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**Government Accountability Office-Defense Industrial
Base: Actions Needed to Address Risks Posed by
Dependence on Foreign Suppliers**

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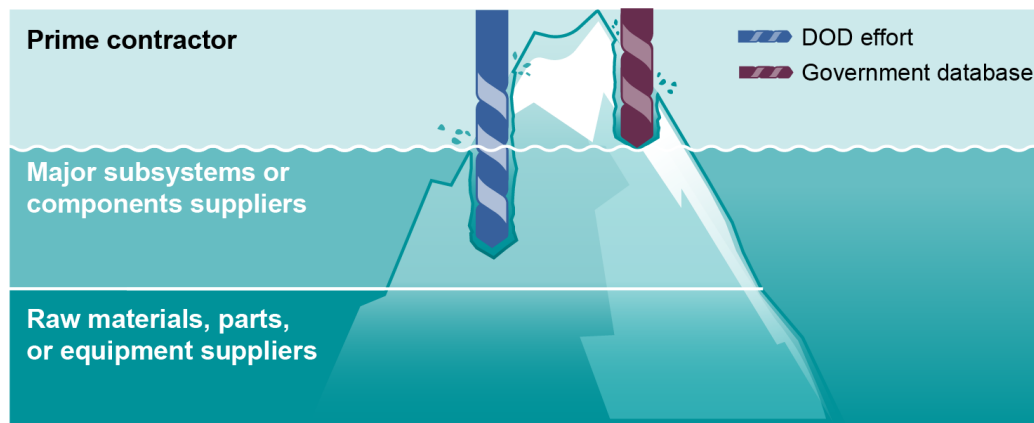
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Background

The January 2024 National Defense Industrial Strategy stated that the Department of Defense’s (DOD’s) dependence on adversarial sources for goods it procures is a mounting national security challenge. These suppliers may cut off U.S. access to critical materials or provide “back doors” in their technology that serve as intelligence pathways.

The Conference Report and a House Report for the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2024 include provisions for the Government Accountability Office (GAO) to report on the DOD’s dependence on foreign entities and its processes for determining whether it is procuring goods from China. This report, among other things, (1) describes the information that government procurement data contains on the country of origin of goods that the DOD procures, and (2) assesses DOD actions to collect additional data.

To conduct this work, the GAO analyzed government procurement data from fiscal years 2020 through 2024, reviewed DOD documents, and interviewed DOD officials and contractor representatives.



Source: GAO depiction of Department of Defense (DOD) information. | GAO-25-107283

Figure 1. GAO Depiction of DOD Information

What the GAO Found

The DOD considers reliance on foreign sources for items it procures a national security risk. The DOD estimates that over 200,000 suppliers help produce advanced weapon systems and noncombat goods. The primary procurement database for the federal government, however, provides little visibility into where these goods are manufactured or whether materials and parts suppliers are domestic or foreign.

The DOD is pursuing several supply chain visibility efforts designed to help improve its ability to identify risks of what it refers to as “foreign dependency.” The DOD has made progress



gathering supplier information for major subsystems and components. However, these efforts are uncoordinated, limited in scope, and provide little insight into the vast majority of suppliers, including those that provide raw materials and parts.

The DOD identified actions it can take to improve its ability to identify and mitigate foreign dependency issues, including

- establishing an office to integrate efforts across the DOD and
- implementing leading commercial practices for supply chain visibility, such as focusing visibility efforts on high-priority programs.

However, the DOD has yet to identify resources, priorities, and time frames for completing the integration. Additionally, it has not identified the organization responsible for implementing the leading commercial practices. Without doing so, the DOD will be less able to identify and address foreign dependency risks.

One untested approach that DOD officials stated could give the DOD more visibility into foreign dependency risks is to contractually require suppliers to provide the information. While some DOD officials assert the information is readily available, others stated this approach may be too costly or that suppliers may not be willing to provide information. Unless the DOD tests the costs and challenges of requiring suppliers to provide foreign dependency information, it could be missing an opportunity to address a mounting challenge to the security of its supply chains.

This is an excerpt from a full-length report. See GAO-25-107283 for additional details, including additional report contributors: [GAO-25-107283, DEFENSE INDUSTRIAL BASE: Actions Needed to Address Risks Posed by Dependence on Foreign Suppliers](#)





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