
reviews before development start; (2) demonstrate capabilities using competitive prototypes; (3) ensure that appropriate trade-offs among cost, schedule, and performance objectives are considered before development start; and (4) include measures to ensure competition or the option of competition throughout the programs' life cycle in their acquisition strategies. We also assessed a new requirement from the 2008 revision to DOD Instruction 5000.02 for a materiel development decision prior to a program's entry into the acquisition process and two initiatives from DOD's September 2010 better buying power memorandum focusing on affordability and "should cost" targets. Many of these reforms and others depend on increased investments of time and resources at the beginning of the acquisition process and encourage an awareness of cost performance throughout a program's life cycle. Increased funding of technology development can have beneficial effects for acquisition programs if the funds are spent on activities appropriate for that phase, such as prototype demonstrations and systems engineering analysis.

Our analysis of 16 future and 37 current major defense acquisition programs allows us to make three observations concerning DOD's progress in implementing these reforms.

Acquisition Reform Observations

1. Almost all of the future major defense acquisition programs we assessed have implemented or plan to implement acquisition reforms from the Weapon Systems Acquisition Reform Act of 2009; current programs have a mixed record in regards to implementing certification requirements from the act, such as considering appropriate trade-offs among cost, schedule, and performance objectives.
2. Some future programs have not implemented the new DOD policy requirement to hold a materiel development decision, and many future and current programs are still working to implement new initiatives, such as developing affordability targets and conducting "should cost" analysis.
3. The 16 future major defense acquisition programs we assessed are investing more funds before entering system development or production than current major defense acquisition programs, which should reduce their technical risk.

Additional information about these observations follows.

- **Almost all future programs have implemented, or plan to implement, most of the legislative reforms we examined. Current programs have waived several of the newest certification requirements.** The Weapon Systems Acquisition Reform Act of 2009