

GAO Highlights

Highlights of [GAO-18-509](#), a report to congressional committees

Why GAO Did This Study

IEDs are one of the most lethal weapons available to terrorists and enemy combatants. DOD reported that between January 2007 and February 2018, approximately 9,000 IED incidents were targeted against U.S. and allied military forces in Iraq and Afghanistan resulting in about 23,000 casualties.

The House Armed Services Committee included a provision in a committee report for GAO to assess JIDO's transition under DTRA. This report: (1) assesses the status of JIDO's transition under DTRA; (2) describes how, if at all, the transition has affected JIDO's warfighter support; and (3) identifies what, if any, challenges could affect JIDO's continued efficiency and effectiveness. GAO examined DOD documentation including directives and plans, and met with DOD officials.

What GAO Recommends

GAO is making four recommendations including that DOD clarify the categories of threats JIDO is responsible for countering and JIDO's corresponding authorities, as well as establish processes for obtaining permission to share research project information and submitting it to DOD's information sharing repository. DOD concurred with all of the recommendations and cited actions it plans to take to address them.

View [GAO-18-509](#). For more information, contact Jason Bair at (202) 512-6881 or bairj@gao.gov.

July 2018

IMPROVISED THREATS

Warfighter Support Maintained, but Clearer Responsibilities and Improved Information Sharing Needed

What GAO Found

The Department of Defense (DOD) established the Joint Improvised Explosive Device Defeat Organization in 2006 to lead and coordinate the department's counter-improvised explosive device (IED) efforts. In response to a congressional mandate, DOD renamed this entity the Joint Improvised-Threat Defeat Organization (JIDO) and placed it under the Defense Threat Reduction Agency (DTRA) in 2016. Since that point, JIDO has transferred personnel and pay systems, funding, and staff functions to DTRA, and identified additional, longer-term transition activities that will take several years to complete, such as workforce colocation. Plans for these transition activities reflect all nine key practices GAO identified for implementing mergers and organizational transformations, such as setting goals and timelines. JIDO also identified efficiencies achieved through the transition in areas such as research and training.

JIDO maintained warfighter support during its transition under DTRA. Officials from across DOD stated that they were satisfied with JIDO's level of support during the transition and that JIDO continued to provide a range of warfighter support such as personnel and rapidly fielded materiel.

Joint Improvised-Threat Defeat Organization Developed Capabilities



The photographs above depict a warfighter using a handheld device to detect improvised explosive devices (IED) (left) and vehicle enhancements to detect and disable IEDs (right).

Source: Defense Threat Reduction Agency. | GAO-18-509

However, GAO identified two challenges to JIDO's efficiency and effectiveness:

- **Unclear responsibilities.** DOD has not clarified which categories of threats JIDO is responsible for countering and what authorities JIDO has for countering them. According to DTRA and JIDO officials, clarifying these issues would help JIDO plan, program, and coordinate its responsibilities.
- **Incomplete information sharing.** JIDO lacks processes to ensure it routinely obtains permission to share research project information and submits it to DOD's designated information sharing repository, as required. As a result, information on less than one-third of JIDO's research projects is included, according to DOD. This limits the ability of other research organizations to leverage JIDO's expertise and increases the risk of redundant or fragmented research.