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ADVANCEMENT OF U.S. INTERESTS

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE PLAN 2000-2002



GAO'S MISSION

GAO exists to support the Congress in meeting its Constitutional responsibilities and to help improve the performance and accountability of the federal government for the benefit of the American people.

CORE VALUES

ACCOUNTABILITY

describes the nature of GAO's work. GAO helps the Congress oversee federal programs and operations to ensure accountability to the American people. GAO's evaluators, auditors, lawyers, economists, public policy analysts, information technology specialists, and other multidisciplinary professionals seek to enhance the economy, efficiency, effectiveness, and credibility of the federal government both in fact and in the eyes of the American people. GAO accomplishes its mission through a variety of activities, including financial audits, program reviews, investigations, legal support, and program analyses.

INTEGRITY

describes the high standards that GAO sets for itself in the conduct of its work. GAO takes a professional, objective, fact-based, nonpartisan, nonideological, fair, and balanced approach to all of its activities. Integrity is the foundation of reputation, and GAO's approach to its work ensures both.

RELIABILITY

describes GAO's goal for how its work is viewed by the Congress and the American public. GAO produces high-quality reports, testimony, briefings, legal opinions, and other products and services that are timely, accurate, useful, clear, and candid.

FOREWORD

In fulfilling its mission, GAO examines the use of public funds; evaluates federal programs and activities; and provides analyses, options, recommendations, and other assistance to help the Congress make effective oversight, policy, and funding decisions. In this context, GAO works to continuously improve the economy, efficiency, and effectiveness of the federal government through the conduct of financial audits, program reviews and evaluations, analyses, legal opinions, investigations, and other services. Most of this work is based upon original data collection and analysis.

To ensure that GAO, in serving the Congress, targets the right issues, provides balanced perspectives, and develops practical recommendations, GAO regularly consults with the Congress and maintains relationships with a variety of federal, state, academic, and professional organizations. GAO also obtains the perspectives of applicable trade groups and associations and attends professional conferences. Moreover, GAO regularly coordinates its work with CRS, CBO, and agency Inspector General offices. Throughout, GAO's core values of accountability, integrity, and reliability are guiding principles.

In keeping with its mission and responsibilities, GAO has developed a strategic plan that includes four strategic goals and 21 related strategic objectives. To ensure that GAO's resources are directed to achieving its goals, a separate strategic plan underlies each objective. In support of GAO's goal of providing timely, quality service to the Congress and the federal government to respond to changing security threats and the challenges of global interdependence, this strategic plan describes the performance goals GAO will use in supporting congressional and federal decisionmaking on advancing and protecting U.S. international interests.

This plan covers a 3-year period; however, because unanticipated events may significantly affect even the best of plans, GAO's process allows for updating this plan to respond quickly to emerging issues. If you have questions or desire information on additional or completed work related to this strategic objective, please call or e-mail me or the contact persons listed on the following pages.

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SERVING THE CONGRESS GAO'S STRATEGIC PLAN FRAMEWORK



MISSION

GAO exists to support the Congress in meeting its Constitutional responsibilities and to help improve the performance and accountability of the federal government for the benefit of the American people.

GOALS

PROVIDE TIMELY, QUALITY SERVICE TO THE CONGRESS AND THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

SUPPORT THE TRANSITION

MAXIMIZE THE VALUE OF GAO



TO ADDRESS CURRENT AND EMERGING CHALLENGES TO THE WELL-BEING AND FINANCIAL SECURITY OF THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

TO RESPOND TO CHANGING SECURITY THREATS AND THE CHALLENGES OF GLOBAL INTERDEPENDENCE

TO A MORE RESULTS-ORIENTED AND ACCOUNTABLE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

BY BEING A MODEL ORGANIZATION FOR THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

THEMES

Demographics

Globalization

Quality of Life

Security

Technology

Government Performance and Accountability

OBJECTIVES

Health care needs and financing
Retirement income security
Social safety net
Education/workforce issues
Effective system of justice
Community investment
Natural resources use and environmental protection
Physical infrastructure

Diffuse security threats
Military capabilities and readiness
ADVANCEMENT OF U.S. INTERESTS
Global market forces

Fiscal position of the government
Government financing and accountability
Governmentwide management reforms
Economy, efficiency, and effectiveness improvements in federal agencies

Client relations
Strategic and annual planning
Human capital
Core business and supporting processes
Information technology services

CORE VALUES

Accountability

Integrity

Reliability

PROVIDE TIMELY,
QUALITY SERVICE TO THE
CONGRESS AND THE
FEDERAL GOVERNMENT



TO RESPOND TO
CHANGING
SECURITY THREATS
AND THE
CHALLENGES
OF GLOBAL
INTERDEPENDENCE

Diffuse security threats
Military capabilities and
readiness
**ADVANCEMENT OF U.S.
INTERESTS**
Global market forces

ADVANCING AND PROTECTING U.S. INTERNATIONAL INTERESTS

The United States is pursuing a global agenda to help countries prosper through the transition to a liberal economic order and to democratic political systems based on the rule of law. This strategy is viewed as a means to achieve the ultimate goals of global peace, stability, and prosperity. To leverage its influence and resources, the United States has sought support from other countries and international organizations to pursue the same agenda. Although U.S. leaders agree on the ultimate goals, there is wide disagreement and intense debate within the United States about the approaches and methods to achieve them, the efficacy of existing activities and programs, and the amount of resources to expend. Furthermore, the United States faces serious challenges to its global leadership and agenda from countries or groups within countries that believe the U.S. strategy does not serve their economic, political, and security interests.

Advancing and protecting U.S. international interests is a complex process, as the United States has multiple interests throughout the world. Furthermore, the number of public policy issues with international aspects is expanding, as is the number of government agencies that have a stake in the conduct of U.S. relations with the rest of the world. To support its interests globally, regionally, and in each country, the United States has multiple tools of statecraft to apply, such as economic and military aid; influence through international organizations; diplomatic persuasion; and, finally, military power. Decisions regarding how to advance and protect U.S. international interests are complex and frequently must reconcile conflicting objectives.

GAO's strategic plan identifies five multiyear performance goals to achieve the strategic objective of supporting congressional and federal decisionmaking on advancing and protecting U.S. international interests. The following pages discuss the significance of the performance goals, the key efforts that will be undertaken, and the potential outcomes.

Performance Goals

- Analyze the Plans, Strategies, Costs, and Results Achieved From U.S. Interventions
- Analyze the Effectiveness and Management of Foreign Aid Programs and the Tools to Carry Them Out
- Analyze the Costs and Implications of U.S. Military Alliances and Commitments
- Evaluate the Efficiency and Accountability of the United Nations and Related Multilateral Organizations and the Extent to Which They Are Serving U.S. Interests
- Assess the Strategies Used to Manage U.S. Foreign Affairs Functions and Activities



Analyze the Plans, Strategies, Costs, and Results Achieved From U.S. Interventions

Significance

Military and humanitarian interventions to make or keep the peace, stabilize and rebuild failed states, or deal with humanitarian emergencies have become major activities for the United States. These interventions are controversial, both domestically and internationally. They are also costly, particularly when the military role is extensive and/or prolonged. For example, the United States has spent over \$12 billion in the Balkans over the last 5 years.

The United States has employed its armed forces and civilian agencies, in conjunction with those of our allies and the international community, to address territorial disputes, armed ethnic and nationalistic conflicts, and civil wars that pose threats to regional and international peace. Some of these conflicts are accompanied by natural or man-made disasters that cause massive human suffering. Successful interventions often require multidimensional operations involving political/diplomatic efforts, humanitarian activities, sophisticated intelligence and communications capabilities, economic development programs, and security measures: hence the term complex contingency operations. In the 1990s, the United States participated in such operations in the Balkans, Cambodia, Haiti, and Somalia. In other places, particularly the Korean peninsula, the United States and its allies continue to maintain a significant military presence to deter an outbreak of war. These potential hostilities have their origins in long-standing conflicts that have not yet been resolved. Less organized are international civilian efforts to promote a peaceful transition in the region.



Key Efforts

Assess U.S. and international military and civilian efforts to stabilize the Balkans

Assess international efforts to promote a peaceful transition on the Korean peninsula

Evaluate the U.S. interagency process (Presidential Decision Directive 56) for managing complex civil/military (contingency) operations

Determine how civil/military (contingency) operations affect military planning and force structure

Potential Outcomes

Information, analyses, and/or options available for congressional oversight of U.S. and international involvement in current and future interventions

Improvement of the current process used to plan for, execute, and coordinate interventions and more efficient use of resources

CONTACT FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: Benjamin F. Nelson, Director, International Relations and Trade Issues, (202) 512-4128, nelsonb.nsiad@gao.gov



Analyze the Effectiveness and Management of Foreign Aid Programs and the Tools to Carry Them Out

Significance

To promote peace and prosperity, the United States is encouraging countries around the world to practice democratic principles, rule of law, open and private market structures, and good and just government. The countries that are transitioning to these principles are large, have several billion people, and are of strategic importance to the United States. In some countries, poverty, instability, and ethnic hatred could result in a retreat from these principles. To encourage the practice of these principles and for other reasons, the United States funds democratic and rule-of-law initiatives, military support and training, and development and humanitarian aid—although corruption in recipient governments is broadly thought to reduce the effectiveness of aid and to be an obstacle to overall U.S. strategies. The United States also counters threats to desired outcomes through international programs to counter terrorism and narcotics trafficking that could undermine democracy and directly affect U.S. interests. The extent to which countries can successfully transition to and maintain democratic governments will have significant implications for U.S. economic and security objectives and ultimately the U.S. budget.

Assistance programs around the world cost the United States about \$13 billion annually. Critics question the value of these programs and have raised questions about whether U.S. funds are accounted for and whether programs are being well managed, achieving the intended purposes, and helping advance U.S. objectives. Furthermore, there are questions regarding alternative approaches that could be applied to achieve U.S. objectives where traditional approaches have failed.



Key Efforts

Determine the accountability for U.S. aid to help Central America and the Caribbean to recover from Hurricane Mitch and other natural disasters

Assess the effectiveness of U.S. and other donor strategies for helping Russia to reform its economy

Evaluate the United States' and other donors' strategies for helping Haiti achieve economic progress and undergo the transition to democracy and rule of law

Evaluate and assess approaches used by bilateral and multilateral agencies to evaluate the impact of foreign assistance programs and identify promising practices

Assess agencies' and multilateral institutions' anti-corruption strategies

Potential Outcomes

Increased attention on accountability for U.S. funds and more focus on achieving results that advance U.S. interests

Improved coordination of the multiple programs

Improved information on the options for U.S. assistance, their advantages and disadvantages

Improved effectiveness and efficiency of foreign assistance programs

Increased attention on reducing corruption and increased congressional understanding of the vulnerabilities

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Analyze the Costs and Implications of U.S. Military Alliances and Commitments

Significance

Alliances with various countries continue to be a significant part of the U.S. security strategy. Established decades ago, these alliances are now changing to better reflect current and future needs and priorities. For example, as NATO changes, the U.S. role in NATO and the implications of that role warrant examination. NATO is expanding its membership eastward and changing its focus from defending the territory of Western Europe to promoting peace and stability outside member countries. Three countries were added to NATO in 1999, and others have signaled their interest in joining. The expansion has important implications for U.S. relations with Russia. In addition, NATO's operations in the Balkans highlighted significant gaps between the United States' and other NATO members' military capabilities. These gaps are likely to grow, further complicating the ability of the alliance to conduct joint operations and exacerbating concerns over how roles and costs will be shared by NATO members. The debates on the expansion of NATO and the evolving role of the alliance in European and world affairs will continue for years. Furthermore, other U.S. security relationships are undergoing change that may affect the cost and deployment of U.S. forces overseas. For example, the U.S. security relationship with Japan is undergoing changes that may affect the basing of U.S. military forces, the roles to be played by each security partner in potential conflicts, and the share of costs each partner will bear for collective security. As we move further away from the Cold War era, more questions will be raised on the cost and utility of these alliances and the role they will play in the future.



Key Efforts

Examine how the developing European-led security initiatives may affect NATO's ability to meet its defense commitments and requirements and identify the implications for the alliance

Assess the ability of new NATO members to bear their portion of the defense burden and the implications for accepting prospective new members into the alliance

Determine how NATO's infrastructure and other programs have been adjusted to reflect the new membership and security environment and identify implications for the alliance

Examine how the United States and its allies are sharing the responsibilities and costs associated with security requirements

Assess how U.S. security relationships are changing in the post-Cold War era and the implications for the U.S. military

Potential Outcomes

Information and analyses for congressional consideration on NATO countries' military capabilities and preparedness to meet evolving security requirements

Information and analyses on the cost implications of NATO's expansion to guide congressional decisions on accepting new members

Options for congressional consideration for reducing costs of NATO's infrastructure and other programs and improving programs to integrate new members

Information, analyses, and/or options for shifting responsibilities and costs to our security partners, to support congressional oversight

Increased congressional understanding of potential financial and military implications resulting from changing U.S. security relationships and options to adjust to these implications

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Evaluate the Efficiency and Accountability of the United Nations and Related Multilateral Organizations and the Extent to Which They Are Serving U.S. Interests

Significance

The United Nations and over 50 related multilateral organizations in which the United States participates were created to address conflict resolution, economic development, and specialized transnational issues. With 185 members, the United Nations provides a forum for influencing the world community to take collective action on issues of importance to U.S. security and economic interests. The United States contributes the largest portion of costs by far—over 25 percent. The President has requested about \$2.3 billion in fiscal year 2000 to pay for U.S. participation in these organizations. The United States works through international organizations, where deemed appropriate, to ensure U.S. interests are met on issues such as resolving humanitarian and refugee crises, controlling infectious diseases, and maintaining international peace and security. For example, the United States is supporting the World Health Organization in its worldwide effort to eradicate polio. The United States also relies on the U.N. to undertake peacekeeping and special missions in selected locations, such as East Timor, Lebanon, and the Congo. The United States is seeking reforms in the U.N. and other international organizations so that they can (1) adjust to today's needs, constraints, threats, and opportunities and (2) develop the capacity to deal with world issues more effectively and efficiently. For example, the United States has urged the U.N. to focus on results by assessing its activities for relevance and cost-effectiveness; to adopt better procurement, budgeting, and human capital practices; and to establish an effective internal oversight mechanism. The Congress has also focused on restructuring and reforming these organizations and has linked U.S. payments to progress in implementing reforms.



Key Efforts

Assess the implementation of reforms at the U.N.

Assess the capabilities of multilateral organizations such as the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the World Health Organization to respond to major humanitarian crises

Examine the roles and missions of the U.N. and other international agencies and the effectiveness of their programs

Potential Outcomes

Analyses of U.N. reforms to aid congressional oversight of progress

Improved accountability and increased transparency at the U.N.

Increased attention by the U.N. to achieving results and improved attention by the State Department to using U.S. resources more effectively to advance U.S. interests through the U.N. system

Increased congressional understanding of the benefits and limitations of U.N. agencies and recommended actions to strengthen these agencies' capabilities

Analyses and options for consideration by congressional committees to reduce overlap and duplication, rationalize missions, and increase effectiveness of programs

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Assess the Strategies Used to Manage U.S. Foreign Affairs Functions and Activities

Significance

The United States spends over \$20 billion to conduct foreign affairs activities. Most federal policies have international aspects, and about 35 federal agencies have staff assigned overseas to implement a variety of programs and activities designed to support U.S. foreign policies and domestic interests. About 19,000 U.S. employees and 36,000 foreign national employees and contractors work at over 250 U.S. embassies and consulates located throughout the world. The State Department either owns or leases about 12,000 properties at these locations and plays a key role in operating these diplomatic facilities for the benefit of the entire government. It also plays a key role in coordinating U.S. policy and programs for each of the world's 190 countries.

State and other foreign affairs agencies are searching for more cost-effective operating approaches. (The Arms Control and Disarmament Agency and the U.S. Information Agency have been abolished, and their personnel and programs have been integrated into the State Department to increase effectiveness and achieve efficiencies.) To ensure that adequate resources are applied to advance and protect priority interests, it is important that less costly ways of doing business be devised, using new technology and management structures, and that long-standing functions and activities that are no longer essential be identified. In addition, the reasonableness of the State Department's overseas infrastructure is being questioned.



Key Efforts

Examine the rationale for deployment of U.S. government personnel overseas and explore options of conducting foreign affairs

Examine the consolidation of foreign affairs agencies

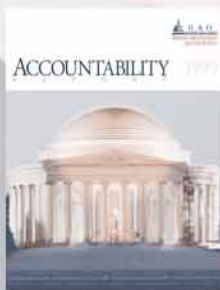
Potential Outcomes

Options for the Congress and U.S. agencies to improve overseas operations, reduce costs, and reduce security vulnerabilities

Improved operational efficiency and potential cost savings resulting from consolidation and improved operations of foreign affairs agencies

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The full set of GAO's strategic planning, performance, and accountability documents are listed below. All of these documents, as well as other GAO reports and documents, may be obtained electronically on our website, www.gao.gov.



Accountability Report for fiscal year 1999

Strategic Plan, 2000-2005

Strategic Plan Executive Summary

Strategic Plan Framework

Strategic Objective Plans

Health Care Needs and Financing

Retirement Income Security

Social Safety Net

Education/Workforce Issues

Effective System of Justice

Community Investment

Natural Resources Use and Environmental Protection

Physical Infrastructure

Diffuse Security Threats

Military Capabilities and Readiness

Advancement of U.S. Interests

Global Market Forces

Fiscal Position of the Government

Government Financing and Accountability

Governmentwide Management Reforms

Economy, Efficiency, and Effectiveness

Improvements in Federal Agencies

Maximize the Value of GAO

Performance Plan Fiscal Year 2001



ADVANCEMENT OF U.S. INTERESTS

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE PLAN

2000-2002