

GAO Highlights

Highlights of [GAO-23-105619](#), a report to the Committee on Armed Services, U.S. Senate

Why GAO Did This Study

Funding for EDI has supported a variety of military activities in Europe, including troop rotations, intelligence activities, and construction of projects such as airfields, ranges, and other military facilities.

A committee report accompanying a bill for the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2022 included a provision for GAO to review EDI's progress in achieving mission and program objectives. This report examines: (1) how, if at all, EDI has changed U.S. military posture in Europe; (2) DOD's efforts to define and report on its funding for EDI; and (3) the extent to which DOD uses performance information to evaluate EDI activities and justify dedicated resources.

GAO analyzed relevant DOD documentation and data and interviewed knowledgeable DOD officials. GAO also conducted site visits in Europe to review activities that were funded as a part of EDI, including construction and infrastructure improvements.

What GAO Recommends

GAO is recommending that the Secretary of Defense ensure that the commander of the U.S. European Command, in collaboration with the heads of the military services, establishes performance goals and measures for EDI and its five lines of effort. DOD partially concurred, noting EDI is not a specific program. GAO continues to believe the recommendation is valid, as discussed in the report.

View [GAO-23-105619](#). For more information, contact Cary B. Russell at (202) 512-5431 or RussellC@gao.gov.

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EUROPEAN DETERRENCE INITIATIVE

DOD Should Establish Performance Goals and Measures to Improve Oversight

What GAO Found

The European Deterrence Initiative (EDI) was established in 2015 to help boost military readiness of European allies and deter Russian aggression. Its activities have enhanced U.S. military posture in Europe by supporting the deployment of additional U.S. rotational forces and expanding the number of locations where U.S. forces operate. From fiscal year 2015 through fiscal year 2023, \$35.1 billion has been spent on EDI activities. For example, according to Army officials, EDI amounts supported construction in Belgium to improve Army prepositioning maintenance and storage facilities (see figure). Also, the U.S. has entered into agreements with other countries to enable additional U.S. military posture changes in Europe.

U.S. Army Vehicles Prepositioned in Belgium



Source: GAO. | GAO-23-105619

From fiscal year 2015 through fiscal year 2024, EDI budget requests made by the Department of Defense (DOD) were for activities defined and categorized by five lines of effort—Increased Presence, Exercises and Training, Enhanced Prepositioning, Improved Infrastructure, and Building Partner Capacity. During the same period, each of the military services used their own criteria to determine what activity should be funded as part of EDI, according to military service officials. In February 2023, DOD issued new guidance defining EDI criteria and standardizing EDI budget request presentations along the five lines of effort for fiscal year 2024 and beyond. The military services' fiscal year 2024 EDI budget requests do not include presentations along the five lines of effort because the fiscal year 2024 budget documents were already finalized when the February 2023 guidance was issued.

The military services have collected information from monitoring and assessing some EDI activities. However, DOD has not established performance goals and measures for EDI. By doing so, DOD would be in a better position to assess EDI activities, support budget requests, and justify dedicated resources with high-quality information. This would enable both DOD and Congress to better understand the return on EDI investments and improve oversight.