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Foreign Affairs Issues

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GAO **United States**
General Accounting Office
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Comptroller General
of the United States

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The Speaker of the House of Representatives
The Majority Leader of the Senate

In response to your request, this report discusses major foreign affairs policy, management, and program issues we have identified through our evaluations of several key State Department and U.S. Information Agency activities. The issues discussed in this report include (1) adjusting to post-Cold War diplomacy, (2) addressing the future of international broadcasting, (3) implementing management improvements, (4) improving U.S. participation in United Nations organizations, (5) improving the effectiveness of international narcotics control programs, and (6) improving the administration of refugee programs.

As part of our high-risk series on program areas vulnerable to waste, fraud, abuse, and mismanagement, we are issuing a related report, Management of Overseas Real Property (GAO/HR-93-15, Dec. 1992).

The GAO products upon which this transition series report is based are listed at the end of the report.

We are also sending this report to the President-elect, the Republican leadership of the Congress, the appropriate congressional committees, and the designated heads of the appropriate agencies.

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To cope with the management challenges posed by the end of the Cold War and the demise of the Soviet Union, the Congress and the new administration need to consider how the State Department and other foreign affairs agencies will be able to operate more efficiently with declining resources and how these agencies and their programs will effectively interact or coordinate their expanding overseas activities. Traditional Cold War institutions, like the Voice of America and Radio Free Europe, and the planned billions of dollars in costs to operate and modernize them need reevaluation. Two other key foreign policy issues, foreign economic assistance and security assistance, are addressed in separate reports in this transition series, Foreign Economic Assistance Issues (GAO-93-25TR) and National Security Issues (GAO-93-9TR).

In our 1988 transition series, we reported that the State Department needed to improve its management and more effectively support activities in international organizations, international counternarcotics programs, and refugee relief programs. Effective policies, management, and programs directed to these issues remain as priorities today. While there has been some progress in addressing management