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Highlights

Highlights of [GAO-06-850](#), a report to congressional requesters

Why GAO Did This Study

Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia are important U.S. allies in the war on terrorism. The United States provides these countries with security assistance, however, Congress restricts funding when credible evidence exists that foreign security units have committed gross human rights violations. GAO (1) describes the goals of U.S. security assistance to these countries and examines U.S. agencies' assessment of this assistance, (2) assesses U.S. agencies' implementation in Morocco and Tunisia of State's policy to screen foreign security forces to ensure compliance with congressional human rights funding restrictions, and (3) examines agencies' efforts to monitor the use of U.S.-origin defense articles provided through U.S. security assistance programs in the three countries, including Western Sahara, to ensure that they are not misused or diverted. GAO visited U.S. posts in Morocco and Tunisia and analyzed trainee files to determine compliance with human rights vetting policy.

What GAO Recommends

GAO recommends that the Secretary of State, in consultation with the Secretary of Defense, strengthen the process for human rights vetting of foreign security forces by establishing a systematic monitoring mechanism that will ensure that State's vetting procedures are carried out at overseas posts. State concurred with our recommendations.

www.gao.gov/cgi-bin/getrpt?GAO-06-850.

To view the full product, including the scope and methodology, click on the link above. For more information, contact Joseph Christoff at (202) 512-8979 or christoffj@gao.gov.

SECURITY ASSISTANCE

Lapses in Human Rights Screening in North African Countries Indicate Need for Further Oversight

What GAO Found

The goals of the U.S. security assistance programs in Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia are to support counterterrorism and broader security cooperation goals, such as maintaining regional stability and security, building the military capacity of foreign partners, and promoting interoperability with U.S. forces. To support these goals, the Departments of State (State) and Defense (DOD) have allocated approximately \$146.6 million, from fiscal years 2002 to 2005, to train and equip security forces in these countries. DOD and State assess these programs together with other related activities through evaluations of security cooperation, counterterrorism, and other country goals.

State policy requires human rights vetting of individuals and units of foreign security forces receiving U.S.-provided training. In Morocco and Tunisia, GAO found lapses in the vetting of trainees during fiscal years 2004 and 2005. These lapses include more than 400 trainees for whom no vetting files existed at the posts. In addition, even though posts maintained vetting files on 468 trainees, GAO estimates that 27 percent of these files did not have evidence of vetting. The lapses in vetting trainees resulted from unclear guidance on vetting procedures, undefined roles and responsibilities for vetting, and the lack of a systematic monitoring mechanism to ensure that procedures were followed. Although State has issued a guide to clarify procedures and has required posts to assign an official responsible for vetting, it does not monitor whether posts are following vetting procedures.

Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia do not have any sensitive U.S.-origin defense articles subject to DOD's systematic monitoring requirements, such as physical inventory and inspection requirements. According to DOD officials and human rights organizations, no allegations of unauthorized use of U.S.-origin equipment have been made that would call for greater scrutiny of end use by these countries.

The United States Provides Excess Defense Articles to Morocco and Tunisia



Source: DOD.