HOMELAND SECURITY

DHS’s Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear, Program Consolidation Efforts

What GAO Found

GAO’s prior work has shown that the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) should complete, document, and make available analyses of key questions related to its chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, and explosives (CBRNE) consolidation proposal. In August 2016, we reported that several key factors were not included when DHS evaluated its organizational consolidation of CBRNE functions. For example, DHS did not fully assess and document potential problems that could result from consolidation or include a comparison of benefits and costs. Further, DHS conducted limited external stakeholder outreach, thus the proposal may not sufficiently account for stakeholder concerns. Attention to these key areas, identified from GAO’s analysis of previous organizational consolidations, would help provide DHS, Congress, and other stakeholders, such as DHS components with assurance that important aspects of effective organizational changes are addressed as part of the agency’s CBRNE reorganization decision-making process. GAO previously recommended that DHS complete, document, and make available analyses of key questions related to its consolidation proposal, including: (1) what problems, if any, consolidation may create; (2) a comparison of the benefits and costs the consolidation may entail; and (3) a broader range of external stakeholder input including a discussion of how it was obtained and considered. DHS did not concur, asserting that the recommendation did not acknowledge the extent to which these questions were discussed both internally within DHS and externally with Congress and that DHS’s decision to consolidate CBRNE functions had already been made which would make additional analysis redundant. GAO closed this recommendation as not implemented. While GAO has not fully assessed DHS’s most recent reorganization plans, GAO continues to believe that documenting information and analyses used to assess the benefits and limitations of its consolidation plan would assist DHS in fully demonstrating how its proposal will lead to an integrated, high-performance organization.

What GAO Recommends

GAO made two recommendations to DHS in 2016 to (1) complete, document, and make available analyses of key questions related to its consolidation proposal; and (2) use the key mergers and organizational transformation practices identified in GAO’s previous work. DHS did not concur with the first recommendation and it was closed as not implemented. DHS concurred with the second recommendation and has not yet implemented it. GAO will continue to monitor DHS’s efforts to address the second recommendation.

View GAO-18-284T. For more information, contact Chris Currie at (404) 679-1875 or currieC@gao.gov