defense Directive 2000.19E, Joint Improvised Explosive Device Defeat Organization (JIEDDO) (Feb. 14, 2006).

[d]Asymmetric warfare refers to threats outside the range of conventional warfare, including terrorism.

eAccording to an Army official, the Army's Asymmetric Warfare Office was dissolved in October 2010.

fAs of October 2010, an Army official stated that stated the Army Asymmetric Warfare Group reports directly to G-33, Army's Staff Directorate for Operations, Readiness, and Mobilization.

gPub. L. No. 111-383, § 803 (2011).

hPub. L. No. 111-383, § 804 (2011).

As table 1 indicates, many of these newly established entities and processes were created, in part, because the department had not anticipated the accelerated pace of change in enemy tactics and techniques that ultimately heightened the need for a rapid response to new threats in Afghanistan and Iraq. According to the Defense Science Board, while DOD, the military services, and combatant commands took actions to respond more quickly to demands to fulfill urgent needs, it became apparent that within the last half decade the department, as well as the acquisition community it depends on, has struggled in their ability to field new capabilities in a disciplined, efficient, and effective way.[16] While many entities started as ad hoc organizations, several have been permanently established.

Meeting Urgent Needs Involves a Breadth of Activities

Although each of the services' and Joint Staff's urgent needs processes is distinct, we identified six broad activities involved after the submission of an urgent need statement. These activities are shown in table 2 below.

Table 2: Activities Involved in Meeting Urgent Needs

Key activity	Definition
Validation	An urgent need request is received from theater and reviewed for validation by a headquarters entity. Validation involves an "in-house" review of an urgent need request to determine if it meets criteria to be recognized as an urgent operational need and thus whether it should continue through the process.
Facilitation	The requirements, costs, potential solution, funding, and other factors related to the course of action to be taken for the fulfillment of the urgent need are developed and coordinated between various entities. This can include, but is not limited to, coordination between validation and solution-development entities, coordination of requirements, and knowledge sharing.
Sourcing	Approval of the proposed course of action and assignment of a sponsor who will carry out a course of action / potential solution.

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[16]*Report of the Defense Science Board Task Force on the Fulfillment of Urgent Operational Needs.*

Key activity	Definition
Execution	The approved solution is developed and fielded. This includes the acquisition, testing, and other activities involved in solution development.
Tracking	Collection of feedback from the warfighter regarding whether the solution met the urgent need request; also collection of performance data regarding course of action and solution.
Transition, Transfer, or Terminate	The decision regarding the final disposition of the capability in terms of whether it will be (1) transitioned to a program of record if it addresses an enduring capability need, (2) transferred to an interim sponsor for temporary funding if it addresses a temporary capability that is not enduring but needs to be maintained for some period, or (3) terminated if it addresses a niche capability that is not enduring, nor is it to be maintained for current operations.

Source: GAO analysis of DOD data.

Congressional Interest in DOD's Approach to Urgent Operational Needs and the Need for Improvement

Over the past 5 years, there have been several reviews of the department's ability to rapidly respond and field urgently needed capabilities in the 21st century security environment.[17] Some of these studies were initiated at the direction of Congress. In fiscal year 2009, the House Armed Services Committee approved the department's designation of a process improvement officer who was tasked with applying Lean Six Sigma process improvement techniques to the business practices of the department. The committee recommended that the process improvement officer examine the processes for rapid acquisition activities that have been established since the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan began and determine whether there were lessons learned that might be integrated into the department's main acquisition process. The department conducted the study and found (1) significant variability in response time at the beginning of the process, indicating unnecessary delays; (2) senior leadership involvement in the process enables rapid decision making; (3) shorter decision processes and focused organizations enable quicker response than under normal requirements; and (4) reprogramming authority is cumbersome and adds time to the urgent needs process. Furthermore, the National Defense Authorization Act for fiscal year 2009 included a provision that would require best practices and process

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[17]These studies include: Defense Science Board, *21st Century Strategic Technology Vectors* (2006); Defense Science Board, *Defense Industrial Structure for Transformation* (2007-2008); MITRE, *Venture Capital and IT Acquisition: Managing Uncertainty* (2008); Army Science Board, *Institutionalization of Innovative Army Organizations* (2008); Defense Science Board, *Buying Commercial: Gaining the Cost/Schedule Benefits for Defense Systems* (2009); GAO, *Perspectives on Potential Changes to Department of Defense Acquisition Management Framework*, GAO-09-295R (Washington, D.C.: Feb. 27, 2009); Defense Science Board, *Creating a DOD Strategic Acquisition Platform* (2009); Defense Science Board, *Fulfillment of Urgent Operational Needs* (2009); Defense Science Board, *2008 Summer Study on Capability Surprise* (2009); GAO-10-460.

improvements to ensure that urgent operational needs statements and joint urgent operational needs statements are presented to appropriate authorities for review and validation not later than 60 days after the documents are submitted.[18] Specifically, the committee report noted that over the last several years, operational commanders in Iraq had identified urgent operational needs for MRAP vehicles, nonlethal laser dazzlers, and other critical equipment. Further, the committee stated it was aware of allegations that requests for some of these items not only went unmet, but were not even presented for more than a year to the senior officials responsible for validating the requests.[19] In 2009, Congress required the Secretary of Defense to commission a study by an independent commission or a federally funded research and development center to assess and report on the effectiveness of the processes used by DOD for the generation of urgent operational need requirements, and the acquisition processes used to fulfill such requirements.[20] In response to this requirement, the Under Secretary of Defense, Acquisition, Technology and Logistics, asked the Defense Science Board to establish a task force to conduct a study on the effectiveness of the processes used by the department for the generation of urgent operational needs requirements and the acquisition processes used to fulfill such requirements. In July 2009, the Defense Science Board released its report with recommendations on potential consolidations necessary to rapidly field new capabilities for the warfighter in a systematic and effective manner.

Moreover, Section 803 of the Ike Skelton National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2011 (the FY 2011 NDAA) amended the existing rapid acquisition authority. Previously, the authority could be used to eliminate deficiencies that resulted in combat fatalities. The amended section now permits the use of the authority to acquire and deploy certain supplies to eliminate deficiencies that result in combat casualties, rather than just combat fatalities. The amendment also increased from $100 million to $200 million the amount that can be used annually to acquire the supplies necessary to address such deficiencies.[21]

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[18]Pub. L. No. 110-417, § 801(2008).

[19]S. Rep. No. 110- 335, at 359 (2008).

[20]Pub. L. No. 110-417, § 801 (2008).

[21]Pub. L. No. 111-383, § 803 (2011).

Additionally, Section 804 of the FY 2011 NDAA, among other things, requires the Secretary of Defense to review the processes for the fielding of capabilities in response to urgent operational needs, consider improvements to those processes, and report to the congressional defense committees in January 2012. [22]

Fulfillment of Urgent Needs Involves a Number of Entities and Processes, Resulting in Fragmentation and Some Overlap of Efforts

The fulfillment of urgent needs involves numerous joint, OSD and military service entities, which have increased over time. We identified areas where some overlap exists among urgent needs entities, such as the submission, validation, and processing of urgent needs requirements. In addition, our analysis identified multiple entities with a role in responding to similar types of urgently needed capabilities, such as ISR and counter-IED, resulting in the potential for duplication of efforts.

Numerous DOD and Military Service Entities Play a Key Role in the Fulfillment of Urgent Needs

The department has many entities that respond to the large number of urgent needs requests submitted by the combatant commands and military services. As previously reported by us and DOD, a complex set of processes has evolved over time, involving numerous joint, OSD, and military service entities over the past decade as the department seeks to fulfill the capability gaps identified by warfighters. On the basis of DOD's and our analysis, we have identified at least 31 entities that play a significant role in the various urgent needs processes. Table 3 below shows the 31 entities we identified and when they were established.

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[22]Pub. L. No. 111-383, § 804 (2011).

Table 3: DOD Entities Involved in the Fulfillment of Urgent Needs

Service / joint	Name of entity	Year implemented[a]
OSD or joint	Joint Staff, J8	–
	Rapid Fielding Directorate	2009
	Intelligence, Surveillance, Reconnaissance Task Force	2008
	Mine Resistant Ambush Protected (vehicle) Task Force	2007
	Joint Improvised Explosive Device Defeat Organization	2006
	Rapid Reaction Technology Office	2006
	Joint Capability Technology Demonstrations	2006
	Joint Rapid Acquisition Cell	2004
Army	Deputy Chief of Staff, G-3/5/7, Current and Future Warfighting Capabilities Division	–
	Biometrics Identity Management Agency	2010
	Asymmetric Warfare Group	2006
	Rapid Fielding Initiative	2002
	Rapid Equipping Force	2002
	Army Capabilities Integration Center, U.S. Army Training & Doctrine Command	–
	Project Manager (PM) or Program Executive Offices[b] (PEO), such as Night Vision / Reconnaissance, Surveillance, and Target Acquisition (including Base Expeditionary Targeting and Surveillance Sensors–Combined) or the Counter Rocket, Artillery, Mortar Program Directorate	–
Navy	Chief of Naval Operations N81D	–
	U.S. Fleet Forces Command	–
	U.S. Pacific Fleet	–
	Rapid Action Teams, led by a Chief of Naval Operations Sponsor	2007
	Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Navy, Expeditionary Warfare	–
	Rapid Development and Deployment Office	2006
	PM or PEO[b], such as PEO Littoral and Mine Warfare	–
Marine Corps	Deputy Commandant for Combat Development and Integration, Capabilities Development Directorate	–
	PM or PEO[b], such as PM Light Armored Vehicles	–
Air Force	Air Force Air Combat Command A8XM	–
	Air Force Air Mobility Command A5QX	–
	Requirements Policy & Process Division, Directorate of Operational Capability Requirements	–
		–
	Office of the Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Acquisition	–
	PM or PEO[b], such as Aeronautical Systems Center	–
Special Operations Command	Special Operations Command J8	–
	Special Operations Research, Development, and Acquisition Center	–

Source: GAO analysis of DOD data.

[a]Dates are not included for entities that were not established to respond to urgent operational needs.

[b]Each military service has program offices responsible for specific programs or portfolios of similar programs that may include solutions to validated urgent need requirements. However, we have not identified the universe of PMs/PEOs that are or have been involved in the fulfillment of urgent needs.

Further analysis shows that these entities have three different missions with respect to fulfilling urgent needs. First, some entities identify and provide a quick response to threats presented by adaptive enemies, but not always in support of urgent needs. Often these entities engage in experimentation and rapid prototyping to accelerate the transition of technologies to the warfighter. For example, the Rapid Reaction Technology Office does not directly receive or validate joint or service urgent needs, but rather anticipates disruptive threats and in response funds solutions and new capabilities, some of which have fulfilled validated joint urgent operational needs. Second, some entities specifically process urgent needs and are generally involved from validation to sourcing. For example, the joint urgent operational needs process is overseen by Joint Staff J8, which receives and validates urgent need requests, and the Joint Rapid Acquisition Cell, which facilitates a rapid solution. In the Army, Navy, and Marine Corps, various entities exist to validate, facilitate, and source urgent needs for their respective processes. Third, some entities focus on developing solutions in response to urgent needs requests that have been validated, facilitated, and sourced by other entities. These solution-development entities are mostly acquisition program offices, such as Program Executive Office Night Vision / Reconnaissance, Surveillance, and Target Acquisition, which also develop solutions in response to nonurgent needs as well as manage existing systems. Finally, some entities are involved in two or more of the three types of missions described above. For example, JIEDDO anticipates threats, processes urgent needs requests, and develops solutions.

Overlap Exists among the Numerous Entities Involved in Processing Urgent Requirements and Expediting Solutions

Our analysis shows that overlap exists among urgent needs entities in the roles they play as well as the capabilities for which they are responsible. Table 4 shows the roles played by the various organizations in relation to the activities involved in meeting urgent needs identified earlier.

Table 4: Roles of Urgent Needs Entities in Key Activities

Service/Joint	Entity involved in urgent needs	Validation	Facilitation	Sourcing	Execution	Tracking	Transition, Transfer, or Terminate
OSD or Joint	Joint Staff, J8	✓	✓	✓		✓	
	Intelligence, Surveillance, Reconnaissance Task Force		✓	✓			✓
	Mine Resistant Ambush Protected (vehicle) Task Force		✓	✓		✓	
	Joint Improvised Explosive Device Defeat Organization	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Joint Rapid Acquisition Cell		✓	✓		✓	
	Rapid Fielding Directorate						
	Rapid Reaction Technology Office		✓			✓	
	Joint Capability Technology Demonstration						✓
Army	Deputy Chief of Staff, Army G-3/5/7, Current and Future Warfighting Capabilities Division	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
	Biometrics Identity Management Agency		✓	✓		✓	
	Asymmetric Warfare Group		✓				
	Rapid Fielding Initiative				✓		
	Rapid Equipping Force	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	Army Capabilities Integration Center, U.S. Army Training & Doctrine Command					✓	✓
	PM or PEO, such as Night Vision / Reconnaissance, Surveillance, and Target Acquisition (Base Expeditionary Targeting and Surveillance Sensors–Combined) or the Counter Rocket, Artillery, Mortar Program Directorate				✓	✓	
Navy	Chief Naval of Operations N81D	✓	✓	✓		✓	
	U.S. Fleet Forces Command	✓	✓	✓			
	U.S. Pacific Fleet	✓	✓	✓			
	Rapid Action Teams, led by a Chief of Naval Operational Sponsor		✓	✓		✓	✓
	Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Navy, Expeditionary Warfare		✓	✓		✓	

Service/Joint	Entity involved in urgent needs	Validation	Facilitation	Sourcing	Execution	Tracking	Transition, Transfer, or Terminate
	Rapid Development and Deployment Office				✓	✓	
	PM or PEO, such as PEO Littoral and Mine Warfare				✓	✓	✓
Marine Corps	Deputy Commandant for Combat Development and Integration, Capabilities Development Directorate	a	✓	✓		✓	✓
	PM or PEO, such as PM Light Armored Vehicles		✓		✓	✓	
Air Force	Air Combat Command A8XM	✓	✓	✓			
	Air Mobility Command A5QX	✓	✓	✓			
	Requirements Policy & Process Division, Directorate of Operational Capability Requirements		✓	✓		✓	
	Office of the Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Acquisition, responsible for Air Force Rapid Response Process		✓				
	PM or PEO, such as Aeronautical Systems Center				✓		
Special Operations Command	Special Operations Command J8	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
	Special Operations Research, Development, and Acquisition Center				✓	✓	

Source: GAO analysis of DOD data.

[a]In the Marine Corps, urgent needs are validated by theater commanders. Deputy Commandant for Combat Development and Integration further validate urgent needs after a course of action has been facilitated and sourced.

DOD entities at the joint level, and each of the services, also have their own policies for meeting urgent needs. These policies result in seven different processes for the fulfillment of urgent needs; additionally, the Army Rapid Equipping Force also has an urgent needs process. For example, warfighters may submit urgent needs, depending on their military service and the type of need, to Joint Staff J8, JIEDDO, Army Deputy Chief of Staff G-3/5/7, Army Rapid Equipping Force, Navy Fleet Forces Command or Commander Pacific Fleet, Marine Corps Deputy Commandant for Combat Development and Integration, Air Force Major

Commands, or Special Operations Command J8. These entities then validate the submitted urgent need request and thus allow it to proceed through their specific process. This contrasts with traditional requirements and needs, which are generally processed under the Joint Capabilities Integration and Development System (JCIDS). JCIDS was established to provide the department with an integrated, collaborative process to identify and guide development of a broad set of new capabilities that address the current and emerging security environment.

Moreover, within some of the services, multiple processes and validation points exist. For example, in the Army, urgent needs can be submitted via two routes: (1) the warfighter can make a request to the Rapid Equipping Force for approval by its Director; or (2) the warfighter can submit an operational needs statement, documenting the urgent need to the Deputy Chief of Staff for the Army G-3/5/7, Current and Future Warfighting Capabilities Division, for validation and prioritization. In the Air Force, urgent needs are handled by the various major commands; however, Air Force headquarters also has a process and an entity that can process urgent needs that do not get fulfilled by the major commands.

Furthermore, at the joint level, six entities facilitate urgent needs requests and five entities provide sourcing support for urgent needs requests. Officials from two combatant commands have expressed frustration with the number of entities involved in the processing of urgent needs requests and suggested that streamlining of the validation, facilitation, sourcing, and funding processes would improve the timeliness of solutions. Additionally, many entities track the fulfillment of urgent needs requests and their solutions; however, most entities with a role in tracking focus only on specific requests they process or solutions they developed. The overlap created by numerous entities involved in processing urgent requirements and expediting solutions may create fragmented efforts and overall inefficiencies within DOD.

Multiple Entities Respond to Requests for Similar Capabilities, Resulting in Potential Duplication of Efforts

Multiple entities we surveyed reported a role in responding to similar categories of urgently needed capabilities. We identified eight entities with a role in responding to ISR capabilities, five entities with a role in responding to counter-IED capabilities, and six entities with a role in responding to communications, command and control, and computer technology, among others.

Over the course of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, multiple organizations have been created to handle specific types of urgently needed capabilities

for urgent operational needs and these organizations also experience overlap. For example, JIEDDO initially was established as an Army task force and was changed to a DOD task force to meet urgent counter-IED needs; however, counter-IED is not handled exclusively by JIEDDO, and we have previously reported that JIEDDO and the services lack full visibility over counter-IED initiatives throughout DOD and are at risk of duplicating efforts.[23] Similarly, we previously reported that many biometrics activities are dispersed throughout DOD at many organizational levels and that DOD has been focusing most of its efforts on quickly fielding biometrics systems, particularly in Iraq and Afghanistan, to address DOD's immediate warfighting needs without guidance to prevent duplication of biometrics-related efforts.[24] In 2010, the Army Biometrics Task force was institutionalized as the Biometrics Identity Management Agency to lead DOD activities to program, coordinate, integrate, and synchronize biometrics technologies and capabilities. However, our ongoing work has identified instances of potential duplication.[25] For example:

- Both the Army and the Marine Corps continue to develop their own counter-IED mine rollers with full or partial JIEDDO funding. The Marine Corps' mine roller per unit cost is about $85,000 versus a cost range of $77,000 to $225,000 per unit for the Army mine roller. However, officials disagree about which system is most effective, and DOD has not conducted comparative testing and evaluation of the two systems. Further, JIEDDO officials said that JIEDDO cannot compel the services to buy one solution over the other.
- The Navy developed a directed-energy technology to fill a critical theater capability gap, yet JIEDDO later underwrote the Air Force's development of the same technology to create a more powerful and faster-moving equipment item than the Navy had developed. However, the Air Force has now determined that its system will not meet requirements and has deferred fielding the technology pending further study. This may have a negative effect on the continued development of this technology by the Navy or others for use in theater. For example, according to DOD officials,

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[23]GAO-10-95; GAO-10-186T.

[24]GAO, *Defense Management: DOD Needs to Establish Clear Goals and Objectives, Guidance, and a Designated Budget to Manage Its Biometrics Activities*, GAO-08-1065 (Washington, D.C.: Sept. 26, 2008).

[25]We are conducting a separate review at the request of the House Armed Services Committee to examine DOD's efforts to improve visibility over its counter-IED programs and evaluate the potential for overlap and duplication of counter-IED initiatives.

during the recent testing of the Air Force's system, safety concerns were noted unique to that system that may limit the warfighter's willingness to accept the technology. However, according to Navy officials, the Navy plans to begin fielding its system in 2011.

While our review did find the potential for duplication, we also found some cases where various entities took the initiative to work together, resulting in collaboration to satisfy urgent needs. For example, the Joint Rapid Acquisition Cell received eight validated joint urgent operational needs requirements, and facilitated the integration of the eight separate, but very much related, ISR and force-protection needs. Specifically, this coordination involved the Joint Rapid Acquisition Cell, U.S. Central Command, JIEDDO, and the Army to consolidate the validated requirements, find a sponsor, and develop a solution. Approximately 6 months from the date of funding, the Army PEO–Intelligence, Electronic Warfare & Sensors, specifically Night Vision/Reconnaissance, Surveillance and Target Acquisition, developed and fielded the Base Expeditionary Targeting and Surveillance Sensors–Combined, a flexible, moveable, adjustable, scalable, and expeditionary base defense system for persistent ground targeting and surveillance.

DOD Does Not Have Comprehensive Guidance and Full Visibility to Effectively Manage and Oversee Its Urgent Needs

DOD has taken several steps to improve the management and oversight of its urgent needs. While these efforts have shown some progress, the department does not have comprehensive policy and guidance for directing efforts across DOD, the military services, and combatant commands to effectively manage and oversee the fulfillment of its urgent needs. Moreover, the department lacks full visibility over the full range of urgent needs efforts from funding to measuring results achieved.

DOD Has Taken Some Steps to Improve Management and Oversight of Urgent Needs Requests

In response to our April 2010 finding that DOD's urgent needs guidance was fragmented, Joint Staff officials stated that they were in the process of revising the Joint Staff instruction on the joint urgent needs process to better align with the department's strategic plan for urgent needs.[26] Moreover, OSD has been drafting Directive-Type Memorandum 10-002 to establish policy, assign responsibilities, and outline procedures for the

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[26]GAO-10-460.

resolution of joint urgent operational needs.[27] The draft directive-type memorandum seeks to provide guidance on a range of issues, including rapid-acquisition authority, the Joint Rapid Acquisition Cell's role as the DOD focal point for tracking and coordinating joint urgent operational needs resolution, as well as clearly defining the responsibilities of those involved in the processing of urgent needs. A senior DOD official explained that after review by the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics, senior DOD officials decided to expand the draft memorandum to include the services' urgent operational needs—as well as joint urgent operational needs—to increase visibility. According to senior DOD officials, the department expects the memorandum to be issued in 2011.

Furthermore, in 2009, the department established the Rapid Fielding Directorate within the office of the Director, Defense Research and Engineering,[28] Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics, and reorganized the Joint Rapid Acquisition Cell, the Rapid Reaction Technology Office, and the Joint Capability Technology Demonstrations under this new office to better align similar missions related to accelerating capabilities to the warfighter.[29] Rapid Fielding Directorate officials stated that one of the first imperatives is to accelerate the delivery of capabilities to the warfighter, emphasizing the ability to efficiently collaborate directly with the military services. Additionally, officials from the Joint Rapid Acquisition Cell stated that they are working to address a number of challenges, including applying their definition of urgent need to validate requirements, prioritizing the urgency of needs identified by the warfighter, developing universal metrics to track and evaluate urgent needs, and formalizing the department's urgent needs processes. Finally, to address concerns of senior-level leadership regarding the management of its urgent needs, the department is planning to establish a senior-level oversight council in Directive-Type Memorandum 10-002. According to a senior OSD official, this council may

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[27]Directive-Type Memorandum 10-002 is entitled "DOD Guidance for Fulfillment of Joint Urgent Operational Needs."

[28]Section 901 of the Ike Skelton National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2011 redesignated the Director for Defense Research and Engineering as the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Research and Engineering. Pub. L. No. 111-383, § 901(a)(1)(A) (2011).

[29]In January 2011, the Joint Rapid Acquisition Cell was removed from the Rapid Fielding Directorate and became a direct report to the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics.

include three- and four-star-level representatives from OSD, the Joint Staff, and the military services to ensure that all efforts across the department are synchronized to rapidly acquire and field materiel solutions to urgent needs.

DOD Does Not Have a Comprehensive Policy for Guiding All Parts of the Process for Addressing Warfighters' Urgent Needs Requests

Despite these actions, DOD does not have departmentwide guidance that provides a common departmentwide approach for how all urgent needs are to be addressed. Guidance for issues that affect all the defense components originates at the DOD level, typically either through a directive or instruction. A directive is a broad policy document that assigns responsibility and delegates authority to the DOD components. Directives establish policy that applies across all the services, combatant commands, and DOD components. An instruction implements the policy, or prescribes the manner for carrying out the policy, for operating a program or activity, and for assigning responsibilities. According to federal best practices reported in GAO's Standards for Internal Control in the Federal Government,[30] management is responsible for developing detailed policies, procedures, and practices to help program managers achieve desired results through effective stewardship of public resources. However, DOD has not issued any such directives or instructions that provide policy and guidance over all of its urgent needs processes. DOD is in the process of developing guidance concerning its urgent needs processes through the Directive-Type Memorandum 10-002. However, it remains in draft form, so it is not clear to what extent this guidance will establish such a common approach for service and other urgent needs processes. Additionally, our analysis found that DOD has a fragmented approach in managing all of its urgent needs submissions and validated requirements. For example, the Joint Staff, JIEDDO, the military services, and the Special Operations Command have issued their own guidance outlining activities involved in processing and meeting their specific urgent needs. Through comparative analysis of policies issued by the Joint Staff, each military service, JIEDDO, and the Special Operations Command for managing the various urgent needs processes, we identified that the policies often varied. Moreover, we found that Joint Staff, Navy, and Air Force policies do not define roles and responsibilities for some activities involved, as shown in table 5.

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[30]GAO, *Standards for Internal Control in the Federal Government,* GAO/AIMD-00-21.3.1 (Washington, DC: November 1999).

Table 5: Activities Included in Urgent Needs Policies and Guidance

Organization	Policy	Generation	Validation	Not Validated[a]	Funding	Execution	Tracking	Transition, transfer, or terminate
Joint Staff	Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Instruction 3470.01, July 15, 2005	✓	✓	X	✓	X	X	X
Army	Army Regulation 71-9, December 28, 2009	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Navy	Joint Memorandum from the Assistant Secretary of the Navy (Research Development and Acquisition), July 19, 2007 Secretary of the Navy Notice 5000, March 12, 2009[b]	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	X
Marine Corps	Marine Corps Order 3900.17, October 17, 2008	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Air Force	Air Force Instruction 63-114, June 12, 2008 Air Force Instruction 10-601, July 12, 2010	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X
JIEDDO	Joint Improvised Explosive Device Defeat Organization Instruction 5000.01, November 6, 2009	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Special Operations Command	Special Operations Command Directive 71-4, June 9, 2009 Special Operations Command Directive 70-1, March 19, 2010	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	✓

Source: GAO analysis of DOD data.

Notes: The data are from urgent needs policy and guidance.

✓ = activities included in the policy/guidance.

X = activities not included in the policy/guidance.

[a]The "not validated" activity within the urgent needs process refers to what occurs when an urgent need is not approved.

[b]The Secretary of the Navy Notice 5000 is an additional piece of guidance that clarifies and supplements the Joint Memorandum that describes the Navy urgent needs process.

As indicated in table 5, some policies include each of the activities involved in the processing and fulfillment of urgent needs. However, Special Operations Command, Joint Staff, Navy, and Air Force policies do not include guidance on all the activities included in the process. For example, we determined the following:

- Joint Staff policy did not address how to provide feedback on urgent needs that are not validated. Officials from one combatant command expressed frustration that they received no feedback as to why joint urgent operational needs they submitted were not validated and lacked adequate insight to understand the decision process. However, other policies addressed this issue. For example, Navy guidance stated that urgent needs that were not validated would be returned to the requester with rationale as to why or with recommendations on how to revise the request, or both.[31]
- The Joint Staff, Navy, and Air Force policies did not define roles and responsibilities involved in the decision to transition, transfer, or terminate the capability solution provided. Furthermore, Special Operations Command, Joint Staff, and Navy policies did not address how validated requirements would be tracked as a capability solution was being developed.
- Also, DOD's urgent needs policies varied for transitioning or transferring capabilities. For example:

  - It is JIEDDO's policy to decide within 2 years whether to transition or transfer the capability over to a service or agency or to terminate it.[32]
  - The Special Operations Command determines at the 1-year mark whether the capability is still needed in-theater, and if so, defines out-year funding requirements and how the funding will be obtained.
  - While the Army has a process in place for transitioning urgent needs, it is applicable only to those urgent needs that are nominated to go through the Army's Capabilities Development for Rapid Transition process. However, this process identifies and approves only certain capabilities that have been nominated for sustainment, rather than tracking all capabilities fielded for the Army's urgent needs.[33]

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[31]Office of the Chief of Naval Operations Joint Memorandum 4000, *Navy Urgent Needs Process Implementation* (July 26, 2007).

[32]Joint Improvised Explosive Device Defeat Organization Instruction 5000.01, *Joint Improvised Explosive Device Defeat (JIEDD) Capability Approval and Acquisition Management Process (JCAAMP)* (Nov. 6, 2009).

[33]Army Regulation 71-9, *Warfighting Capabilities Determination* (Dec. 28, 2009).

GAO-11-273 Warfighter Support

During our review, numerous officials stated the need for overarching, uniform guidance to all entities involved in urgent needs processes. Senior officials we spoke with stated that the department needs to provide more comprehensive management and oversight over all of its urgent needs. Additionally, combatant command, Joint Staff, and service officials stated a need for policies to be explicit regarding the necessary activities that must be addressed within the urgent needs process. For example, officials at one combatant command stated that when submitting an urgent need through the joint urgent operational needs process, they lacked insight into the validation process and metrics used by the Joint Staff, as well as guidance on how joint urgent operational needs are evaluated across the combatant commands. An official at a different combatant command emphasized the importance of defining which requests truly qualify as an urgent need, and noted that the Joint Staff's requirements process lacks a method to verify that requirements are properly defined. Moreover, Joint Staff officials discussed the importance of defining a joint urgent operational need, as well as criteria for what qualifies as an urgent need in their guidance that is currently undergoing revisions.[34] Army officials noted that inconsistency exists regarding rapid acquisition guidance between the Joint Staff, Army, and Air Force policies. And finally, Air Force officials stated that urgent needs policy should include guidance on which steps within the acquisition process should and can be waived, deferred, or tailored in order to rapidly acquire capabilities, which would allow acquisition personnel to more quickly address urgent needs. Because DOD does not have baseline DOD-wide guidance that applies to urgent operational needs processes across the department clearly defining the roles and responsibilities of how urgent needs should be assessed, processed, and managed—including activities such as tracking the status of a validated requirement—the department continues to maintain a fragmented approach to managing its urgent needs processes. As a result, the department risks inefficiently responding to urgent needs and potentially duplicating efforts.

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[34]As of December 2010, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Instruction 3470.01 is undergoing revisions but had not yet been approved at the time of our review.

DOD Lacks Full Visibility over Urgent Needs Efforts, Challenging DOD's Ability to Manage and Oversee Its Processes

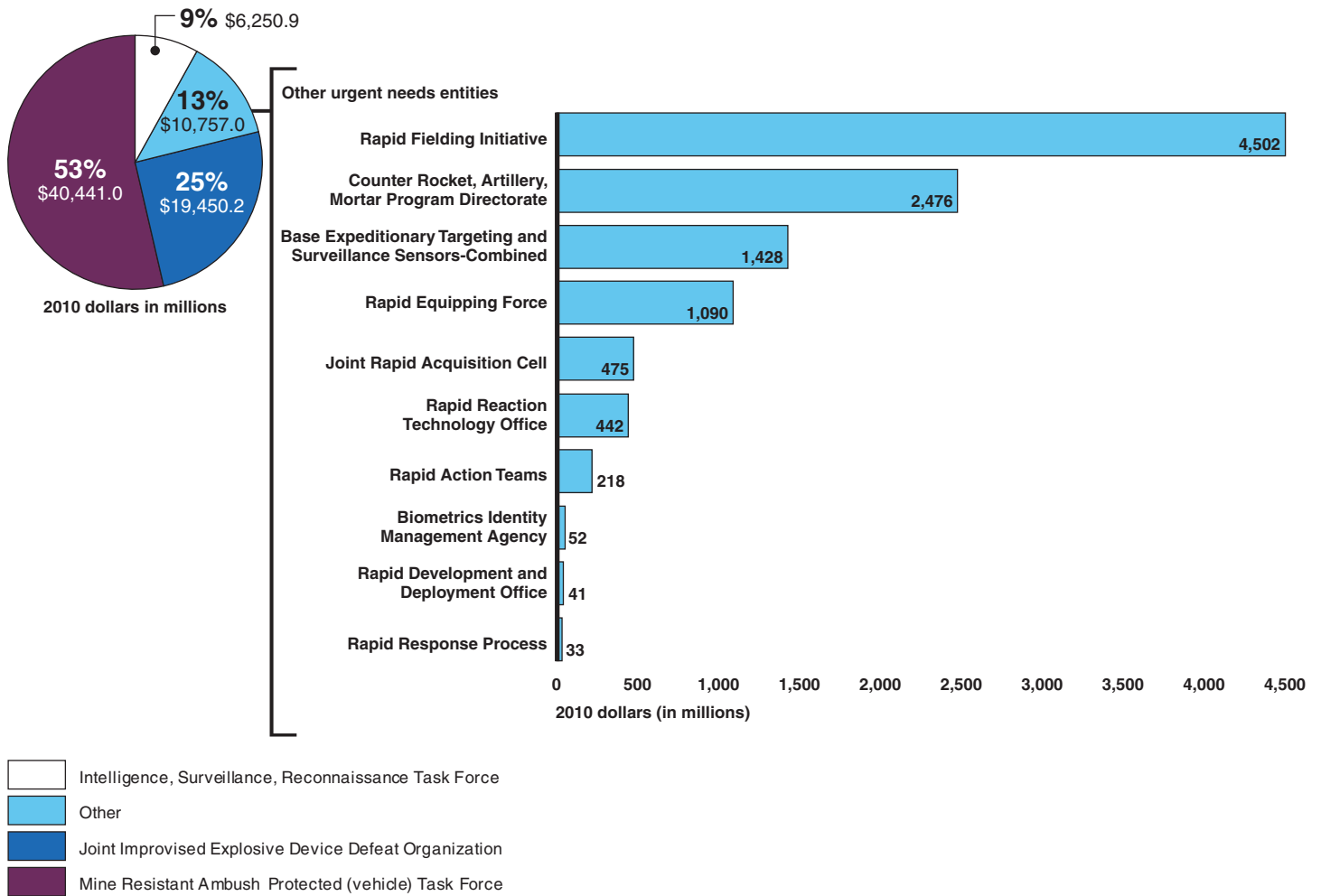### Funding Estimated at More Than $76 Billion over 6 Years

DOD lacks full visibility over the full range of urgent needs efforts—from funding to measuring results. This includes the lack of a single senior-level focal point to help bring cohesion to DOD's urgent needs processes. It also includes the lack of a system and metrics to facilitate coordinating, monitoring, and tracking progress and measuring results.

The department lacks full visibility to readily identify the total cost of its urgent needs efforts. However, we obtained data from the majority of entities in our analysis on how much funding was made available to them for the fulfillment of urgent needs. On the basis of the data submitted to us in response to our data-collection instrument, the total funding for the fulfillment of urgent needs is at least $76.9 billion from fiscal years 2005 through 2010.[35] As indicated in figure 1 below, funding is spread unevenly among many urgent needs entities because the entities have different roles in the fulfillment of urgent needs. In addition, some entities like JIEDDO and the Rapid Reaction Technology Office have access to special funds[36] for the fulfillment of urgent needs, while others rely on different sources such as funding through the annual budget process or the reprogramming or transfer of funds from other DOD programs and activities.

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[35]Our estimate is based on funding data provided by urgent needs-related entities responding to our data-collection instrument and includes funding for processing of urgent needs as well as development of solutions and some acquisition costs. As our survey was not exhaustive, the numbers reported are a lower bound to the total amount spent on urgent needs rather than an upper bound. Our estimate differs from the figure reported by the Defense Science Board in September 2009 because we included fiscal year 2010 funds while the Defense Science Board report only included funding over the period 2005–2009. Additionally, our funding data have been converted to base year 2010 dollars.

[36]JIEDDO has access to the Joint IED Defeat Fund, and the Rapid Reaction Technology Office has access to the Rapid Reaction Fund.

Figure 1: Estimated Funding for the Fulfillment of Urgent Operational Needs of Entities Identified by GAO, Fiscal Year 2005 through Fiscal Year 2010

9% $6,250.9

13% $10,757.0

53% $40,441.0

25% $19,450.2

2010 dollars in millions

Other urgent needs entities

Entity	2010 dollars (in millions)
Rapid Fielding Initiative	4,502
Counter Rocket, Artillery, Mortar Program Directorate	2,476
Base Expeditionary Targeting and Surveillance Sensors-Combined	1,428
Rapid Equipping Force	1,090
Joint Rapid Acquisition Cell	475
Rapid Reaction Technology Office	442
Rapid Action Teams	218
Biometrics Identity Management Agency	52
Rapid Development and Deployment Office	41
Rapid Response Process	33

2010 dollars (in millions)

☐ Intelligence, Surveillance, Reconnaissance Task Force

☐ Other

☐ Joint Improvised Explosive Device Defeat Organization

☐ Mine Resistant Ambush Protected (vehicle) Task Force

Source: GAO analysis of DOD data.

Of the $76.9 billion in urgent needs funds represented in figure 1, $67.1 billion or 87.2 percent has been assigned to OSD entities, $9.5 billion or 12.4 percent to Army entities, $259 million or less than 1 percent to Navy entities, and $33.0 million or less than 1 tenth of 1 percent to Air Force entities. The amounts reported in figure 1 may underestimate the actual total amounts expended on urgent needs for the given years because the

list of entities is not exhaustive. Further, the data are self-reported and not all entities we identified provided funding data.[37] Without full visibility of its urgent needs efforts and costs, the department is not fully able to identify key improvements and is inhibited in its ability to build agile, adaptive, and innovative structures capable of quickly identifying emerging gaps and adjusting program and budgetary priorities to rapidly equip and field capabilities that will mitigate those gaps.

Disparate Tracking Systems Limit DOD's Visibility over Its Urgent Needs Process and Can Hamper Improvement Efforts

DOD cannot readily identify the totality of its urgent needs efforts as well as the cost of such efforts because it has limited visibility over all urgent needs submitted by warfighters—both from joint and service-specific sources. DOD and service officials cited two impediments to full visibility: the lack of a comprehensive tracking system to manage and oversee all urgent needs identified by the warfighter and a lack of clearly defined roles. Specifically, DOD and the services have disparate ways of tracking urgent needs; some have formal databases to input information while others use more informal methods such as e-mailing to solicit feedback. For example, the Joint Chiefs of Staff and each of the military services utilize electronic databases to track capability solutions as they move through the urgent needs process. However, more than a third of the entities involved in the process did not collect or provide the necessary information for the joint or service-based systems to track those solutions. Rather, there was confusion over whose role it was to collect and input data into these tracking systems. For example, one program office that develops urgent needs solutions uses a metric of operational readiness levels to track the effectiveness of its solutions. However, the program office does not provide these data to the joint or services' electronic databases. Rather, program office officials stated they believed it was the responsibility of the combatant command, Joint Staff, or service offices that maintain the databases to maintain this information. However, officials from the Joint Rapid Acquisition Cell, which maintains the joint database, stated they obtain data from the other individual databases based on what the DOD components input.

DOD and military service officials stated the need for improvements to tracking urgent needs. For example, some senior DOD officials stated that they would like senior acquisition executives and other oversight officials to review every 4 to 6 weeks how joint and service urgent needs are

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[37]The Asymmetric Warfare Group was unable to provide specific funding for its urgent needs activities because it is not involved in funding urgent needs.

progressing. Combatant command officials stated that while they have visibility into the database for tracking joint urgent operational needs, they do not have the same visibility into the services' databases. Specifically, officials at one combatant command, who stated they have zero visibility into the urgent needs being addressed by the services, cited the value in having a global database of all service and joint urgent needs as they develop and transition, transfer, or terminate fielded solutions. Additionally, Army officials recognized the need for improved visibility. Specifically the Vice Chief of Staff of the Army issued a memorandum in April 2010 to develop a rapid acquisition / rapid equipping common operating picture and collaboration tool as a means to increase efficiency and transparency of Army urgent need processes. Stakeholders include various Army entities as well as numerous other entities involved in the process. Without full visibility into all of its urgent needs, the department, military services, and combatant commands risk the potential for overlap or duplication in developing capabilities to respond to urgent needs. This reinforces the need for a single focal point at a sufficiently high level to bring greater cohesion to these disparate efforts.

According to DOD officials, the need for improved oversight was an important factor in the decision to revise the Directive-Type Memorandum 10-002. Furthermore, Joint Rapid Acquisition Cell officials stated the draft Directive-Type Memorandum 10-002 would require DOD components to provide visibility to the Joint Rapid Acquisition Cell of urgent needs managed through the DOD entities' processes.

DOD Has Not Established a Universal Set of Metrics for Evaluating the Effectiveness and Tracking the Status of Solutions Provided to the Warfighter

Our analysis found that the feedback mechanisms across DOD, the Joint Staff, the military services, JIEDDO, and the Special Operations Command are varied and fragmented. In April 2010, we recommended that DOD develop an established, formal feedback mechanism or channel for the military services to provide feedback to the Joint Chiefs of Staff and Joint Rapid Acquisition Cell on how well fielded solutions met urgent needs. The department concurred with the recommendation and stated that it would develop new DOD policy and that the Joint Chiefs of Staff would update the Chairman's instruction to establish requirements for oversight and management of the fulfillment of urgent needs. The majority of DOD urgent needs entities we surveyed reported that they do not collect all the data needed to determine how well these solutions are performing. For example, one entity reported that information on whether a deployed solution was successful is largely anecdotal and there is no uniformity in the way such data are collected and reported. Additionally, while the Air Force uses its requirements database to track the progress of systems or solutions under development, it has not formalized metrics to assess the

performance of deployed systems or solutions, or for reporting such performance to senior leadership.

In April 2010, we also recommended that DOD develop and implement standards for accurately tracking and documenting key process milestones such as funding, acquisition, fielding, and assessment, and for updating data management systems to create activity reports to facilitate management review and external oversight of the process. DOD agreed with these recommendations and noted actions it planned to take to address them. However, our analysis found that the department lacked a method or metric to track the status of a validated urgent requirement across the services and DOD components, such as whether a requirement currently in development could be applicable to another service. Specifically, officials from one combatant command stated that they do not have visibility into the urgent needs being addressed at the service level, which could be beneficial to have so that the combatant command would have awareness of capabilities being developed and could communicate with that particular service if the combatant command saw it as a solution to an urgent need. In addition, officials within the Joint Staff recognize the importance of establishing tracking in an urgent needs system and plan to include language in revisions to their policy on joint urgent operational needs. With the establishment of a metric or mechanism to track the status of a validated requirement, the department would gain improved awareness of urgent needs as they move through the process.

DOD Lacks a Focal Point Responsible for Managing, Overseeing, and Maintaining Full Visibility over All the Department's Urgent Needs Efforts

DOD's lack of visibility over all urgent needs requests is due in part to the lack of a senior-level focal point (i.e., gatekeeper) that has the responsibility to manage, oversee, and have full visibility to track and monitor all emerging capability gaps being identified by warfighters in-theater. At present, the department has not established a senior-level focal point to (1) lead the department's efforts to fulfill validated urgent needs requirements, (2) develop and implement DOD-wide policy on the processing of urgent needs or rapid acquisition, or (3) maintain full visibility over its urgent needs efforts and the costs of those efforts. We have previously testified and reported on the benefits of establishing a single point of focus at a sufficiently senior level to coordinate and integrate various DOD efforts to address concerns, such as with

counterterrorism and the transformation of military capabilities.[38] Moreover, the 2010 Quadrennial Defense Review seeks to further reform the department's institutions and processes to support the urgent needs of the warfighter, buy weapons that are usable, affordable, and truly needed, and ensure that taxpayer dollars are spent wisely and responsibly. Similarly, the Secretary of Defense initiated major efforts in August 2010 to significantly reduce excess costs and apply savings achieved by reducing duplication and overhead, and set a goal to find $100 billion in savings over a 5-year period. Without establishment of a senior-level focal point, DOD officials may be unable to identify areas for improvement, including consolidation, to prioritize validated but unfunded requirements, to identify funding challenges and a means to address such challenges, or ensure collaboration to modify capabilities in development to meet several similar urgent needs requirements—and may be unable to reduce any overlap or duplication that may exist as solutions are developed or modified.

Opportunities Exist for Consolidating Urgent Needs Processes and Entities

In addition to not having a comprehensive approach for managing and overseeing its urgent needs efforts, DOD has not conducted a comprehensive evaluation of its urgent needs processes and entities to identify opportunities for consolidation. Given the overlap and potential for duplication we identified in this review, coupled with similar concerns raised by other studies, there may be opportunities for DOD to further improve its urgent needs processes through consolidation. On the basis of our discussions with DOD officials as well as our analysis of prior reports and studies and the responses from our data-collection instrument, we identified several options that the department might consider in an effort to evaluate the merits of consolidating its urgent needs processes and entities.

DOD Has Not Comprehensively Evaluated Opportunities for Consolidation across the Department

Despite various reports by the Defense Science Board, GAO, and others— that raised concerns about the numbers and roles of the various entities and processes involved and the potential of overlap and duplication—DOD has not comprehensively evaluated opportunities for consolidation across the department. For example, the Defense Science Board Task Force found that DOD has done little to adopt urgent needs as a critical, ongoing

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[38]GAO, *Combating Terrorism: Comments on Counterterrorism Leadership and National Strategy*, GAO-01-556T (Washington, D.C.: Mar. 27, 2001) and *Military Transformation: Clear Leadership, Accountability, and Management Tools Are Needed to Enhance DOD's Efforts to Transform Military Capabilities*, GAO-05-70 (Washington, D.C.: Dec. 17, 2004).

GAO-11-273 Warfighter Support

DOD institutional capability essential to addressing future threats, and it twice provided recommendations to the department about potential consolidations. Specifically, in July 2009, the task force identified a number of critical actions to address the situation, including a dual acquisition path that separates "rapid" and "deliberate" acquisitions as well as the establishment of a new agency to implement this separation, called the Rapid Acquisition and Fielding Agency. Further, the Task Force stated that this new agency should (1) be focused on acquiring new solutions to joint urgent operational needs; (2) work with the combatant commands to anticipate future needs; and (3) oversee and coordinate tracking of all urgent need statements in conjunction with the services and the service components. Contrary to these recommendations, some DOD officials whom we interviewed across the department expressed their concern with the creation of a new agency since the Secretary of Defense publicly questioned why it was "necessary to bypass existing institutions and procedures to get the capabilities needed to protect U.S. troops and fight ongoing wars."[39]

According to senior OSD officials, the department has conducted studies, including a Lean Six Sigma study, to determine lessons learned from several independent urgent needs processes that might be integrated into the department's main acquisition process. Briefings have been presented to the Under Secretary for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics, making the business case to standardize the department's urgent needs processes, improve support to the warfighter, and achieve greater collaboration across the department. However, DOD has not developed or implemented any courses of action to address the findings of these studies. Many DOD and military service officials stated that higher-level senior leadership needs to take decisive action to improve and formalize its urgent needs processes, thus reducing unnecessary duplication in staff, IT, support, and funding. Until the department comprehensively evaluates its strategic direction on urgent needs, it will be unaware of opportunities for consolidation across the department as well as opportunities for improved coordination, or other actions to achieve savings or increased efficiencies in its fulfillment of urgent needs.

DOD Directive 5105.02 directs the Deputy Secretary of Defense to serve as the Chief Management Officer of the department with the responsibility

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[39]Robert M. Gates, "A Balanced Strategy: Reprogramming The Pentagon For A New Age," *Foreign Affairs* (January 2009).

and function, among others, to establish performance goals and measures for improving and evaluating overall economy, efficiency, and effectiveness and monitor and measure the progress of the department.[40] Moreover, the department's Strategic Management Plan outlines the five top-level business priorities of DOD, including "Reform the DoD Acquisition and Support Processes" as its third business priority.[41] A goal of this priority is to focus research and development to address warfighting requirements in an effort to speed technology transitions focused on warfighting needs. Furthermore, GAO's Business Process Reengineering Assessment Guide establishes that a comprehensive analysis of alternative processes should include a performance-based, risk-adjusted analysis of benefits and costs for each alternative.[42] Our prior work on business process reengineering has demonstrated the importance of exploring available options, including the potential of each option to achieve the desired goals as well as to determine the benefits, costs, and risks of each.[43]

Other Options Aimed at Consolidation and Increased Efficiencies

Given the overlap and potential for duplication we identified in this review, coupled with similar concerns raised by other studies, we identified and analyzed a number of options aimed at potential consolidations in an effort to provide ideas for the department to consider in streamlining its urgent needs entities and processes. The options are presented in table 6 below. Using information and documentation provided by DOD officials, prior reports and studies, and the responses from our data-collection instrument, we analyzed each option in terms of its potential capacity to (1) reduce overlap or duplication or both, if any, in the mission, roles, and key activities; (2) reduce fragmentation and potential gaps in the processes; (3) increase coordination and visibility; and (4) increase efficiencies. We also assessed the advantages and disadvantages of each option. Additionally, while title 10, U.S. Code, provides that the military services are responsible for equipping and

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[40]DOD Directive 5105.02, *Deputy Secretary of Defense* (Feb. 18, 2009).

[41]Department of Defense, Strategic Management Plan (2009).

[42]GAO, *Business Process Reengineering Assessment Guide*, ver. 3, GAO/AIMD-10.1.15 (Washington, D.C.: May 1997).

[43]GAO, *Defense Health Care: DOD Needs to Address the Expected Benefits, Costs, and Risks for Its Newly Approved Medical Command Structure*, GAO-08-122 (Washington, D.C.: Oct. 12, 2007).

training their own forces, DOD officials indicated that title 10 would not preclude consolidating or otherwise streamlining the processing of urgent operational needs to maximize efficiency and response to the warfighter.

Table 6: Identified Potential Options for Consolidating the Department's Urgent Needs Processes, with Advantages and Disadvantages

Option 1: Consolidate into one OSD-level entity all the urgent needs processes of the services and DOD, while keeping the development of solutions at the services' program offices. This option would consolidate eight urgent needs processes into a single process at the OSD level. The option addresses consolidation of processing activities, such as the submission from the warfighters, validating the requirement as urgently needed, sourcing, facilitating the solution development or modification, and tracking the fielded solution. However, the option recognizes the need for the solution development to remain at the service-level program offices.

Advantages	Disadvantages
• the process for the warfighter could be simplified if there were no multiple policies, procedures, points of contact, and bureaucracies involved in fulfilling their urgent needs • a single validation point may provide an additional opportunity to prioritize urgent needs • may expand visibility over all urgent needs, including (1) the types of capabilities being requested; (2) the types of solutions being developed; (3) the tracking of solutions • may eliminate potentially duplicative work on solutions • may improve efficiency through consolidation of staff and infrastructure	• may necessitate the time-intensive development and issuance of new policy and guidance • could create a large bureaucratic entity, which may inhibit flexibility in addressing urgent needs and reduce agility that may allow current urgent needs entities to respond to warfighters innovatively and rapidly

Option 2: Consolidate entities that have overlapping mission or capability portfolios regarding urgent needs solutions. Rather than consolidate entire entities, DOD may find it beneficial to consolidate elements of entities that overlap in function. For example, DOD could consolidate all entities involved in the development of urgent needs solutions for biometrics. Additionally, for example, JIEDDO has a training element that may overlap with the services' own training missions.

Advantages	Disadvantages
• may improve efficiency and effectiveness of revised entities • research and development may benefit from consolidating subject-matter expertise • may eliminate potentially duplicative work on solutions	• may remove expertise needed by entities to conduct missions unrelated to the urgent needs process • may stifle innovation that occurs through varying approaches to solving capability gaps

Option 3: Establish a gatekeeper within each service to oversee all key activities to fulfill a validated urgent need requirement. Some phases of the process are fragmented—without clear ownership—and overseen by multiple entities. For example, Navy guidance that designates the Chief of Naval Operations to serve as the Navy Urgent Needs Gatekeeper does not task the Chief of Naval Operations with responsibility to ensure the tracking of urgent needs or the oversight of the transition, termination, or transfer process.

Advantages	Disadvantages
• centralized oversight may aid in minimizing fragmentation, overlap, and duplication within each process • urgent needs processes could be managed holistically rather than sequentially • may increase coordination, visibility, and accountability within services' processes	• an additional layer of oversight may slow down the urgent needs processes • flexibility and agility in addressing urgent needs may be impeded • would still have several urgent needs processes within DOD that would require coordination

Option 4: Consolidate within each service any overlapping activities in the urgent needs process. The services' activities include the submission of an urgent needs request, its validation, execution, tracking, transition, termination—and the transfer of any solution. For example, the Army could consolidate overlapping activities, such as its multiple entry and validation points, and the Air Force could centralize its urgent needs processes that are in place at each major command.	
Advantages	**Disadvantages**
• may allow full transparency of each service's process • may improve efficiency through consolidation of staff and infrastructure • may eliminate potentially duplicative work on solutions	• may inhibit any flexibility in addressing urgent needs and reduce any agility that may allow existing urgent needs entities to respond to warfighters innovatively and rapidly • may eliminate subject-matter expertise within existing entities • would still have several processes across the department

Source: GAO.

The options we identified are not meant to be exhaustive or mutually exclusive. Rather, DOD would need to perform its own analysis, carefully weighing the advantages and disadvantages of options it identifies to determine the optimal course of action. Additionally, it must be recognized that many entities involved in the fulfillment of urgent needs have other roles as well. For example, while the Biometrics Information Management Agency may respond directly to an urgent need, it also has the mission to lead the department's activities to program, integrate, and synchronize biometric technologies and capabilities. Furthermore, several DOD officials also pointed out that although efficiency is important, the speed of development and effectiveness of solutions are generally a higher priority for urgent needs.

In sharing our analysis of options with DOD and military service officials, they agreed that such an analysis considering all the advantages and disadvantages of consolidation is a necessary step to improving the department's fulfillment of urgent needs. Given the increasing number of urgent needs and the escalating fiscal challenges, it is critical for DOD to reevaluate the current status of how it fulfills its urgent needs and whether there is potential to reduce duplication, fragmentation, and overlap to achieve increased efficiencies or cost savings, or both. Without a comprehensive evaluation of its urgent needs entities and processes, DOD will not be in a position to know if it is fulfilling urgent needs in the most efficient and effective manner as well as accomplishing its strategic management objectives.

Conclusions

DOD has issued guidance that addresses several aspects of the process for warfighter needs, but the entities aiding warfighters' needs do not have DOD-wide guidance in such areas as clearly defining roles and responsibilities and minimum requirements for processing requests. Additionally, DOD and military service officials have limited awareness of

all urgent needs—including how well those needs are being met—which can hamper their ability to effectively manage and identify areas where overlap and duplication exist, in accordance with the department's strategic and long-term goals. Yet DOD does not have a focal point to provide visibility into the totality of these urgent needs activities. Without DOD-wide guidance on the department's urgent needs processes and a focal point to lead its overall efforts on urgent operational needs and to act as an advocate within the department for issues related to the department's ability to rapidly respond to urgent needs, DOD is likely to continue to risk duplicative, overlapping, and fragmented efforts, which contributes to inefficiency and loss of potential financial savings. Additionally, without full visibility and the establishment of a metric or mechanism to track the status of a validated requirement, including its transition, the department may not be able to identify key improvements. Moreover, without a formal feedback mechanism or channel for the military services to provide feedback, the department is likely to be unaware of how well fielded solutions are performing. Finally, we acknowledge that rapid response to urgent needs has a high priority, but on the basis of our analyses we believe there are still opportunities to achieve efficiencies without sacrificing response to the warfighter. Without one DOD office—such as the Chief Management Officer—taking a leadership role to analyze options for consolidating urgent needs processes and entities, there are both real and potential risks of duplication, overlap, and fragmentation in the efforts, as well as the risk that DOD may not address urgent warfighter needs in the most efficient and cost-effective manner.

Recommendations for Executive Action

To promote a more comprehensive approach to planning, management, and oversight of the department's fulfillment of urgent operational needs, we recommend that the Secretary of Defense take the following five actions:

- Direct the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics to develop and promulgate DOD-wide guidance across all urgent needs processes that

  - establishes baseline policy for the fulfillment of urgent operational needs;
  - clearly defines common terms as well as the roles, responsibilities, and authorities of the OSD, Joint Chiefs of Staff, combatant commands, and military services for all phases of the urgent needs process, including, but not limited to, generation, validation, funding, execution, tracking, and management of the transition, termination, or transfer

process and that incorporates all available expedited acquisition procedures;

- designates a focal point within the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics (such as the Rapid Fielding Directorate, or other entity as deemed appropriate) with the appropriate authority and resources, dedicated to leading the department's urgent needs efforts, including, but not limited to: (1) acting as an advocate within the department for issues related to DOD's ability to rapidly respond to urgent needs; (2) improving visibility across all urgent needs entities and processes; and (3) ensuring tools and mechanisms are used to track, monitor, and manage the status of urgent needs, from validation through the transition, including a formal feedback mechanism or channel for military services to provide feedback on how well fielded solutions met urgent needs; and
- directs the DOD Components to establish minimum processes and requirements for each of the above phases of the process.

- Direct DOD's Chief Management Officer to evaluate potential options for consolidation to reduce overlap, duplication, and fragmentation, and take appropriate action.

Agency Comments and Our Evaluation

In written comments on a draft of this report, DOD fully concurred with all five of our recommendations. However, DOD stated that specific actions it will take to address these recommendations will be identified in a report on its urgent needs processes required by the Ike Skelton National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2011 and due to Congress in January 2012.[44] This act requires DOD to review its processes for the fielding of capabilities in response to urgent operational needs and consider such improvements as providing a streamlined and expedited approach, clearly defining the roles and responsibilities for carrying out all phases of the process, and establishing a formal feedback mechanism. Although DOD noted in its comments that actions to be taken would be identified in its subsequent congressionally mandated report, it did provide some actions it planned to take. For example, DOD agreed to issue guidance to address our recommendations that DOD develop and promulgate DOD-wide guidance across all urgent needs processes that establishes a baseline policy and directs DOD components to establish minimum processes and requirements across the urgent needs process. DOD stated this policy will permit DOD components to operate their own

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[44]Pub. L. No. 111-383, § 804 (2011).

processes, but would maintain a sufficient baseline commonality to maintain DOD oversight. We agree that nothing in our recommendations preclude the DOD components from maintaining their own urgent needs processes, but as we reported, these processes should be part of a comprehensive DOD-wide approach for how all urgent needs should be addressed.

Additionally, with regard to our recommendation that DOD develop guidance that identifies a focal point to lead the department's urgent needs efforts, DOD stated that the Director of the JRAC would act in this capacity pending the outcome of the congressionally mandated study. We agree that this would be a good step towards addressing our recommendation until DOD completes its review. Finally, in concurring with our recommendation that DOD evaluate potential options for consolidation, DOD stated that the Deputy Chief Management Officer and the military services' Chief Management Officers would provide oversight and assistance in DOD's review of the end-to-end process with regard to utilizing process improvement techniques and tools. Providing this DOD review specifically includes an evaluation of potential consolidation options, we agree that it would address our recommendation. Technical comments were provided separately and incorporated as appropriate. The department's written comments are reprinted in appendix II.

We are sending copies of this report to interested congressional committees and the Secretary of Defense. This report will be available at no charge on GAO's website, http://www.gao.gov.

If you or your staff have any questions about this report, please contact me at (202) 512-8365 or by e-mail at SolisW@gao.gov. Contact information for our Offices of Congressional Relations and Public Affairs may be found on

the last page of this report. GAO staff who have made major contributions to this report are listed in appendix III.

William M. Solis, Director
Defense Capabilities and Management

The Honorable Carl Levin
Chairman
The Honorable John McCain
Ranking Member
Committee on Armed Services
United States Senate

The Honorable Joseph Lieberman
Chairman
The Honorable Susan Collins
Ranking Member
Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs
United States Senate

The Honorable Daniel K. Inouye
Chairman
The Honorable Thad Cochran
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Defense
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate

The Honorable Howard McKeon
Chairman
The Honorable Adam Smith
Ranking Member
Committee on Armed Services
House of Representatives

The Honorable C.W. Young
Chairman
The Honorable Norman D. Dicks
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Defense
Committee on Appropriations
House of Representatives

The Honorable Jason Chaffetz
Chairman
The Honorable John F. Tierney
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on National Security, Homeland Defense and Foreign
Operations
Committee on Oversight and Government Reform
House of Representatives

Appendix I: Scope and Methodology

To determine what entities exist within the Department of Defense (DOD) for responding to urgent operational needs and to what extent, if any, there is fragmentation, overlap, or duplication in their missions, roles, and responsibilities, we reviewed the Defense Science Board Task Force report and used it as our starting point to identify the joint and service entities involved in the fulfillment of urgent operational needs.[1] We interviewed officials from the Defense Science Board Task Force to gain an understanding of their methodology, their findings, and their recommendations. We developed a 46-question data-collection instrument to collect information from the urgent needs entities identified by the Defense Science Board report to determine the entities' roles and the extent of their involvement in the various activities of the urgent needs processes. For example, for each entity, we collected general information on the mission, role, and responsibility, organizational structure, and impetus for creation; the roles and processes the entity employs with respect to urgent needs; and specifically how the entity is involved in the vetting, funding, tracking, and transitioning of urgent needs. Prior to fielding the data-collection instrument, we tested it with two entities and adjusted the questions and layout based on the feedback we received. Moreover, in an effort to identify any additional urgent needs entities not captured by the Defense Science Board Task Force or by us in our background research, we employed a "snowball" sampling technique, whereby we included our list of urgent needs entities and asked each entity (1) if it was aware of any others that are involved in the response and fulfillment of urgent operational needs and (2) if it interfaces with any other organizations or programs with regards to managing the urgent operational needs process. We then contacted those entities that the respondents had identified to better understand the population of urgent needs related entities. After analyzing data provided as well as interviews with DOD, military service, selected combatant command, and entity officials, we judgmentally selected the entities included in our analysis to exclude entities that did not meet our definition of an urgent needs organization. For example, we did not include the department's Commander's Emergency Response Program after reviewing its mission and purpose. After the urgent needs entities responded to the data-collection instruments, we created a database and analyzed the variables to gain an understanding of the mission, roles, and responsibilities, as well

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[1]*Report of the Defense Science Board Task Force on the Fulfillment of Urgent Operational Needs* (Washington, D.C.: Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics, July 2009).

as the organizational structure, and impetus for creation of the entity, and the roles and processes the entity employs with respect to urgent needs. On the basis of this data as well as our analyses of DOD's urgent needs policies and guidance, the Defense Science Board Task Force report, and other relevant documents, we identified six broad urgent needs activities involved after the submission of an urgent needs statement: validation, facilitation, sourcing, execution, tracking, and transition, transfer, or termination. We then analyzed the data obtained through the data-collection instrument and other documentation to identify the prevalence of fragmentation, overlap, or duplication in response to urgent needs between and among the entities and within DOD more generally. In order to present the cost analysis for each urgent needs entity in consistent terms, all cost data in this report are in fiscal year 2010 dollars. We converted cost information to fiscal year 2010 dollars using conversion factors from the DOD Comptroller's National Defense Budget Estimates for Fiscal Year 2010.

To determine the extent to which DOD has a comprehensive approach for managing and overseeing its various activities to address urgent needs identified by warfighters in-theater, we reviewed key documents including the Quadrennial Defense Review, DOD's Strategic Management Plan, prior National Defense Authorization Acts, and other public laws. We examined these documents to gain an understanding of the department's strategic goals as well as to examine any potential effects each had on the department's rapid acquisition and urgent needs processes. We analyzed joint and military service policies pertaining to the fulfillment of urgent operational needs, including Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Instruction 3470.01; Army Regulation 71-9; Air Force Instructions 63-114 and 10-601; Secretary of the Navy Instruction 5000.2C and Secretary of the Navy Notice 5000; Marine Corps Order 3900.17; DOD Joint Improvised Explosive Device Defeat Organization Instruction 5000.01; and U.S. Special Operations Command Directives 70-1 and 71-4, to gain an understanding of roles and responsibilities involved in fulfilling urgent needs, what constitutes an urgent need, and to assess whether the department has comprehensive departmentwide policy for establishing a baseline on how urgent needs are to be addressed, including key aspects of the process such as generation, validation, or tracking. Likewise, we analyzed forthcoming DOD policies, including the department's Directive-Type Memorandum 10-002, which seeks to establish policy, assign responsibilities, and outline procedures for the resolution of joint urgent operational needs. We conducted comparative analysis of the policies to identify the differences between the varying policies to identify the extent of any fragmentation. We interviewed relevant DOD officials, including

senior defense officials within the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense, Acquisition, Technology and Logistics, including the Rapid Fielding Directorate, and the Office of the Secretary of Defense, Cost Assessment and Program Evaluation to gain an understanding of the totality of the department's efforts to satisfy urgent warfighter requirements as well as on the metrics used to evaluate the effectiveness of the capability solutions developed to address urgent needs. Likewise, we interviewed officials from the Joint Staff, selected combatant commands, and each military service, including acquisition and Program Management / Program Executive Officials to further our understanding of how urgent needs are fulfilled; how the processes are managed and overseen; and what improvements, if any, are warranted. In addition, we interviewed officials at each entity we identified to gain an understanding of their mission, role, and responsibilities, how data on their joint or service-specific fulfillment of urgent needs is tracked and reported to senior level officials, and what improvements, if any, are warranted.

To determine the extent to which DOD comprehensively evaluated its urgent needs entities and processes and identified potential for consolidations, we contacted senior defense officials within the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense, Acquisition, Technology and Logistics, the Office of the Secretary of Defense, Cost Assessment and Program Evaluation, selected combatant commands, and the military services to identify and obtain any studies, reports, or analysis conducted by the department on its fulfillment of urgent needs. Using this information, together with analysis of prior reports and studies and the responses from our data-collection instrument, we developed several options that DOD may wish to consider, including a variety of consolidation options for the entities and processes responsible for responding to urgent operational needs. We tested and analyzed these options in terms of their potential capacity to gain increased efficiencies in the visibility, coordination, management, and oversight of the department's urgent needs process as well as to reduce duplication, overlap, and fragmentation, if any.

We visited or contacted the following offices during our review:

Department of Defense

- Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance Task Force, Washington, D.C.
- Joint Improvised Explosive Device Defeat Organization, Washington, D.C.
- Mine Resistant Ambush Protected vehicle Task Force, Washington, D.C.

- Office of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Force Structure, Resources, and Assessment Directorate (J8), Washington, D.C.
- Office of the Secretary of Defense, Cost Assessment and Program Evaluation, Washington, D.C.
- Office of the Under Secretary of Defense, Acquisition, Technology and Logistics, Washington, D.C.

  - Defense Procurement and Acquisition Policy Office
  - Joint Rapid Acquisition Cell
  - Rapid Fielding Directorate
    - Complex Systems, Joint Capability Technology Demonstration Office
    - Rapid Reaction Technology Office

- U.S. Coalition Warrior Interoperability Demonstration Office, Washington, D.C.
- Defense Science Board, Washington, D.C.

U.S. Army

- Deputy Chief of Staff, Department of the Army, G-3/5/7, Washington, D.C.
- Asymmetric Warfare Group, Fort Meade, Maryland
- Biometrics Identity Management Agency, Washington, D.C.
- Deputy Chief of Staff, Department of the Army, G-3/5/7 Capability Integration Division, Washington, D.C.
- Office of the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Acquisition, Logistics, and Technology, Army Science Board, Arlington, Virginia
- Program Executive Office—Command, Control, and Communications–Tactical, Counter Rocket, Artillery, and Mortar Program Directorate, Fort Monmouth, New Jersey
- Program Executive Office—Intelligence, Electronic Warfare, and Sensors, Night Vision/Reconnaissance, Surveillance, and Target Acquisition, Fort Belvoir, Virginia
- Program Executive Office—Soldier, Directorate of Logistics (G4) (formerly known as Rapid Fielding Initiative Directorate), Fort Belvoir, Virginia
- Rapid Equipping Force, Fort Belvoir, Virginia
- Research, Development, and Engineering Command, Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland
- Task Force Observe, Detect, Identify, Neutralize, Washington, D.C.
- Training and Doctrine Command, Fort Monroe, Virginia

  - Army Capabilities Integration Center
  - Human Terrain System

U.S. Navy

- Chief of Naval Operations, N81D, Washington, D.C.
- Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Navy, Expeditionary Warfare, Washington, D.C.
- Navy Comptroller's Office, Washington, D.C.
- Office of Naval Research, Office of Transition, Rapid Development and Deployment Program, Arlington, Virginia

U.S. Marine Corps

- Combat Development Command, Capabilities Development Directorate, Quantico, Virginia

U.S. Air Force

- Office of the Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Acquisition, Washington, D.C.
- Requirements Policy & Process Division, Directorate of Operational Capability Requirements, Washington, D.C.
- Air Force Comptroller's Office, Washington, D.C.
- Air Mobility Command, Scott Air Force Base, Illinois
- 645th Aeronautical Systems Group (Big Safari), Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Dayton, Ohio
- Rapid Capabilities Office, Washington, D.C.

Combatant Commands

- U.S. Central Command, MacDill Air Force Base, Tampa, Florida
- U.S. European Command, Stuttgart, Germany
- U.S. Northern Command, Peterson Air Force Base, Colorado Springs, Colorado
- U.S. Special Operations Command, MacDill Air Force Base, Tampa, Florida
- U.S. Transportation Command, Scott Air Force Base, Illinois

We conducted this performance audit from February 2010 to March 2011 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 audit objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives.

Appendix II: Comments from the Department of Defense

OFFICE OF THE UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
3000 DEFENSE PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, DC 20301-3000

FEB 4 2011

ACQUISITION,
TECHNOLOGY
AND LOGISTICS

Mr. William Solis
Director, Defense Capabilities Management Team
U.S. Government Accountability Office
441 G Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20548

Dear Mr. Solis:

This is the Department of Defense (DoD) response to the GAO draft report, GAO-11-273, "WARFIGHTER SUPPORT: DoD's Urgent Needs Processes Need a More Comprehensive Approach and Evaluation for Potential Consolidation," dated January 10, 2011 (GAO Code 351448). Comments on the report's recommendations are enclosed.

Separately, the Department will be coordinating a review and submitting the report to the congressional defense committees required by section 804 of the Ike Skelton National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2011, *Review of Acquisition Process for Rapid Fielding of Capabilities in Response to Urgent Operational Needs*. We anticipate that specific actions accomplished by the Department related to the GAO's recommendations will be included in the report.

The Department appreciates the opportunity to respond to your draft report. Technical comments were provided separately. Should you have any questions, please contact Mr. William Beasley, William.Beasley@osd.mil, 703-695-8045.

Sincerely,

Thomas P. Dee
Director, Joint Rapid Acquisition Cell

Enclosures:
As stated

GAO DRAFT REPORT DATED JANUARY 10, 2011
GAO-11-273 (GAO CODE 351448)

"WARFIGHTER SUPPORT: DOD'S URGENT NEEDS PROCESSES NEED A MORE
COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH AND EVALUATION FOR POTENTIAL
CONSOLIDATION"

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE COMMENTS
TO THE GAO RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATION 1: The GAO recommends that the Secretary of Defense direct the
Under Secretary of Defense, Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics to develop and promulgate
DoD-wide guidance across all urgent needs processes that establishes baseline policy for the
fulfillment of urgent operational needs.

DOD RESPONSE: Concur. The Department will issue appropriate guidance that will ensure
the urgent needs / rapid acquisition processes meet the warfighter's needs. The policy will
permit DoD Components to operate Component-specific processes while maintaining sufficient
baseline commonality that cross-DoD oversight can be accomplished.

RECOMMENDATION 2: The GAO recommends that the Secretary of Defense direct the
Under Secretary of Defense, Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics to develop and promulgate
DoD-wide guidance across all urgent needs processes that clearly defines common terms as well
as the roles, responsibilities, and authorities of the Office of the Secretary of Defense, Joint
Chiefs of Staff, Combatant Commands, and the military services for all phases of the urgent
needs process, including, but not limited to, generation, validation, funding, execution, tracking,
and management of the transition, termination or transfer process and that incorporates all
available expedited acquisition procedures.

DOD RESPONSE: Concur. Under the effort required by section 804 of the Ike Skelton
National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2011, the end-to-end process will be
assessed, responsibilities defined, and appropriate policy changes initiated. It is expected that
additional policy and procedures under the authority of multiple DoD officials (e.g., Chairman of
the Joint Staff, Under Secretary of Defense Comptroller/CFO, Director, Operational Test and
Evaluation) will be assessed for any necessary changes and coordinated with the responsible
officials.

RECOMMENDATION 3: The GAO recommends that the Secretary of Defense direct the
Under Secretary of Defense, Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics to develop and promulgate
DoD-wide guidance across all urgent needs processes that designates a focal point within the
Office of the Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics (such as the Rapid
Fielding Directorate, or other entity as deemed appropriate) with the appropriate authority and
resources, dedicated to leading the department's urgent needs efforts, including, but not limited
to: (a) acting as an advocate within the department for issues related to DoD's ability to rapidly
respond to urgent needs; (b) improving visibility across all urgent needs entities and processes;

1

and (c) ensuring tools and mechanisms are used to track, monitor, and manage the status of urgent needs, from validation through the transition, including a formal feedback mechanism or channel for military services to provide feedback on how well fielded solutions met urgent needs.

DOD RESPONSE: Concur. Pending completion of the effort required by section 804 of the Ike Skelton National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2011, the Director of the Joint Rapid Acquisition Cell will act as the focal point. The results of the section 804 effort will shape the ultimate decisions on structuring the urgent needs and rapid acquisition processes.

RECOMMENDATION 4: The GAO recommends that the Secretary of Defense direct the Under Secretary of Defense, Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics to develop and promulgate DoD-wide guidance across all urgent needs processes that directs the DoD Components to establish minimum processes and requirements for each of the above phases of the process.

DOD RESPONSE: Concur. The Department will issue appropriate guidance that will ensure the urgent needs / rapid acquisition processes meet the warfighter's needs. The policy will permit DoD Components to operate Component-specific processes while maintaining sufficient baseline commonality that cross-DoD oversight can be accomplished.

RECOMMENDATION 5: The GAO recommends that the Secretary of Defense direct DoD's Chief Management Officer to evaluate potential options for consolidation to reduce overlap, duplication, and fragmentation and take appropriate action.

DOD RESPONSE: Concur. Under the effort required by section 804 of the Ike Skelton National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2011, the end-to-end process will be addressed and the Deputy Chief Management Officer, supported by component Chief Management Officers, will participate and provide oversight and assistance in utilizing process improvement techniques and tools.

2

Appendix III: GAO Contact and Acknowledgments

GAO Contact

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In addition to the contact named above, Cary B. Russell (Assistant Director), Usman Ahmad, Laura G. Czohara, Lonnie McAllister II, John Ortiz, Richard Powelson, Steve Pruitt, Amie Steele, Ryan Stott, John Strong, Tristan To, Nicole Vahlkamp, Elizabeth Wood, Delia P. Zee, and Karen Zuckerstein made key contributions to this report.