

The background of the slide is a collage of various US dollar bills, including \$100, \$20, and \$50 denominations, arranged in a somewhat chaotic but overlapping pattern. The bills are rendered in a light, semi-transparent style, allowing the text to stand out clearly.

# **The Upcoming Transition GAO's Efforts to Assist the 111<sup>th</sup> Congress and the Next Administration**

**Gene L. Dodaro  
City College of New York  
Charles B. Rangel Center for  
Public Service  
October 23, 2008**

# Outline

- Brief overview of GAO
- Key objectives for our transition work
- Examples of transition issues to be covered

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# GAO OVERVIEW

# GAO's Mission

GAO exists to support the Congress in carrying out its constitutional responsibilities and to help improve the performance and assure accountability of government for the benefit of the American people

We play a unique, independent and non-partisan “watchdog” role

# SERVING THE CONGRESS AND THE NATION GAO'S STRATEGIC PLAN FRAMEWORK

## MISSION

GAO exists to support the Congress in meeting its constitutional responsibilities and to help improve the performance and ensure the accountability of the federal government for the benefit of the American people.

### THEMES

Changing Security Threats

Sustainability Concerns

Economic Growth & Competitiveness

Global Interdependency

Societal Change

Quality of Life

Science & Technology

### GOALS & OBJECTIVES

Provide Timely, Quality Service to the Congress and the Federal Government to . . .  
. . . Address Current and Emerging Challenges to the Well-being and Financial Security of the American People *related to* . . .

- Health care needs
- Lifelong learning
- Work benefits and protections
- Financial security

- Effective system of justice
- Viable communities
- Natural resources use and environmental protection
- Physical infrastructure

. . . Respond to Changing Security Threats and the Challenges of Global Interdependence *involving* . . .

- Homeland security
- Military capabilities and readiness

- Advancement of U.S. interests
- Global market forces

Help Transform the Federal Government's Role and How It Does Business to Meet 21st Century Challenges *by assessing* . . .

- Roles in achieving federal objectives
- Government transformation

- Key management challenges and program risks
- Fiscal position and financing of the government

Maximize the Value of GAO by Being a Model Federal Agency and a World-Class Professional Services Organization *in the areas of* . . .

- Client and customer satisfaction
- Strategic leadership
- Institutional knowledge and experience

- Process improvement
- Employer of choice

## CORE VALUES

Accountability

Integrity

Reliability

# Demand High for GAO Assistance

- Over 1,200 requests received from Congress in '08
- Over 160 new mandates for GAO reviews were embedded into law
- Provided testimony before Congress over 300 times in FY 2008

# Core Values

## **Accountability**

Help the Congress oversee federal programs, policies, and operations to ensure accountability to the American people

## **Integrity**

Ensure that our work is professional, objective, fact-based, nonpartisan, nonideological, fair, and balanced

## **Reliability**

Provide high-quality, timely, accurate, useful, clear, and candid information

# GAO's Workforce

- 3,100 FTE—75% in D.C., 25% in field
- Workforce consists primarily of analysts, IT specialists, auditors, attorneys, and economists
- GAO has technical chiefs for accounting, actuarial science, economics, statistics, science, and technology
- 80% of GAO's resources spent on people
- We hire people with advanced degrees including public administration and public policy



# Fiscal Year 2008 Performance

Measures	FY 08 Actual
Financial benefits (in billions)	\$57.8
Other benefits	1,398
Testimonies	304
Products with recommendations	66%
Recommendations implemented	83%
Timeliness (based on client feedback)	95%

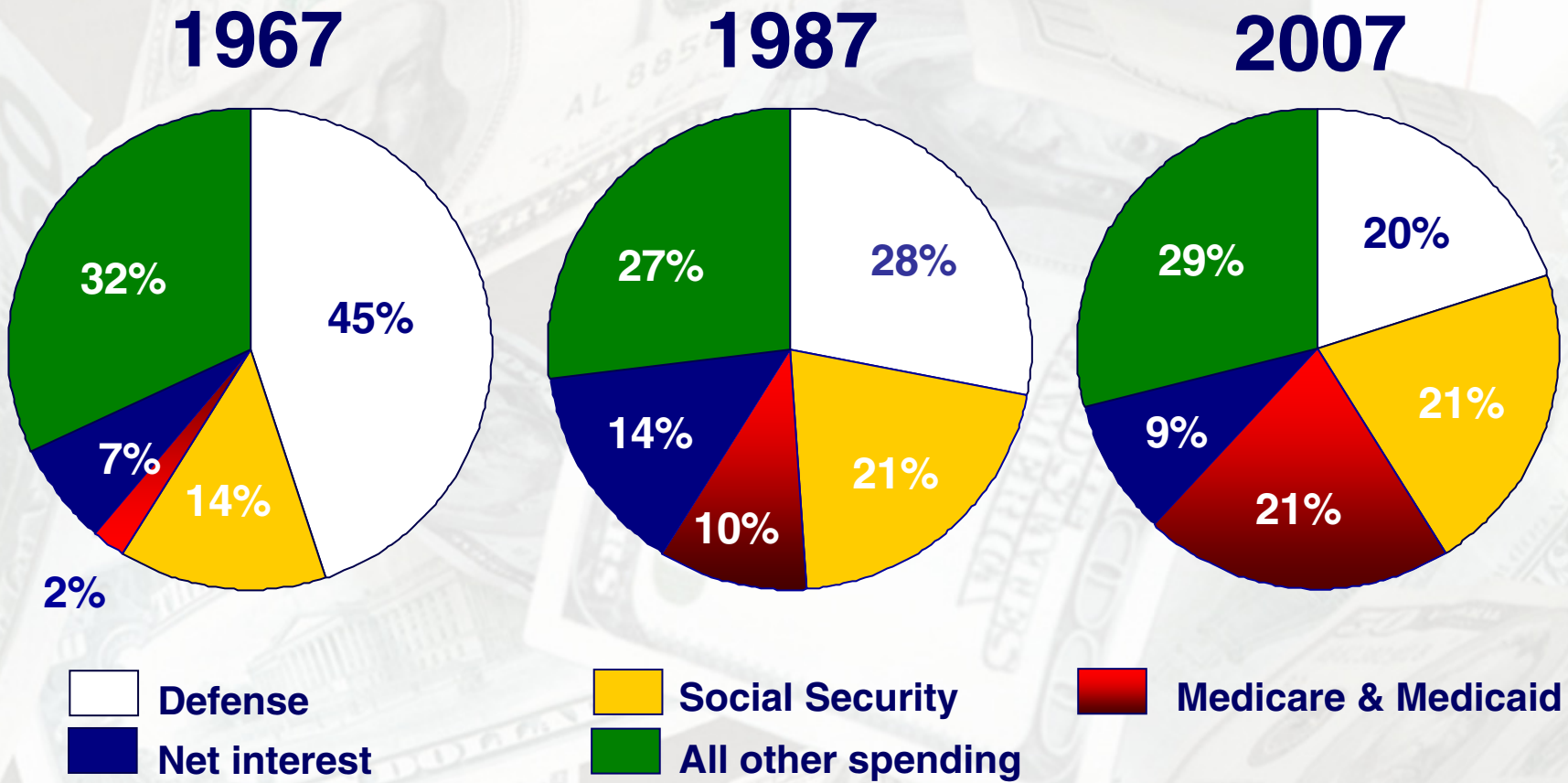
# Near Term: GAO Role in Financial Rescue

- Oversight role critically important in Economic Stabilization Act
- Congress turned to GAO
- Auditors of FDIC, FHFA and government wide statements
- Advice and analysis in reassessing regulatory structure

# Long Term: GAO Simulations on Federal Fiscal Path

- Short term issues require responses
- Long term unsustainable path will ultimately need attention
- Need to reexamine base, reform entitlements and review revenue structures

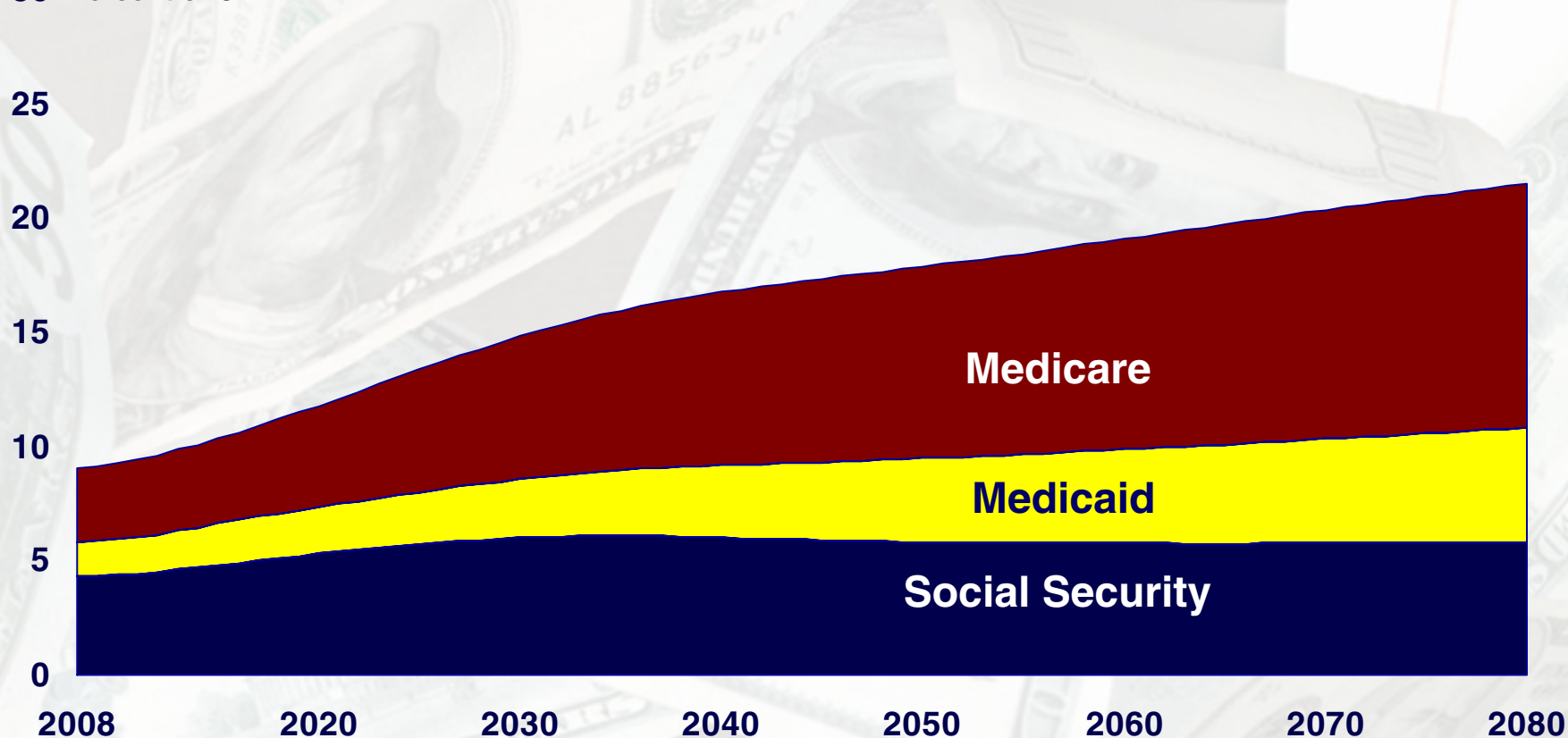
# Composition of Federal Spending



Source: GAO analysis of data from the Office of Management and Budget.

# Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid Spending as a Percent of GDP

30 Percent of GDP



Source: GAO analysis of data from the Office of the Chief Actuary, Social Security Administration, Office of the Actuary, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, and the Congressional Budget Office.

Note: Social Security and Medicare projections based on the intermediate assumptions of the 2008 Trustees' Reports. Medicaid projections based on CBO's January 2008 short-term Medicaid estimates and CBO's December 2007 long-term Medicaid projections adjusted to reflect excess cost growth consistent with the 2008 Trustees intermediate assumptions.

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# TRANSITION OBJECTIVES

# No Ordinary Transition: Dynamics Shaping our Environment

- A nation at war and facing first homeland security change
- Near-term and long-term economic challenges
  - Financial Turmoil
  - Economic Slowdown
  - Long-term fiscal imbalance as backdrop
- Personnel and Performance Challenges

# Presidential Transition Act

- Enacted in 1963 for an orderly transfer of executive power
- Provides for federal funding and disclosures
- Recognizes GAO as important resource



# Transition: GAO Objectives

- Provide insight into pressing national issues
- Highlight the growing need for innovative, integrated approaches to solve national and global challenges
- Document targeted opportunities to conserve resources that can be applied to new initiatives
- Underscore critical capacity-building needs in individual agencies that will affect implementation of whatever new priorities are pursued
- Help inform the management improvement agendas of Congress and the new administration

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# **EXAMPLES OF TRANSITION ISSUES**

# Provide Insight into Pressing National Issues

- Oversight of financial institutions and markets
- US efforts in Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan.
- Protecting the homeland—including
  - Disaster response
  - Cyber critical infrastructures
- Decision on conduct of 2010 census

# Growing Need for Innovative, Integrated Approaches to National and Global Challenges

- Care for servicemembers and veterans
- Strengthening preparedness for large-scale public health emergencies
- Oversight of food safety
- Financing surface transportation infrastructure

# Document Targeted Opportunities to Conserve Resources That Can Be Applied to New Initiatives

- Addressing over \$55 billion in improper payments
- Confronting estimated \$290 billion tax gap
- Managing large scale acquisitions
- Collecting oil and gas royalties

# Underscore Critical Capacity Building Needs

Critical needs in individual agencies will affect policy implementation

- Selection of senior leadership team— leadership skills, abilities, experience
- Build on statutory management framework
  - Strengthen capacity to manage contractors
  - Better manage IT to achieve benefits and control costs
  - Address human capital challenges
  - Strengthen financial management

# Help Inform Management Improvement Agendas of Congress and New Administration

- **High Risk List**

- Started in 1990 with focus on fraud, waste, abuse, and mismanagement
- Evolved to include major economy, efficiency, effectiveness, and transformation challenges
- Updates issued at the start of each new Congress
- Focus from cabinet officers

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## On the Web

Web site: [www.gao.gov/cghome.htm](http://www.gao.gov/cghome.htm)

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## Contact

Chuck Young, Managing Director, Public Affairs  
[YoungC1@gao.gov](mailto:YoungC1@gao.gov) (202) 512-4800  
U.S. Government Accountability Office  
441 G Street NW, Room 7149  
Washington, D.C. 20548

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