



One Hundred Twelfth Congress
U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Homeland Security
Washington, DC 20515
June 7, 2012

The Honorable Gene Dodaro
Comptroller General of the United States
U.S. Government Accountability Office
441 G Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20548

Dear Comptroller General Dodaro:

One of our most critical national security goals is disrupting, dismantling, and defeating terrorist organizations that threaten the safety and security of the American people. In the *National Strategy for Counterterrorism* released in June 2011, the Administration has stated that fighting terrorism requires a multi-departmental effort. This whole-of-government approach should harness every element of American power, including not only military power, but law enforcement and intelligence as well.

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) was founded to protect the United States from terrorist threats—which remains its highest priority. The security of the American homeland is linked to international security as vulnerabilities in one part of the world can quickly become security threats in another. In response, since its creation in 2002, DHS has expanded its operational borders so that, according to the Department, America’s “physical borders become our last line of defense and not our first.” While these activities may play an important role in U.S. strategy to combat terrorism, the Subcommittee is concerned that DHS’s international counterterrorism activities and expertise may not be properly accounted for, coordinated with other agencies, and targeted toward advancing U.S. counterterrorism interests abroad.

To this end, we request that GAO undertake a review of DHS’ international counterterrorism activities that would address the following questions:

1. What are DHS and its components—including the Office of International Affairs’-- roles, responsibilities, and authorities to combat terrorism overseas?
2. What resources (e.g. staff, program funding, etc.) have DHS and its components devoted to achieving U.S. goals related to combating terrorism overseas?

3. To what extent do DHS and its components allocate resources to overseas counterterrorism efforts to align with DHS and U.S.-government wide counterterrorism goals and priorities?
4. To what extent are U.S. embassies utilizing the unique knowledge and skills of DHS staff posted overseas?

Thank you for your immediate attention to this critical issue of national security. If you have any questions concerning this request, please contact Dr. R. Nicholas Palarino, staff director for the Subcommittee on Oversight, Investigations, and Management, at 202-226-8417.

Sincerely,



Michael T. McCaul
Chairman
Subcommittee on Oversight, Investigations, and Management