

January 1999

# Major Management Challenges and Program Risks

Department of State



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**United States  
General Accounting Office  
Washington, D.C. 20548**

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**Comptroller General  
of the United States**

January 1999

The President of the Senate

The Speaker of the House of Representatives

This report addresses the major performance and management challenges that have hampered the effectiveness of the Department of State in carrying out its mission. The key to meeting these challenges is for State to adopt good management practices and correct the weaknesses in its information and financial management systems. GAO outlines actions that State has taken or initiated to address the challenges it faces and further actions that are needed.

The Department has made progress in addressing many of the challenges GAO has identified. State is now devoting substantial resources to developing a strategy to enhance its information technology capacity and security as well as its financial management systems. In fact, State received an unqualified opinion on its most recent financial statements. It has also developed a plan and strategy to improve embassy security. This is important because the Department faces significant challenges, particularly in (1) providing security for its overseas operations and employees and (2) consolidating key foreign affairs activities as directed by the Congress. Sustained top-level management attention to these challenges is critical. Given the nature and extent of the challenges facing the Department, it will take time to assess the impact of these efforts.

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This report is part of a special series entitled the Performance and Accountability Series: Major Management Challenges and Program Risks. The series contains separate reports on 20 agencies—one on each of the cabinet departments and on most major independent agencies as well as the U. S. Postal Service. The series also includes a governmentwide report that draws from the agency-specific reports to identify the performance and management challenges requiring attention across the federal government. As a companion volume to this series, GAO is issuing an update to those government operations and programs that its work has identified as “high risk” because of their greater vulnerabilities to waste, fraud, abuse, and mismanagement. High-risk government operations are also identified and discussed in detail in the appropriate performance and accountability series agency reports.

The performance and accountability series was done at the request of the Majority Leader of the House of Representatives, Dick Arme; the Chairman of the House Government Reform Committee, Dan Burton; the Chairman of the House Budget Committee, John Kasich; the Chairman of the Senate Committee on Governmental Affairs, Fred Thompson; the Chairman of the Senate Budget Committee, Pete Domenici; and Senator Larry Craig. The series was subsequently cosponsored by the Ranking Minority Member of the House Government Reform Committee, Henry A. Waxman; the Ranking Minority Member, Subcommittee on Government Management, Information and Technology, House

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Government Reform Committee, Dennis J. Kucinich;  
Senator Joseph I. Lieberman; and Senator Carl Levin.

Copies of this report series are being sent to the President, the congressional leadership, all other Members of the Congress, the Director of the Office of Management and Budget, the Secretary of State, and the heads of other major departments and agencies.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "D.M. Walker", with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

David M. Walker  
Comptroller General of  
the United States

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# Overview

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As the lead agency for the conduct of foreign affairs, the Department of State has enormous responsibilities as it works to shape a more secure, prosperous, and democratic world for the benefit of the American people. A substantial amount of State's nearly \$2.7 billion annual budget for the administration of foreign affairs is spent on what could be called "business" functions that support its broad mission. The Department has a worldwide network of operations to maintain its headquarters and more than 250 overseas posts, as well as about 35 other U.S. agencies that operate overseas. State provides security for thousands of U.S. personnel and facilities abroad. In addition, State operates a network of communications facilities around the globe that are critical to its foreign affairs mission.

In carrying out its important mission, the Department of State faces a number of significant performance and management challenges that, if not met, could affect its ability to function effectively in the 21st century. These challenges are not simple: They cover a wide spectrum of State operations and responsibilities around the world.



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## The Challenges

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### Enhancing the Management of Security Programs for Overseas Personnel and Property

In the wake of the bombing of the U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania, the Congress provided State \$1.45 billion in emergency funding in the Omnibus Consolidated and Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Act for Fiscal Year 1999 (P.L. 105-277) to enhance security around the world. This includes funds for an immediate response to the bombings such as medical treatment, counterterrorism programs and rewards, and economic assistance, as well as funds to rebuild the embassies in Kenya and Tanzania. In addition, State will likely request several billion dollars in funds for new capital construction in the upcoming years. State will face several management challenges in administering an expanded security construction program, including whether it can bring on board the appropriate amount of staff to plan and manage a large number of overseas construction projects.

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### Improving Information and Financial Management Systems

We have reported that the Department of State relied on outdated and unsecured information and financial management systems that are vulnerable to Year 2000

problems and security breaches. State estimated in 1997 that it would need \$2.7 billion over 5 years to achieve a modernized global infrastructure. However, this estimate was not prepared through the rigorous analytical process called for in federal guidance designed to control costs and improve efficiency. State has since taken steps to improve its information security and adopted an improved approach to addressing its Year 2000 problems. It has also begun to incorporate a comprehensive capital planning and investment process into its information technology (IT) investments. However, State needs to ensure that it remediates on a timely basis its mission-critical systems.

In the financial management area, State received, for the first time, an unqualified opinion on its fiscal year 1997 financial statements. This achievement provides State with a foundation from which it can move toward being able to more routinely produce the timely and reliable financial information that is critical to making sound decisions that promote effective and efficient use of federal funds. To reach this goal, State needs to continue to bring its systems into full compliance with federal accounting and information management requirements.

State also must work on solving related internal control weaknesses if it is to adequately protect its assets and have timely, reliable data for cost-based decisionmaking, reporting, and performance management.

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Effectively Managing  
the Visa Process

State processes more than 8 million immigrant and nonimmigrant visa applications annually. State's own internal assessments have categorized this process as being materially deficient due to unfilled computer systems needs, insufficient staffing overseas, and inadequate interagency coordination, which have weakened management controls. To reduce the program's vulnerability to fraud, State has put a number of controls in place to prevent unqualified individuals from receiving a visa, including a special computerized logarithmic name-checking capability and an anti-terrorism tip-off program.

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Effectively  
Reorganizing  
Foreign Affairs  
Agencies

In a major effort to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of U.S. foreign affairs operations, the Congress directed the abolishment of the U.S. Information Agency (USIA) and the U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency (ACDA) and the transfer of those functions into State. A key issue is

whether State can integrate these agencies in a manner that reduces overall costs while enhancing capability.

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**Progress and  
Next Steps**

State is making progress in addressing these issues. For example, it is devoting substantial resources toward formulating a strategy and establishing priorities for enhancing overseas security. It has established a new Bureau of Information Resource Management to focus exclusively on IT requirements and received an unqualified opinion on its financial statements; implemented a new overseas support services system to better allocate costs among various user agencies; installed machine-readable visa systems to reduce the possibility of fraud and abuse; and established a task force to address agency consolidation issues. State has also completed strategic and annual performance plans under the Government Performance and Results Act of 1993. In addition, State has assembled a new management team to direct many of these initiatives.

These are clearly steps in the right direction. However, more needs to be done to create a well-tuned platform for conducting foreign affairs. Achieving this goal will require the

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## Overview

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State Department to make a strong commitment to management improvement, modernization, and “cost-based” decisionmaking. A prerequisite to management improvement is a better financial management system that produces accurate and more timely information. The Results Act process can serve as an important tool to help State overcome the problems and issues we have cited and identify opportunities to improve the efficiency of its business operations and measure performance.

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# Major Performance and Management Issues

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The Department of State is vested with a wide range of responsibilities, including formulating U.S. policy on diverse international issues, coordinating and supporting U.S. agencies' programs and activities overseas, influencing other countries to adopt policies and practices consistent with U.S. interests, assisting U.S. businesses overseas, providing services to U.S. citizens abroad, and issuing passports and visas. To carry out its responsibilities, State has about 23,000 employees. It also maintains more than 13,000 overseas buildings and other facilities that are used to support its operations and the operations of several thousand employees of other U.S. government agencies overseas. State's budget for the administration of foreign affairs totaled \$2.77 billion in fiscal year 1998 and is funded at \$2.68 billion in fiscal year 1999.<sup>1</sup> State's annual budget for the administration of foreign affairs supports its headquarters and other domestic offices, embassies, and consulates at more than 250 overseas posts.

In our past and ongoing work, we, have identified several problems with State's management and performance. This report

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<sup>1</sup>State also received \$1.45 billion in emergency funds for overseas security under the fiscal year 1999 omnibus appropriations act.

summarizes our recent and ongoing work concerning the challenges and issues State faces in providing enhanced overseas security, upgrading its information systems, strengthening financial and accounting controls, enhancing controls over the issuance of visas, integrating other foreign affairs agencies' functions into the Department, and improving its strategic and performance planning.

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**Enhancing the  
Management of  
Security  
Programs for  
Overseas  
Personnel and  
Property**

The need to adequately protect employees and their families overseas may very well be the single most important management issue currently facing the State Department. The acts of terrorism in Kenya and Tanzania claimed more than 260 lives and injured thousands in August 1998. Worldwide, several embassies found themselves either shut down or unable to provide normal services because of threatening situations. The monetary requirements for undertaking security enhancements will be significant, as will the management and technological challenges. The \$1.45 billion that State received in emergency funding will be used to rebuild the embassies in Kenya and Tanzania, relocate other embassies, and improve security for other facilities serving U.S. personnel worldwide. State reports that

it has completed security surveys of over 200 posts and formulated 6 internal working groups to direct and track program implementation. One initiative will require the accounting system to accumulate spending data on areas such as equipment acquisition and construction. State is also identifying the management infrastructure upgrades and modifications that will be required, including contract specifications, office space needed, and new personnel recruitment.

State is also assessing its longer term security enhancement needs, and preliminary estimates indicate that several billion dollars may be requested for additional embassy construction. A key issue facing State is whether it will have the capacity to implement a major security construction program. In the early 1990s, we reported that State encountered several management problems in using the \$1.47 billion in funds that were applied to the diplomatic security construction program during fiscal years 1986-95. These management problems were related to inadequate staffing, poor program planning, difficulties in site acquisition, changes in security requirements, and inadequate contractor performance. All of these directly



contributed to significant delays and cost increases in the majority of State's construction projects. For example, inadequate coordination within State in determining building requirements contributed to millions of dollars in cost increases in a project in Pretoria, South Africa. A lack of agreement within State on potential building sites delayed projects in Bogota, Colombia, and Tunis, Tunisia, for several years and substantially increased costs. State has undertaken a number of efforts to improve construction programs, including the development of a 5-year program planning process laying out capital construction funding requirements and programs to review design schemes in terms of cost-effectiveness and to reduce the number of changes in project scope and schedule during project execution. Nevertheless, the scope of the problems encountered indicated that State had systemic weaknesses in its program management.

In view of State's prior experiences and difficulties in implementing the security construction program, several questions and issues need to be addressed as part of today's efforts to formulate strategies for enhancing security.

- What would be the total costs to bring overseas posts into compliance with current security standards?
- What actions would State need to take to ensure it has the management capability to implement a large-scale construction program?
- Are there adequate control mechanisms to ensure efficient and effective use of emergency funds and any subsequent funding for overseas security?

One issue that should be considered in addressing future security requirements is the sheer number of U.S. employees overseas. The security burden is directly associated with the size of the overseas workforce. In our work on overseas staffing issues in the mid-1990s, we noted that the U.S. government (excluding military operational commands) employed a total of nearly 38,000 personnel overseas—split evenly between U.S. direct hire employees and foreign national employees. An important trend has been the increase in the number of overseas U.S. direct hires by the non-foreign affairs agencies. A broad examination of how the U.S. government carries out its overseas role and related missions may now be needed in view of the increased security threats. State needs to

take the lead in working with other agencies operating overseas to examine their overseas staffing requirements and explore alternatives to stationing Americans overseas.

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**Improving  
Information  
Management  
Systems**

State's information resource management (IRM) infrastructure has historically been inadequate to support the Department's core foreign policy and administrative functions. State officials have recognized that deficiencies exist. The Department is spending hundreds of millions of dollars each year on information resource management, including \$100 million to \$150 million to modernize its IT hardware and software systems, remediate Year 2000 problems, implement a comprehensive information security program, and upgrade its overall IT capability. These initiatives have received top-level management support in recent months as evidenced by the

appointment of a permanent Chief Information Officer (CIO), and a deputy CIO for architecture and planning, the creation of a Deputy CIO position for the Year 2000 issue, and the assignment of information system security issues to the Deputy CIO for Operations. Safeguarding State's IT investments will require sustained management commitment and proper execution to provide adequate assurance that critical operations and assets are protected from disruption, loss, and inappropriate disclosure and that the sizable investments in modernization will lead to effective information systems.

In 1997, State introduced a long-range plan to upgrade and operate its IT infrastructure at an estimated cost of \$2.7 billion over 5 years. This estimate was very speculative because not all costs required to complete the plan were included, such as consular IT operating costs, and some costs had changed, such as bandwidth requirements and capital replacement needs. Furthermore, these plans were developed without the benefit of full implementation of the planning and investment process called for by federal guidance. This guidance is found

in law,<sup>2</sup> GAO documents,<sup>3</sup> and instructions from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB)<sup>4</sup> that were developed to help agencies avoid costly IT modernization mistakes.

To address these shortcomings, we recommended that State make the full implementation of an IT planning and investment process a top priority. This should include preparing a validated IT architecture to help guide the modernization, establishing a fully functioning technical review board, revising State's long-range plans and cost estimates, and identifying potential cost savings and efficiencies expected from the modernization effort. State's CIO recently has taken a number of steps to implement our recommendations. These include drafting an IRM vision paper that will serve as a basis for revising the strategic and tactical plans, and related cost estimates; finalizing a high-level IT architecture; implementing a departmentwide capital planning process in conformance with new OMB A-11 guidance;

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<sup>2</sup>The 1995 Paperwork Reduction Act (P.L. 104-13, 109 Stat. 163), and the 1996 Clinger-Cohen Act (P.L. 104-106, 110 Stat. 679).

<sup>3</sup>Assessing Risks and Returns: A Guide for Evaluating Federal Agencies' IT Investment Decisionmaking (GAO/AIMD-10.1.13, February 1997).

<sup>4</sup>Capital Programming Guide (Washington, D.C.: OMB, July 1997).

and reconstituting the technical review board.

State has been slow in addressing Year 2000 issues. Failure to address Year 2000 deficiencies could have a significant impact on State's ability to perform key functions, including identifying visa applicants who may pose a threat to the nation's security; sending and receiving vital communications; establishing secure information systems; providing efficient, flexible, and timely national security reporting; and promoting U.S. business opportunities abroad.

We reported in August 1998 that if State continued its current approach, which lacked a mission-based perspective, it would risk spending time and resources fixing systems that have little bearing on its overall mission. We recommended that State reassess its systems using a mission-based approach and ensure that systems identified as supporting critical business functions receive priority attention and resources. We also recommended that State ensure that contingency planning efforts focus on core business functions and supporting systems and that interfaces with other entities be identified and corrected. State generally agreed with these recommendations and has

since prioritized its mission-critical applications and adopted an improved approach.

In its November 1998 quarterly report, OMB categorized State as a “tier 1” agency, meaning that State was not making sufficient progress. However, recent data suggests that State is beginning to make progress in remediating systems that have been determined to be mission-critical. State had remediated 32 percent of its 38 noncompliant mission-critical applications as of January 1999. It expects that 92 percent will be implemented by March 31, 1999; two of the remaining three systems are expected to be ready in April 1999 and the last system is expected in August 1999.

Our 1997 evaluation of State’s information security program showed that it lacked key elements such as routine assessments of risk, complete written policies, and procedures for testing system controls. Our tests showed that State’s unclassified but sensitive systems, and the information contained within them, are vulnerable to unauthorized access. Also, the Department’s December 1997 report on internal controls, prepared under the Federal Managers’ Financial Integrity Act of 1982, and the State

Inspector General's audit report on State's 1997 consolidated financial statements,<sup>5</sup> cited the information system security as a material weakness. Such vulnerabilities could be exploited by individuals or organizations seeking to damage State's operations, commit terrorism, or obtain financial data.

We recommended that State implement a number of corrective measures, including establishing a central information security unit and adopting risk-based IT security management techniques. State concurred with the majority of our recommendations and has taken steps to improve information security, such as establishing a central IT security unit and Department-level information systems security officer, preparing new management guidance on IT security, and increasing IT security awareness activities.

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<sup>5</sup>Audit of U.S. Department of State's 1997 Consolidated Financial Statements, Office of Inspector General Audit Report 99-FM-003 (Washington, D.C., Nov. 10, 1998).



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**Improving  
Financial  
Management  
Systems**

One of State's long-standing shortcomings has been the absence of an effective financial management system that can assist managers in making "cost-based" decisions. Recently, and for the first time, the Department of State received an unqualified audit opinion on its Departmentwide financial statements for fiscal year 1997. This achievement represents a good step forward and provides the Department a foundation on which to build the capacity to produce, on a more routine basis, the accurate and timely financial management information critical to making sound decisions that promote effective and efficient use of federal

funds. However, State must fulfill the expanded OMB governmentwide reporting requirements for fiscal year 1998 financial statements and provide audited statements to OMB by March 1, 1999.

In its efforts to improve the Department's overall financial management operations to a point that accurate and timely information is easily accessible, enabling managers to make "cost-based" decisions on a routine basis, State must continue its efforts to strengthen its financial management system. For example, in the recently issued audit report on State's fiscal year 1997 financial statements, the Department's Inspector General disclosed that State's systems were out of compliance with certain requirements, including some requirements of the Federal Financial Management Improvement Act of 1996. The Inspector General reported that (1) the Department's existing financial management systems did not substantially comply with the financial management system requirements designed to ensure that all automated information systems are appropriately safeguarded; (2) the Department had not established a complete contingency/business recovery plan for its financial system; and (3) several inadequacies in the Department's internal

controls, including inaccurate unliquidated obligations, unreconciled general ledger balances, and financial statement balances derived from other than the general ledger, still needed to be corrected. The Inspector General concluded that the problems identified in the report reduced the Department's ability to produce accurate, consistent, and timely financial management information and therefore diminished its ability to carry out its fiduciary responsibility.

In response to the audit findings, State has indicated that it is in the process of establishing a contract to study the level of compliance with the Federal Financial Management Improvement Act. State will use the results of the study to prepare a remediation plan as required by the act. The Department also stated that additional reports and procedures are being put into place to address the internal control weaknesses identified during the most recent audit. State recently noted that it has efforts underway to improve its financial management systems, including upgrading its central financial management system, having one system for regional disbursing and accounts reporting, and developing standard financial capabilities for its

overseas posts. In its 1997 Federal Managers' Financial Integrity Act report, State reported that it has corrected material weaknesses in the areas of receivables and travel advances.

To better manage and allocate overseas support costs, State has also implemented the International Cooperative Administrative Support Services (ICASS) system. Under ICASS, greater responsibility and authority for managing resources and making decisions about administrative support services shared with other agencies located at diplomatic missions have been delegated to the overseas posts. The stakes are high—initial ICASS reports indicate that shared administrative costs are about \$640 million annually. ICASS has been separately audited and received a clean opinion. ICASS is now generating new and more reliable cost data; the key question that remains to be answered is whether State can effectively use the system to consolidate resources and reduce overseas support costs.

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**Effectively  
Managing the Visa  
Process**

The Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) estimated that as of October 1996, 5 million illegal aliens were residing in the United States. While not the primary source of illegal immigration, visa fraud is a significant matter of concern. State's consular officers at overseas posts are responsible for providing expeditious visa processing for qualified applicants. At the same time, they must prevent the entry of those who are a danger to U.S. security interests or are likely to remain in the United States illegally. Last year, over 7 million aliens applied for nonimmigrant visas, and 640,000 foreigners immigrated to the United States. Visa processing is a particular

problem for some overseas locations where volume and/or security concerns are high.

State has introduced new technologies, equipment, and controls designed to improve visa processing and reduce the incidence of fraud. State notes that progress has been made in several areas, including installation of machine-readable visa systems at all visa-issuing posts; online connectivity to Washington, D.C., databases; and implementation of a first phase of a State-INS data-share program. Many improvements were made possible through State's temporary authority to retain fees charged foreigners applying for nonimmigrant visas. Those fees generated millions of dollars, enabling the Department of State to invest in border security technology and to pay the salaries of nearly 2,000 employees.

State will need to remain vigilant in a number of areas to further reduce the vulnerability of the visa system to fraud and abuse. These issues include (1) critical staffing gaps in overseas consular positions; (2) limitations in consular automated systems; (3) restrictions in the exchange of intelligence information with INS and other law enforcement agencies; and (4) weaknesses in the integrity of immigrant

and nonimmigrant documentation, including the computerized systems used to produce them. The Department must also continue its efforts to encourage consular sections to implement best practices designed to streamline and rationalize the visa workload. Potential best practices include using travel agents for initial processing, establishing appointment systems to control workload, and allowing the payment of visa fees at a bank or other financial institution. In view of the increased international terrorist threats, continued attention to State's progress in addressing these issues will be needed.

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**Effectively  
Reorganizing  
Foreign Affairs  
Agencies**

The long-planned reorganization of the government's foreign affairs agencies is under way. In April 1997, the White House announced a plan to put matters of international arms control, public diplomacy, and other functions within a "reinvented" State Department. In October 1998, the

Congress authorized the reorganization, which abolished USIA and ACDA and consolidated and integrated those functions into State. The reorganization is intended to reinvigorate the foreign affairs functions of the United States within the State Department. About 3,000 employees of ACDA and USIA will be integrated into State. Potential areas identified for integration among the three agencies include legal affairs, congressional liaison, press and public affairs, and management. Central management functions that are to be integrated include IRM, overseas facilities and operations, logistics, diplomatic security, financial management, and human resources. State has recently submitted a report to the Congress describing its reorganization strategy.

State has indicated that during the transition, costs would likely increase because of the need to implement system conversions and transfers; in the longer term, overall staffing and costs may decrease. State faces several challenges in achieving the objectives of this reorganization. One major challenge is the technological difficulty of uniting the agencies, including integrating separate electronic mail and computer systems. Overall issues include whether the



reorganization will actually produce identifiable efficiencies and improved performance in foreign affairs programming. As our prior work has indicated, many of the areas targeted for management consolidation need substantial reform.

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**Strengthening  
Strategic and  
Performance  
Planning**

State needs to strengthen its strategic and performance planning as part of its overall efforts to improve management. In its first strategic plan for foreign affairs, State formulated 16 foreign policy goals that cover a wide spectrum of U.S. national interests—national security, economic prosperity, American citizens and U.S. borders, law enforcement, democracy, humanitarian response, and global issues. Our review of that plan and the Department’s annual performance plan for 1999 indicated that State’s plans had their strong points but often fell short of meeting the requirements of the Results Act.

One area of concern was that State's strategic plan addressed neither the potential impact of the consolidation of the foreign affairs agencies on its systems nor the potential for other agencies to have functions duplicative of State's. We have found that State's functional bureaus share responsibility with multiple U.S. agencies on various overlapping issues, including trade and export policy and international security functions. The strategic plan also did not address the deficiencies in State's financial accounting and information systems, noting only in general terms that several years will be required to develop performance measures and related databases to provide sufficient information on the achievement of goals.

Our review of State's performance plan revealed similar deficiencies, but also some encouraging points as well. For example, State's performance plan generally provided clear and reasonable strategies and goals in the areas of improving U.S. citizens' services and border security, and promoting democracy. In contrast, State's plan did not present a clear picture of its methods to meet strategic and performance goals in the areas of furthering economic prosperity, preventing international crime, and

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**Major Performance and Management  
Issues**

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enhancing humanitarian assistance. Overall, the performance plan did not clearly indicate the Department's intended performance and was vague about how State will coordinate with other agencies. Further, State's performance plan did not provide sufficient confidence that the Department's performance information will be credible. It did not address how the known deficiencies in State's financial and information systems will affect performance measurement. In response to our work, State is attempting to improve its planning by developing clearer and more objective performance measures linked to performance goals and identifying partnerships with other agencies or governments to address crosscutting issues.

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# Related GAO Products

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## Overseas Security and Presence

Overseas Presence: Staffing at U.S. Diplomatic Posts (GAO/NSIAD-95-50FS, Dec. 28, 1994).

State Department: Overseas Staffing Process Not Linked to Policy Priorities (GAO/NSIAD-94-228, Sept. 20, 1994).

State Department: Management Weaknesses in the Security Construction Program (GAO/NSIAD-92-2, Nov. 29, 1991).

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## Information Management

Department of State IRM: Modernization Program at Risk Absent Full Implementation of Key Best Practices (GAO/NSIAD-98-242, Sept. 29, 1998).

Year 2000 Computing Crisis: State Department Needs to Make Fundamental Improvements to Its Year 2000 Program (GAO/AIMD-98-162, Aug. 28, 1998).

Computer Security: Pervasive, Serious Weaknesses Jeopardize State Department Operations (GAO/AIMD-98-145, May 18, 1998).

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## Visa Processing

State Department: Tourist Visa Processing Backlogs Persist at U.S. Consulates (GAO/NSIAD-98-69, Mar. 13, 1998).

State Department: Efforts to Reduce Visa Fraud (GAO/T-NSIAD-97-167, May 20, 1997).

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**Foreign Affairs  
Organization and  
Management**

Foreign Affairs Management: Major Challenges Facing the Department of State (GAO/T-NSIAD-98-251, Sept. 17, 1998).

International Affairs: Activities of Domestic Agencies (GAO/T-NSIAD-98-174, June 4, 1998).

International Affairs Budget: Framework for Assessing Relevance, Priority, and Efficiency (GAO/T-NSIAD-98-18, Oct. 30, 1997).

Foreign Affairs: Perspective on Foreign Affairs Programs and Structures (GAO/NSIAD-97-6, Nov. 8, 1996).

State Department: Options for Addressing Possible Budget Reductions (GAO/NSIAD-96-124, Aug. 29, 1996).

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**Strategic and  
Performance  
Planning**

The Results Act: Observations on the Department of State's Fiscal Year 1999 Annual Performance Plan (GAO/NSIAD-98-210R, June 17, 1998).

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**Related GAO Products**

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Managing for Results: Agencies' Annual Performance Plans Can Help Address Strategic Planning Challenges (GAO/GGD-98-44, Jan. 30, 1998).

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# Performance and Accountability Series

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Major Management Challenges and Program Risks: A Governmentwide Perspective  
(GAO/OCG-99-1)

Major Management Challenges and Program Risks: Department of Agriculture  
(GAO/OCG-99-2)

Major Management Challenges and Program Risks: Department of Commerce  
(GAO/OCG-99-3)

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