

GAO Highlights

Highlights of [GAO-14-397](#), a report to congressional requesters

Why GAO Did This Study

DHS plays a vital role in securing the nation, and its intelligence analysis capabilities are a key part of this effort. Within DHS, I&A has a lead role for intelligence analysis, but other operational components also perform their own analysis activities. GAO was asked to review the management of departmental analysis efforts.

This report addresses the extent to which (1) DHS intelligence analysis activities are integrated to support departmental intelligence priorities, (2) I&A customers find analytic products and services useful, and (3) I&A has addressed challenges in maintaining a skilled analytic workforce.

GAO examined mechanisms DHS used to coordinate analysis across components, I&A reports and feedback surveys, and human capital plans. GAO also interviewed officials from I&A, the five DHS components with intelligence analysis as a core function, the Office of the Director of National Intelligence who represent the Intelligence Community, 7 of 78 fusion centers (focal points within states that analyze and share information), and the private sector. The fusion center and sector interviews, chosen based on geographic location and other factors, are not generalizable, but provided insight on progress.

What GAO Recommends

GAO recommends, among other things, that DHS (1) establish strategic intelligence priorities and use them to inform analytic activities and (2) establish mechanisms to evaluate workforce initiatives and use results to determine any needed changes. DHS concurred with our recommendations.

View [GAO-14-397](#). For more information, contact Eileen Larence at (202) 512-8777 or larencee@gao.gov.

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DHS INTELLIGENCE ANALYSIS

Additional Actions Needed to Address Analytic Priorities and Workforce Challenges

What GAO Found

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has established mechanisms—including an intelligence framework and an analytic planning process—to better integrate analysis activities throughout the department, but the mechanisms are not functioning as intended. For example, the framework does not establish strategic departmental intelligence priorities that can be used to inform annual planning decisions, such as what analytic activities to pursue and the level of investment to make, as called for in DHS guidance. According to officials from DHS's Office of Intelligence and Analysis (I&A), it can be challenging for DHS components to focus on developing both strategic priorities and more tactical priorities that support their specific operations. Absent strategic priorities, DHS used component subject matter experts and other information to develop key questions of common interest they would address through analysis. As a result, DHS does not have reasonable assurance that component analytic activities and resource investments are aligned to support departmental priorities. The mechanisms to integrate analysis, however, gave components insight into one another's work and helped them avoid unnecessary overlap and duplication.

I&A customers had mixed views on the extent to which its analytic products and services are useful. GAO's interviews with representatives of I&A's five customer groups indicate that two groups—DHS leadership and state, local, tribal, and territorial partners—found products to be useful, while three groups—DHS components, the Intelligence Community, and the private sector—generally did not. Representatives of four of the five groups said that they found other types of services, such as briefings, to be useful. Results from surveys that are attached to I&A products indicate that most customers were very satisfied with the products' usefulness, but the results are not generalizable because they reflect only the views of customers who chose to respond. To address this issue, I&A is conducting more comprehensive surveys and interviews with customers to evaluate the products and services that best meet their needs. I&A expects to complete this effort by the end of June 2014.

I&A has taken steps to address challenges it faced in maintaining a skilled workforce, but has not assessed whether its efforts are resolving the challenges. For example:

- I&A faced challenges in recruiting and hiring analysts, in part because of its hiring authority, which put it at a disadvantage compared with other agencies that were able to process hiring actions more quickly. I&A's hiring authority was changed in 2013, a fact that could help ease these challenges.
- I&A experienced low morale and high rates of attrition, particularly among its lower-level analysts. To help address these issues, I&A restructured its grade levels in 2012 to provide additional career advancement opportunities.

However, I&A has not established mechanisms to evaluate its efforts and use the results to make any needed changes because I&A leadership has focused on other priorities. Such mechanisms will help I&A evaluate if efforts are achieving their intended results of improving recruiting and hiring, bolstering morale, and reducing attrition. In addition, using the evaluation results to determine any needed changes will help ensure that I&A is making sound workforce decisions.