



Highlights

Highlights of GAO-13-289, a report to the Chairman, Subcommittee on the Middle East and North Africa, Committee on Foreign Affairs, House of Representatives

Why GAO Did This Study

Following Syria's withdrawal from Lebanon in 2005 and war between Israel and Hezbollah in 2006, U.S. agencies increased their allocations of security assistance for Lebanon from \$3 million in 2005 to about \$28 million in 2006. This assistance included training and equipment funded and implemented by State or DOD for the Lebanese Armed Forces and Internal Security Forces of Lebanon. However, questions remain regarding the effectiveness of security assistance as a tool of U.S. policy in Lebanon, including concerns about the influence of foreign actors, primarily Syria and Iran, and extremist militant groups operating in Lebanon.

GAO was asked to review U.S. security assistance to Lebanon. GAO's review, covering fiscal years 2007 through 2012, assessed the extent to which the U.S. government (1) adjusted its strategic goals and security assistance programs in Lebanon, (2) funded assistance programs for Lebanese security forces, and (3) evaluated the effectiveness of security assistance programs in Lebanon. GAO reviewed budgetary data and planning documents and interviewed U.S. and Lebanese government officials in Washington, D.C.; Tampa, Florida; and Beirut, Lebanon.

What GAO Recommends

State and DOD should complete plans with milestone dates to evaluate security assistance programs in Lebanon and develop better performance indicators to facilitate evaluation. State and DOD concurred.

View GAO-13-289. For more information, contact Charles Michael Johnson, Jr. at (202) 512-7331 or johnsoncm@gao.gov.

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SECURITY ASSISTANCE

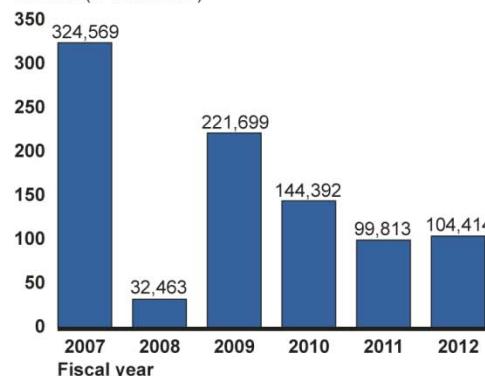
Evaluations Needed to Determine Effectiveness of U.S. Aid to Lebanon's Security Forces

What GAO Found

The United States has kept strategic goals for Lebanon constant since 2007 and adjusted security assistance in response to political and security conditions. Since 2007, U.S. strategic goals for Lebanon have been to support the nation as a stable, secure, and independent democracy. According to U.S. officials, U.S. policy priorities include supporting the Government of Lebanon in establishing stability and security against internal threats from militant extremists and the influence of Iran and Syria. U.S. programs to help achieve these priorities include Foreign Military Financing, International Military Education and Training (IMET), International Narcotics Control and Law Enforcement (INCLE), Antiterrorism Assistance, Counterterrorism Financing, Export Control and Related Border Security, and Section 1206 and 1207 authorities. While strategic goals have not changed, program implementation has changed to meet conditions on the ground, according to U.S. officials. For example, the Department of State (State) delayed committing Foreign Military Financing funds to Lebanon for 3 months in 2010, following an exchange of fire between the Lebanese Armed Forces and Israeli forces.

U.S. agencies allocated over \$925 million for security assistance programs for Lebanon from fiscal years 2007 through 2012; State has disbursed and the Department of Defense (DOD) has committed the majority of the funds.

Total U.S. Security Assistance Allocated for Lebanon, Fiscal Years 2007-2012
Dollars (in thousands)



Source: GAO analysis of State data.

To date, State has evaluated only one of its security assistance programs for Lebanon, the INCLE program; neither State nor DOD has completed plans or established time frames to evaluate the other programs. State's evaluation policy requires that certain programs be evaluated periodically. Without such evaluations, State and DOD have little objective evidence to show that the programs have been effective or what the proper mix of programs should be. Evaluations can be facilitated through appropriate performance measurement. However, GAO and other agencies have previously reported deficiencies in how agencies measure program performance. For example, GAO found in 2011 that the IMET program evaluation efforts had few of the elements commonly accepted as appropriate for measuring performance. State and DOD are undertaking efforts to develop better performance indicators.