



Highlights of [GAO-05-852](#), a report to congressional requesters

### Why GAO Did This Study

U.S. government and other experts have reported that Islamic extremism is on the rise and that the spread of Islamic extremism is the pre-eminent threat facing the United States. In addition, various sources alleged that Saudi Arabia is one source that has supported and funded the spread of Islamic extremism globally.

GAO was asked to determine (1) what efforts U.S. government agencies are implementing to identify, monitor, and counter support and funding for the global propagation of Islamic extremism, particularly support and funding originating in Saudi Arabia; (2) what U.S. agencies and other entities have reported regarding support and funding for the global propagation of Islamic extremism, particularly any provided by Saudi sources (private entities, individuals, and the Saudi government), as well as sources in other countries; and (3) what efforts the Saudi government has taken to address Islamic extremism.

GAO submitted this report to the intelligence agencies, the Departments of Defense (DOD), State, and the Treasury, and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) for their review and comment. The agencies had no formal comments, and their technical comments were incorporated, as appropriate.

[www.gao.gov/cgi-bin/getrpt?GAO-05-852](http://www.gao.gov/cgi-bin/getrpt?GAO-05-852).

To view the full product, including the scope and methodology, click on the link above. For more information, contact Jess T. Ford at (202) 512-4268 or at [fordj@gao.gov](mailto:fordj@gao.gov).

## INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

# Information on U.S. Agencies' Efforts to Address Islamic Extremism

### What GAO Found

The intelligence agencies, DOD, State, and USAID are implementing various efforts to identify, monitor, and counter the support and funding of the global propagation of Islamic extremism. The intelligence agencies and DOD are carrying out identification and monitoring efforts, primarily in counterintelligence and force protection. State and USAID are carrying out efforts to counter the global propagation of Islamic extremism, with State's efforts focused primarily on traditional diplomacy, counterterrorism, and public diplomacy and USAID's efforts focused on development programs to diminish underlying conditions of extremism. We are preparing a classified report, to be subsequently released, with a more complete description of U.S. efforts to address the global spread of Islamic extremism.

#### Examples of Agencies' Efforts to Address Islamic Extremism

Agency	Efforts to address Islamic extremism
DOD	Collection and All-Source Analysis by Air Force Office of Special Investigations: collects, analyzes, and disseminates threat information on Islamic extremism and provides threat notifications that could negatively impact the protection of U.S. Air Force personnel and resources worldwide.
State	Terrorist Exclusion List: places entities such as al Manar, the media arm of Hezbollah, on the terrorist exclusion list to help curb the propagation of Islamic extremism.
State and USAID	South Asia Regional Program: intends to address the root causes of extremism through education, democracy, economic cooperation and development, and conflict mitigation projects.

Sources: DOD, State, and USAID.

A number of sources have reported that Saudi private entities and individuals, as well as sources from other countries, are allegedly financing or supporting Islamic extremism. For example, in July 2005, a Treasury official testified before Congress that Saudi Arabia-based and -funded organizations remain a key source for the promotion of ideologies used by terrorists and violent extremists around the world to justify their agenda. However, according to the 9/11 Commission Report, the Commission found no persuasive evidence that the Saudi government knowingly supported al Qaeda. The agencies also told GAO that Islamic extremism is being propagated by sources in countries other than Saudi Arabia, such as Iran, Kuwait, and Syria. The agencies are still examining Saudi Arabia's relationship, and that of other sources in other countries, to Islamic extremism.

The Saudi government has announced and, in some cases, undertaken some reform efforts to address Islamic extremism. For example, the government is undertaking educational and religious reforms, including revising textbooks and conducting a 3-year enlightenment program, to purge extremism and intolerance from religious education. However, U.S. agencies do not know the extent of the Saudi government's efforts to limit the activities of Saudi sources that have allegedly propagated Islamic extremism outside of Saudi Arabia.