

GAO Highlights

Highlights of [GAO-15-32](#), a report to congressional addressees

Why GAO Did This Study

Regional BMD constitutes an essential element in deterring enemies from using ballistic missiles and supporting defense commitments to U.S. allies and partners. DOD's 2010 *Ballistic Missile Defense Review Report* noted that the United States would pursue phased, tailored, and adaptive approaches to regional BMD in Europe, the Asia-Pacific region, and the Middle East. A provision in the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year 2014 mandated DOD to submit within 180 days a report to the congressional defense committees on eight elements related to the status and progress of regional BMD programs and efforts. The Joint Explanatory Statement accompanying the NDAA mandated that GAO provide its views on DOD's report. Separately, GAO was requested to provide its results in a written, publicly releasable form.

This report assesses the extent to which DOD's report addressed the required reporting elements and provides views on other key information, if any, that DOD could have included in the report. GAO used a scorecard methodology to compare the required reporting elements to the information in DOD's BMD report. Further, GAO reviewed the 2010 *Ballistic Missile Defense Review Report*, combatant commander integrated priority lists, and other DOD documents and policy, and interviewed DOD officials to gain further insight on DOD's regional BMD efforts.

What GAO Recommends

Because DOD prepared its report in response to a nonrecurring mandate, GAO is not making recommendations.

View [GAO-15-32](#). For more information, contact Joseph W. Kirschbaum at (202) 512-9971 or kirschbaumj@gao.gov.

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REGIONAL MISSILE DEFENSE

DOD's 2014 Report Generally Addressed Required Reporting Elements, but Excluded Additional Key Details

What GAO Found

The Department of Defense's (DOD) June 2014 regional ballistic missile defense (BMD) report addressed five of the eight required reporting elements, and partially addressed the remaining three required reporting elements.

- DOD's report addressed elements relating to a BMD risk assessment, the role that regional missile defenses play in the homeland defense mission, the integration of offensive and defensive capabilities, and two elements on the roles and contributions of allies.
- DOD's report partially addressed the required reporting elements regarding the alignment of regional approaches to missile defense with combatant command-integrated priorities, the concept of operations for the European Phased Adaptive Approach (EPAA), and the testing and development of key EPAA elements.

Additionally, GAO determined that DOD's report did not include key details for some elements that would have benefitted the congressional defense committees' oversight of DOD's regional BMD efforts. Generally accepted research standards for preparing sound and complete defense studies include providing complete, accurate, and relevant information. However, DOD's report does not consistently meet this standard, based on GAO's review. For example, the explanation in DOD's report of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization's transfer of authority process did not include sufficient detail to clearly convey the process. DOD's report also did not include details regarding the combatant commands' requirements, nor did it fully describe issues affecting the testing and development of key regional BMD systems (see fig.). DOD officials told GAO that the report was intended to address each of the eight required reporting elements concisely, that DOD regularly provides more detailed analysis on some of these topics to Congress via periodic briefings, and that they did not want to provide duplicative information in this report. GAO recognizes that judgment is needed in preparing reports to Congress; however, DOD's report did not include details on key BMD assets and risks to the EPAA schedule, which limits the report's utility to the congressional defense committees in their oversight of DOD's regional BMD programs.

Systems That Contribute to Regional Ballistic Missile Defense



SM-3: Standard Missile-3; BMD: Ballistic Missile Defense; AN/TPY-2: Forward-based Army Navy/Transportable Radar; C2BMC: Command, Control, Battle Management, and Communications Center; THAAD: Terminal High Altitude Area Defense

Source: GAO analysis of DOD documents (data); Missile Defense Agency and Air Force (images). | GAO-15-32