



Highlights of [GAO-05-573T](#), a testimony before the Subcommittee on Management, Integration, and Oversight, Committee on Homeland Security, House of Representatives

## Why GAO Did This Study

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) plays a key role in coordinating the nation's homeland security efforts with stakeholders in the federal, state, local, and private sectors. While GAO has conducted numerous reviews of specific DHS missions, such as border and transportation security and emergency preparedness, this testimony addresses overall DHS management issues.

This testimony addresses (1) why GAO designated DHS's transformation as a high-risk area; and (2) the specific management challenges facing DHS.

[www.gao.gov/cgi-bin/getrpt?GAO-05-573T](http://www.gao.gov/cgi-bin/getrpt?GAO-05-573T).

To view the full product, including the scope and methodology, click on the link above. For more information, contact Norman Rabkin at (202) 512-8777 or [rabkinn@gao.gov](mailto:rabkinn@gao.gov).

# HOMELAND SECURITY

## Overview of Department of Homeland Security Management Challenges

### What GAO Found

GAO designated DHS's transformation as a high-risk area in 2003, based on three factors. First, DHS faced enormous challenges in implementing an effective transformation process, developing partnerships, and building management capacity because it had to transform 22 agencies into one department. Second, DHS faced a broad array of operational and management challenges that it inherited from its component legacy agencies. Finally, DHS's failure to effectively address its management challenges and program risks could have serious consequences for our national security. Overall, DHS has made some progress, but significant management challenges remain to transform DHS into a more efficient organization while maintaining and improving its effectiveness in securing the homeland. Therefore, DHS's transformation remains a high-risk area.

DHS faces a number of management challenges to improve its ability to carry out its homeland security missions. Among these challenges are

- providing focus for management efforts,
- monitoring transformation and integration,
- improving strategic planning,
- managing human capital,
- strengthening financial management infrastructure,
- establishing an information technology management framework,
- managing acquisitions, and
- coordinating research and development.