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# Highlights

Highlights of [GAO-08-622](#), a report to congressional requesters

## Why GAO Did This Study

Since 2002, destroying the terrorist threat and closing the terrorist safe haven have been key national security goals. The United States has provided Pakistan, a key ally in the war on terror, more than \$10.5 billion for military, economic, and development activities. Pakistan's Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), which border Afghanistan, are vast unpoliced regions attractive to extremists and terrorists seeking a safe haven.

GAO was asked to assess (1) the progress in meeting these national security goals for Pakistan's FATA, and (2) the status of U.S. efforts to develop a comprehensive plan for the FATA. To address these objectives, GAO compared national security goals against assessments conducted by U.S. agencies and reviewed available plans.

## What GAO Recommends

GAO recommends that the National Security Advisor and the Director of the NCTC, in consultation with the Secretaries of Defense and State and others, implement the congressional mandate to develop a comprehensive plan to combat the terrorist threat and close the safe haven in the FATA. Defense and USAID concurred with the recommendation; State asserted that a comprehensive strategy exists, while the Office of the Director of National Intelligence stated that plans to combat terrorism exist. In GAO's view, these plans have not been formally integrated into a comprehensive plan as called for by Congress. The NSC provided no comments.

To view the full product, including the scope and methodology, click on [GAO-08-622](#). For more information, contact Charles Michael Johnson Jr. at (202) 512-7331 or [johnsoncm@gao.gov](mailto:johnsoncm@gao.gov).

## COMBATING TERRORISM

### The United States Lacks Comprehensive Plan to Destroy the Terrorist Threat and Close the Safe Haven in Pakistan's Federally Administered Tribal Areas

#### What GAO Found

The United States has not met its national security goals to destroy terrorist threats and close the safe haven in Pakistan's FATA. Since 2002, the United States relied principally on the Pakistan military to address U.S. national security goals. Of the approximately \$5.8 billion the United States provided for efforts in the FATA and border region from 2002 through 2007, about 96 percent reimbursed Pakistan for military operations there. According to the Department of State, Pakistan deployed 120,000 military and paramilitary forces in the FATA and helped kill and capture hundreds of suspected al Qaeda operatives; these efforts cost the lives of approximately 1,400 members of Pakistan's security forces. However, GAO found broad agreement, as documented in the National Intelligence Estimate, State, and embassy documents, as well as Defense officials in Pakistan, that al Qaeda had regenerated its ability to attack the United States and had succeeded in establishing a safe haven in Pakistan's FATA.

No comprehensive plan for meeting U.S. national security goals in the FATA has been developed, as stipulated by the *National Strategy for Combating Terrorism* (2003), called for by an independent commission (2004), and mandated by congressional legislation (2007). Furthermore, Congress created the National Counterterrorism Center (NCTC) in 2004 specifically to develop comprehensive plans to combat terrorism. However, neither the National Security Council (NSC), NCTC, nor other executive branch departments have developed a comprehensive plan that includes all elements of national power—diplomatic, military, intelligence, development assistance, economic, and law enforcement support—called for by the various national security strategies and Congress. As a result, since 2002, the U.S. embassy in Pakistan has had no Washington-supported, comprehensive plan to combat terrorism and close the terrorist safe haven in the FATA. In 2006, the embassy, in conjunction with Defense, State, and U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), and in cooperation with the government of Pakistan, began an effort to focus more attention on other key elements of national power, such as development assistance and public diplomacy, to address U.S. goals in the FATA. However, this does not yet constitute a comprehensive plan.



Sources: GAO; USAID and Map Resources (maps).