

## Why GAO Did This Study

In March 2009, the President called for an expanded U.S. civilian presence under Chief of Mission authority to build the capacity of the Afghan government to provide security, essential services, and economic development. In addition, the Department of Defense (DOD) deploys civilians under combatant commander authority to Afghanistan to support both combat and capacity-building missions. DOD established the Civilian Expeditionary Workforce (CEW) in 2009 to create a cadre of civilians trained, cleared, and equipped to respond urgently to expeditionary requirements. As the military draws down, U.S. civilians will remain crucial to achieving the goal of transferring lead security responsibility to the Afghan government in 2014.

For this report, GAO (1) examined the expansion of the U.S. civilian presence in Afghanistan, (2) evaluated DOD's implementation of its CEW policy, and (3) determined the extent to which U.S. agencies had provided required Afghanistan-specific training to their personnel before deployment. GAO analyzed staffing data and training requirements, and interviewed cognizant officials from the Department of State (State), other U.S. agencies with personnel under Chief of Mission authority in Afghanistan, and DOD.

## What GAO Recommends

GAO's recommendations to DOD include developing key assumptions and identifying the number and types of positions that should constitute the CEW, and establishing a process to identify and synchronize training requirements. DOD concurred with GAO's recommendations.

View [GAO-12-285](#). For more information, contact Brenda S. Farrell at (202) 512-3604 or [farrellb@gao.gov](mailto:farrellb@gao.gov), or Charles Michael Johnson Jr. at (202) 512-7331 or [johnsoncm@gao.gov](mailto:johnsoncm@gao.gov).

## AFGHANISTAN

### Improvements Needed to Strengthen Management of U.S. Civilian Presence

## What GAO Found

U.S. agencies under Chief of Mission authority and the Department of Defense (DOD) have reported expanding their civilian presence in Afghanistan and took steps to improve their ability to track that presence. Since January 2009, U.S. agencies under Chief of Mission authority more than tripled their civilian presence from 320 to 1,142. However, although State could report total Chief of Mission numbers by agency, in mid-2011 GAO identified discrepancies in State's data system used to capture more-detailed staffing information such as location and position type. State began taking steps in the fall of 2011 to improve the reliability of its data system. Also, DOD reported expanding its overall civilian presence from 394 civilians in January 2009 to 2,929 in December 2011 to help assist U.S. efforts in Afghanistan. The extent to which DOD's data is reliable is unknown due to omissions and double counting, among other things. In a 2009 report, GAO noted similar data issues and recommended DOD improve data concerning deployed civilians. DOD concurred with the recommendation and expects the issues will be addressed by a new tracking system to be completed in fiscal year 2012.

DOD has taken preliminary steps to implement its Civilian Expeditionary Workforce (CEW) policy, including establishing a program office; however, nearly 3 years after DOD's directive established the CEW, the program has not been fully developed and implemented. Specifically, DOD components have not identified and designated the number and types of positions that should constitute the CEW because guidance for making such determinations has not been provided by the Office of the Secretary of Defense. Officials stated that once key assumptions regarding the size and composition of the CEW have been finalized, implementing guidance will be issued. Until guidance that instructs the components on how to identify and designate the number and types of positions that will constitute the CEW is developed, DOD may not be able to (1) make the CEW a significant portion of the civilian workforce as called for in DOD's fiscal year 2009 Civilian Human Capital Strategic Plan, (2) meet readiness goals for the CEW as required in DOD's Strategic Management Plan for fiscal years 2012-2013, and (3) position itself to respond to future missions.

U.S. agencies under Chief of Mission authority and DOD provided Afghanistan-specific, predeployment training to their civilians, but DOD faced challenges. State offered predeployment training courses to address its requirements for Chief of Mission personnel and designated a centralized point of contact to help ensure that no personnel were deployed without taking required training, including the Foreign Affairs Counter Threat course. While predeployment training requirements were established for Afghanistan by the Office of the Secretary of Defense and the Combatant Commander, DOD relied on its various components to provide the training to its civilians. In some cases, DOD components offered duplicate training courses and did not address all theater requirements in their training because DOD did not have a process for identifying and synchronizing requirements and coordinating efforts to implement them, as called for in the *Strategic Plan for the Next Generation of Training for the Department of Defense*. Absent this process, DOD could not ensure that its civilians were fully prepared for deployment to Afghanistan and that training resources were used efficiently.