COMBATING TERRORISM

Planning and Documentation of U.S. Development Assistance Programs in Pakistan’s Federally Administered Tribal Areas Need to Be Improved

What GAO Found

U.S. national security goals call for development assistance to aid the Pakistani government in addressing terrorist threats emanating from the FATA. GAO found that U.S. development objectives in the FATA are generally aligned with U.S. national security goals and Pakistan’s FATA development plans. In September 2007, USAID and Pakistan signed an agreement regarding development activities in the FATA including the creation of joint strategic implementation plans for the seven FATA geographic areas. We found, however, that the U.S. and Pakistan have not yet completed such plans.

The U.S. government has implemented two efforts to track its $750 million pledge in accordance with good management practices. State is tallying allocations of U.S. programs in Pakistan’s western frontier region (which includes the FATA), and the USAID controller in Islamabad has undertaken an effort to track most, but not all, U.S. development-related obligations and expenditures in the FATA. As of the end of fiscal year 2009, the U.S. government has reportedly allocated over $728 million toward the pledge.

USAID and State collect reports on the performance of their FATA-specific programs. However, key elements, such as identification of evaluation efforts and a timeline for reviewing implementing partner reports required by USAID’s regulations are missing in its performance management plan for the FATA. Also, State did not collect all the required project performance documentation. Long-term development programs for which performance could be measured against annual targets generally did not achieve targets.

Although hampered by security challenges that prevent direct monitoring called for in its guidance, USAID has taken steps to apply a set of indirect monitoring procedures. This includes collecting information from implementing partners and locally employed staff, and the use of a geographic information system. While USAID officials told GAO they use these methods, GAO found that USAID did not always document the use of these monitoring procedures. GAO also found that State has several monitoring procedures, but had not fully documented their use of these procedures.