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National Security Analysis
Issue Area Plan

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Foreword

As the investigative arm of Congress and the nation's auditor, the General Accounting Office is charged with following the federal dollar wherever it goes. Reflecting stringent standards of objectivity and independence, GAO's audits, evaluations, and investigations promote a more efficient and cost-effective government; expose waste, fraud, and mismanagement in federal programs; help Congress target budget reductions; assess financial information management; and alert Congress to developing trends that may have significant fiscal or budgetary consequences. In fulfilling its responsibilities, GAO performs original research and uses hundreds of databases or creates its own when information is unavailable elsewhere.

To ensure that GAO's resources are directed toward the most important issues facing Congress, each of GAO's 31 issue areas develops a strategic plan that describes the significance of the issues it addresses, its objectives, and the focus of its work. Each issue area relies heavily on input from congressional committees, agency officials, and subject-matter experts in developing its strategic plan.

The National Security Analysis issue area plan covers programs of the Department of Defense (DOD), the individual military services, and other supporting defense agencies. GAO's work in this issue area focuses on major DOD initiatives on strategy implementation, combating terrorism, force structure, budget analysis, and intelligence. Because over 40 federal activities have some role in combating terrorism, our work will necessarily involve a number of agencies in addition to DOD. The principal issues we cover are

- the extent to which DOD's initiatives for implementing the national military strategy result in the efficient and effective allocation of resources,
- the extent to which the crosscutting national policy and strategy to combat terrorism is being efficiently and effectively implemented,
- the efficiency and effectiveness of DOD's existing and planned force structure,
- the extent to which planned defense budgets accurately reflect the projected costs of DOD programs, and
- the extent to which the intelligence community is adequately addressing the changed threat and new requirements.

In the pages that follow, we describe our key planned work on these important issues.

Because events may significantly affect even the best of plans, our planning process allows for updates and the flexibility to respond quickly to emerging issues. If you have any questions or suggestions about this plan, please call me at (202) 512-3504.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Richard Davis".

Richard Davis
Director
National Security Analysis

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Table I: Key Issues

Issue	Significance
Strategy implementation: Do DOD's initiatives to implement the national military strategy ensure efficient and effective allocation of resources?	In May 1997, DOD completed its first Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) of U.S. defense strategy, force structure, and modernization requirements mandated by Congress. As a result of this review, DOD adopted a strategy to shape the strategic environment; respond to threats, including two nearly simultaneous major theater wars and contingency operations; and prepare for potentially more challenging threats from a near-peer competitor that may emerge in the next century or an enemy that uses or threatens to use weapons of mass destruction, information warfare, or terrorism against us. Congress has expressed concerns about whether the QDR reflects a fundamental rethinking of U.S. priorities and defense needs for the post-Cold War era and whether DOD processes and programs place adequate emphasis on joint operations.
Combating terrorism: Is the crosscutting national policy and strategy to combat terrorism being implemented efficiently and effectively?	Presidential Decision Directive 39 (June 1995), issued by the National Security Council, identified terrorism both at home and abroad as a high-priority national security and criminal concern and provided the blueprint for a national strategy to combat terrorism. With more than 40 agencies, bureaus, and offices involved, the need for and complexity of effective leadership and interagency-coordinated operations, and more than \$7 billion in federal funds allocated annually, Congress is concerned about the potential for fragmented program efforts, duplicative and overlapping capabilities and programs, and funding gaps in key areas. Congress is also interested in U.S. cities' preparedness to deal with potential terrorist incidents during which weapons of mass destruction are used.

Table I: Key Issues

Objective	Focus of work
<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Evaluate whether DOD's major initiatives to implement key aspects of the national military strategy and QDR decisions are based on sound assumptions and will result in an efficient and effective allocation of resources.•Assess DOD's analytical processes and tools for conducting requirements reviews and making trade-offs between near-term and longer-term priorities.•Assess DOD's progress in institutionalizing joint thinking and acting in its programs, processes, and procedures.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Reasonableness of analytical framework and key assumptions underpinning DOD assessments of requirements for forward presence, contingency operations, and major theater wars.•Identification of greater efficiencies that maximize force capabilities within expected budgets.•Potential for improving the emphasis on joint operations in DOD's planning and requirements determination.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Assess various federal programs designed to combat terrorism in accordance with legislation and national policy.•Identify approaches for refining and targeting federal investments in programs that combat terrorism.•Explore ways to expand and enhance interagency coordination and cooperation in counterterrorism operations.•Examine industries' and other countries' best practices in combating terrorism.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Clarification of federal agencies' roles and missions; efficiency of program implementation.•Evaluation/assessment of controls to preclude unneeded duplication and overlap among federal agencies' programs and capabilities and programs that can benefit from better threat and risk assessment.•Review of interagency operations, exercises, and deployments to determine strengths and weaknesses and how lessons learned are incorporated into future plans.•Identification of opportunities to enhance U.S. capabilities and approaches to combating terrorism.

(continued)

Table I: Key Issues

Issue	Significance
Force structure: Are DOD's forces organized efficiently and effectively to implement the national military strategy?	Congressional interest and debate continues over the size and composition of U.S. military forces. A primary concern of Congress is that the warfighting "tooth" of the military services has been reduced while the infrastructure "tail" remains robust. Congress is also concerned about the adequacy of DOD's planned force structure to respond to future threats. An issue that is just beginning to attract congressional attention is the potential effect of new technologies and advanced warfighting concepts on future force structure. Efforts to size and organize DOD's forces more efficiently are becoming more important as DOD seeks to modernize its forces and achieve long-term readiness within expected budgets.
Budget analysis: Do budgets for national security programs accurately reflect the projected costs of DOD programs?	There is widespread concern in Congress about the adequacy of funding for defense priorities such as modern weapon systems. DOD plans to fund its modernization program within the defense budget through various means, including reducing its infrastructure. Congress is unsure whether ongoing initiatives will result in the savings needed for modernization.
Intelligence: Is the U.S. intelligence community adequately addressing the changed threat and new requirements?	The United States spends tens of billions of dollars each year on intelligence programs, most of which were developed during the Cold War years. The intelligence community is continuing to undergo major changes because of the changing post-Cold War security environment.

Table I: Key Issues

Objective	Focus of work
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Identify opportunities for achieving savings by organizing forces more efficiently or consolidating key functions shared by more than one service, component, or command. •Evaluate the basis for the services' stated requirements for active military, civilian, and reserve personnel. •Assess efforts to reduce reliance on military forces to perform infrastructure activities. •Assess the adequacy of service support forces. •Assess DOD efforts to modify its planned force structure in light of a changing security environment. •How force structure will be affected by future warfighting concepts being explored by the military services and the Joint Staff. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Potential for consolidating functions among/within services. •Service requirements for active military personnel. •Services progress in developing workload-based requirements for infrastructure personnel. •Consideration of joint warfighting requirements in force planning. •Process and criteria for establishing the active and reserve component mix. •Impact of future technology and doctrine on force organization.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Assess whether DOD's budgets are based on accurate data and sound estimates with lower program and societal costs. •Assess whether DOD's financial plan and budget execution match its priorities. •Identify the trends in DOD's budget and assess the implications of those trends. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Full disclosure of budget assumptions and estimates. •Analysis of defense infrastructure and appropriations accounts. •Comparison of spending plans and stated defense priorities.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Maintain a cadre of staff who can respond to congressional requests as needed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Based on needs of customers.

Table II: Planned Major Work

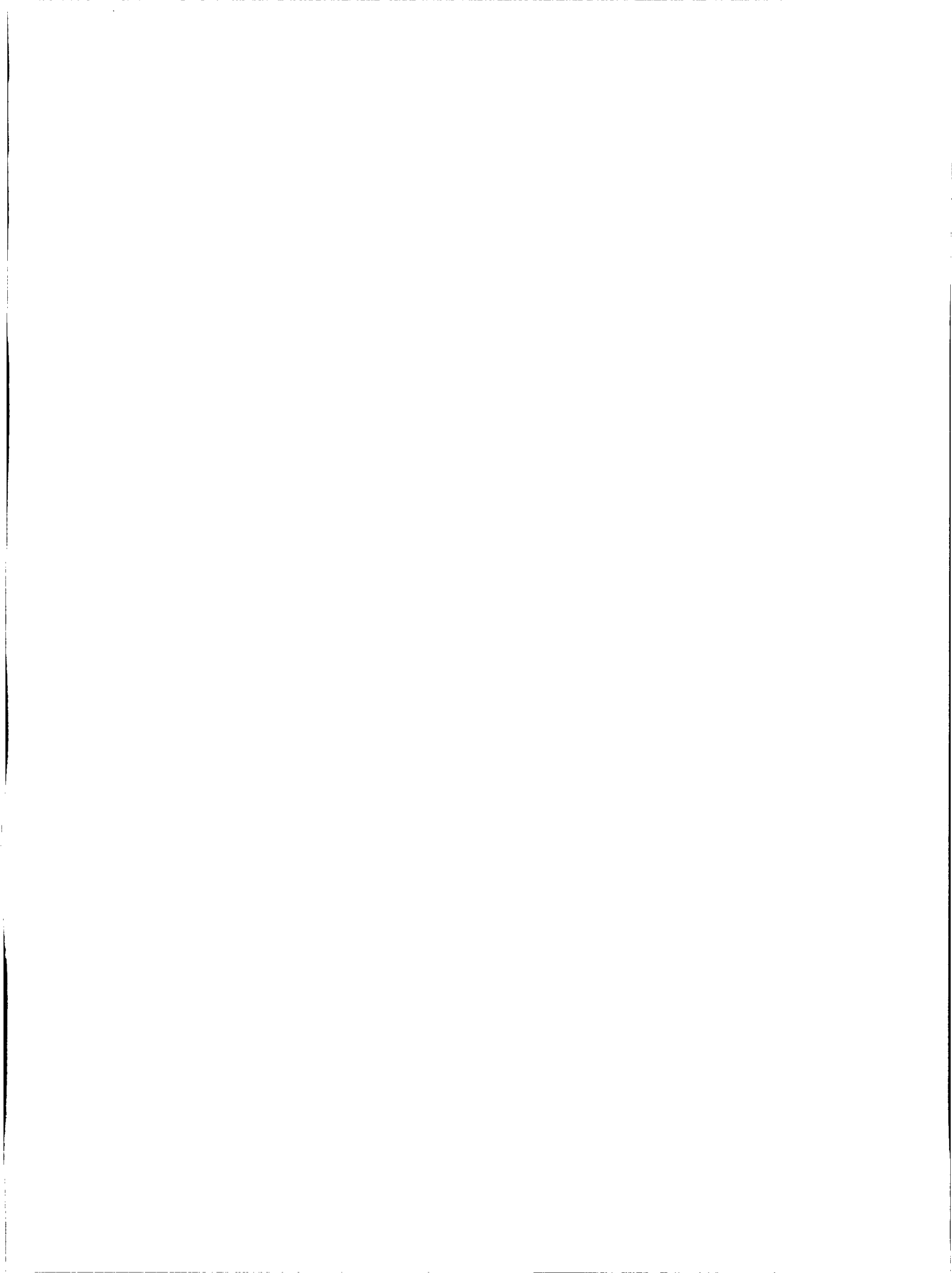
Issue	Planned major job starts
Strategy implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •DOD's counterproliferation program. •QDR's downsizing of defense agencies/activities. •Navy's approach for staffing its ships. •U.S. technological advances and their impact on coalition warfare.
Combating terrorism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Best practices in combating terrorism. •U.S. strategies for critical infrastructure protection. •Counterterrorism and weapons of mass destruction. •Counterterrorism research and development across the government.
Force structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Total army analysis 2005. •Global Naval Force presence policy and its implications. •Joint integrated theater air and missile defense forces. •Navy active and reserve component mix.
Budget analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Operation and maintenance funding for Guard and Reserve forces. •QDR planned savings.^a •Agencies' budgets and expenditures for combating terrorism. •Selected infrastructure activity categories.
Intelligence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Selected intelligence programs as congressional interests dictate.

^aWork is currently ongoing.

Table III: GAO Contacts

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