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Highlights

Highlights of [GAO-03-165](#), a report to Congressional Requesters

Why GAO Did This Study

In response to the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, the federal government has taken unprecedented actions in international diplomacy, law enforcement, intelligence, and military operations. Combating terrorism is now at the top of the national security agenda and significant changes have occurred in the government's organization and spending on these matters. For fiscal year 2004, the President requested \$11.4 billion to combat terrorism overseas.

GAO was asked to develop baseline information on federal agencies' programs and activities to combat terrorism overseas. This report is intended to assist the Congress in its oversight of these efforts. Specifically, this report describes the interagency framework for planning, executing, and coordinating related federal efforts. Additionally, this report identifies and describes the federal programs and activities to detect and prevent terrorism overseas, disrupt and destroy terrorist organizations overseas, and respond to terrorist incidents overseas. Because of the number of agencies and wide spectrum of programs involved in combating terrorism overseas, this informational report does not evaluate program effectiveness.

Several agencies provided comments on a draft of this report and GAO incorporated them, as appropriate, to improve the accuracy of the report.

www.gao.gov/cgi-bin/getrpt?GAO-03-165.

To view the full product, including the scope and methodology, click on the link above. For more information, contact Raymond J. Decker at (202) 512-6020 or deckerrj@gao.gov.

COMBATING TERRORISM

Interagency Framework and Agency Programs to Address the Overseas Threat

What GAO Found

The National Security Council manages an interagency framework to combat terrorism overseas. The President, National Security Council, and federal agencies have published a series of related directives and strategies to guide federal efforts. To implement the directives and strategies, various federal agencies are assigned key roles and responsibilities. Because many agencies are involved, there are several mechanisms to coordinate across agencies. Within this framework, efforts can be divided into three areas:

- **Detect and prevent terrorism:** including efforts to gather intelligence, protect facilities and persons overseas, impact foreign opinion through public diplomacy, prevent terrorists and their materials from entering the United States, and improve other nations' capabilities.
- **Disrupt and destroy terrorist organizations:** includes diplomacy; law enforcement efforts to investigate, arrest, and prosecute terrorists; financial and related measures to eliminate terrorist support; military actions to destroy terrorists and regimes that harbor them; and covert operations by intelligence agencies.
- **Respond to an international terrorist incident:** consists of pre-event preparations, managing the crisis and consequences of an attack, and reviewing incidents for lessons learned.

Aftermath of the August 1998 al Qaeda Terrorist Bombing of the U.S. Embassy in Dar es-Salaam, Tanzania



Source: Department of State.