United States Government Accountability Office

GAO

Report to the Chairman, Committee on Homeland Security, House of Representatives

December 2010

INFORMATION SHARING

DHS Could Better Define How It Plans to Meet Its State and Local Mission and Improve Performance Accountability

GAO

Accountability ★ Integrity ★ Reliability

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Why GAO Did This Study

Information sharing among federal, state, and local officials is crucial for preventing acts of terrorism on U.S. soil. The Department of Homeland Security (DHS), through its Office of Intelligence and Analysis (I&A), has lead federal responsibility for such information sharing. GAO was asked to assess (1) actions I&A has taken to enhance the usefulness of intelligence products it provides to state and local partners, (2) other services I&A provides to these partners, and (3) to what extent I&A has defined how it intends to share information with these partners. To conduct this work, GAO reviewed relevant statutes, strategies, best practices, and agency documents; contacted a nongeneralizable sample of 10 fusion centers—where states collaborate with federal agencies to improve information sharing—based on geographic location and other factors; and interviewed I&A officials. This is a public version of a sensitive report that GAO issued in September 2010. Information DHS deemed sensitive has been redacted.

What GAO Recommends

GAO recommends that I&A establish milestones for identifying the information needs of state and local partners, report to these partners on how I&A used feedback they provided to enhance intelligence products, identify and document priority programs and activities related to its state and local mission, and establish time frames for developing additional related performance measures. DHS agreed with these recommendations.

View GAO-11-223 or key components. For more information, contact Eileen Larence at (202) 512-8777 or larencee@gao.gov.

What GAO Found

To enhance the usefulness of intelligence products it provides to state and local partners, I&A has initiatives underway to identify these partners' information needs and obtain feedback on the products, but strengthening these efforts could support the development of future products. As of August 2010, I&A had finalized information needs—which are owned and controlled by the states—for 9 of the 50 states. I&A was working with remaining states to identify their needs, but it had not established mutually agreed upon milestones for completing this effort, in accordance with program management principles. Working with states to establish such milestones and addressing any barriers to identifying their needs could better assist states in the timely completion of this process. In addition, I&A has begun issuing a new customer feedback survey to recipients of its products and plans to begin analyzing this feedback to determine the value of the products, but it has not developed plans to report the results of its analyses to state and local partners. Reporting the results to these partners and actions it has taken in response could help I&A demonstrate that the feedback is important and makes a difference, which could encourage state and local partners to provide more feedback and ultimately make I&A's products and services more useful.

In addition to intelligence products, I&A provides a number of other services to its state and local partners—primarily through fusion centers—that have generally been well received by the center officials GAO contacted. For example, I&A has deployed more than 60 intelligence officers to fusion centers nationwide to assist state and local partners in areas such as obtaining relevant intelligence products and leveraging DHS capabilities to support their homeland security missions. I&A also facilitates access to information-sharing networks disseminating classified and unclassified information, provides training directly to center personnel, and operates a 24-hour service to respond to state and local requests for information and other support.

Historically, I&A has focused its state and local efforts on addressing statutory requirements and responding to I&A leadership priorities, but it has not yet defined how it plans to meet its state and local information-sharing mission by identifying and documenting the specific programs and activities that are most important for executing this mission. Best practices show that clearly identifying priorities among programs and activities is important for implementing programs and managing results. Further, I&A's current performance measures do not allow I&A to demonstrate the expected outcomes and effectiveness of programs and activities that support state and local partners, as called for in program management principles. I&A officials said they are planning to develop such measures, but had not established time frames for doing so. Defining and documenting how I&A plans to meet its state and local information-sharing mission and establishing time frames for developing additional performance measures could better position I&A to make resource decisions and provide transparency and accountability over its efforts.

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Washington, DC 20548

December 16, 2010

The Honorable Bennie G. Thompson
Chairman
Committee on Homeland Security
House of Representatives

Dear Mr. Chairman:

Recent planned or attempted acts of terrorism on U.S. soil have highlighted the need for and importance of federal, state, and local officials sharing information in order to apprehend the responsible individuals. The Homeland Security Act of 2002[1] and subsequently enacted laws—including the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004[2] and the Implementing Recommendations of the 9/11 Commission Act of 2007 (the 9/11 Commission Act)[3]—assigned the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) responsibility for, among other things, sharing terrorism-related information as appropriate with its state and local partners, and authorized additional measures and funding to support carrying out this mandate.[4] DHS's Office of Intelligence and Analysis (I&A) is the lead DHS component with responsibilities for sharing this information with all levels of government and the private sector. Most states and some major urban areas have established fusion centers that provide a conduit for I&A to share information within the state.[5]

Our prior work on the importance of including state and local entities in information sharing has shown that these efforts continue to be a significant challenge for the federal government. In January 2005, we designated terrorism-related information sharing a high-risk area because

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[1]Pub. L. No. 107-296, 116 Stat. 2135 (2002).

[2]Pub. L. No. 108-458, 118 Stat. 3638 (2004).

[3]Pub. L. No. 110-53, 121 Stat. 266 (2007).

[4]Terrorism-related information includes homeland security, terrorism, and weapons of mass destruction information.

[5]In general, fusion centers are collaborative efforts of two or more agencies that provide resources, expertise, and information to the center with the goal of maximizing their ability to detect, prevent, investigate, and respond to criminal and terrorist activity. There are 72 designated fusion centers in the United States.

the government had continued to face formidable challenges in analyzing and disseminating this information in a timely, accurate, and useful manner.[6] We reported that information is a crucial tool in fighting terrorism and that its timely dissemination is critical to maintaining the security of our nation. This area remained on the high-risk list for our January 2009 update.[7] As a result of this designation, we continuously monitor federal efforts to remove barriers to and better achieve information sharing.

This report is a public version of a sensitive report that we provided to you in September 2010. DHS deemed some of the information in that report as sensitive, which must be protected from public disclosures. Therefore, this report omits certain information associated with (1) the types of products I&A provides to its state and local partners, (2) the specific number of products it provided to these partners, and (3) the amount of feedback I&A received on its products from these partners. Although the information provided in this report is more limited in scope, it addresses the same questions as the sensitive report. Also, the methodology used for both reports is the same. In the context of how I&A has responded to its statutory mission to share terrorism-related information with state and local partners, the sensitive report addressed the following questions: [8]

- To what extent has I&A taken actions to enhance the usefulness of intelligence products that it provides to state and local partners?

- In addition to intelligence products, what other services does I&A provide to state and local partners to facilitate information sharing, and what are its partners' views of these services?

- To what extent has I&A defined how it intends to meet its state and local information-sharing mission?

To determine the extent to which I&A has taken actions to enhance the usefulness of intelligence products for state and local partners, we reviewed documentation related to I&A's intelligence products and its

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[6]GAO, *High-Risk Series: An Update*, GAO-05-207 (Washington D.C.: January 2005).

[7]GAO, *High-Risk Series: An Update*, GAO-09-271 (Washington D.C.: January 2009).

[8]Although you initially asked us to include tribal entities as part of our review, we found that I&A generally shares information with these entities through its state and local partners. Therefore, we do not specifically address tribal entities in this report.

efforts to gather the information needs of state and local partners and feedback on the products provided.[9] These documents included fact sheets, briefing handouts, and *Federal Register* notices. We also reviewed I&A reports to Congress on the dissemination of intelligence products and related feedback; a 2008 contractor report on I&A's support to fusion centers, which led to I&A efforts to gather state and local information needs; and a 2010 I&A-sponsored study on how intelligence products are disseminated to state and local agencies.[10] In addition, we reviewed statutory provisions that address I&A's role in disseminating intelligence products and gathering feedback, and the October 2007 *National Strategy for Information Sharing*, which provides criteria on the importance of gathering state and local information needs, among other things. Further, we reviewed standards for program management and our previous reports to identify criteria regarding project management and stakeholder involvement in federal agency programs and decision making.[11] We compared I&A's efforts against the relevant legislation and criteria to identify efforts to meet certain provisions and potential areas for improvement. We also interviewed senior officials from various I&A divisions to discuss how they prepared and disseminated intelligence products, what prior and current efforts they took or are taking to gather state and local information needs and feedback on products, and how these efforts have evolved over time.

In addition, we interviewed directors, intelligence analysts, and other senior officials from 10 fusion centers—including the President of the National Fusion Center Association—and asked them whether I&A had discussed their information needs, their views on the usefulness of I&A's products, related feedback they have provided to I&A, and other issues.

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[9]In this context, information needs refer to any general or specific subject for which a state or local agency has a continuing need for intelligence.

[10]See, for example, I&A, *Voluntary Feedback from State, Local, Tribal, and Private Sector Consumers, 2009 Report to Congress* (Sept. 15, 2009); CENTRA Technology Incorporated, *Enhancing DHS Information Support to State and Local Fusion Centers: Results of the Chief Intelligence Officer's Pilot Project and Next Steps* (February 2008); and MITRE Corporation, *Office of Intelligence and Analysis Fusion Center Dissemination Study* (March 2010).

[11]See, for example, Project Management Institute, *The Standard for Program Management* © (2006); GAO, *Standards for Internal Control in the Federal Government*, GAO/AIMD-00-21.3.1 (Washington, D.C.: November 1999); and GAO, *Fisheries Management: Core Principles and a Strategic Approach Would Enhance Stakeholder Participation in Developing Quota-Based Programs*, GAO-06-289 (Washington, D.C.: Feb. 23, 2006).

Because we selected a nonprobability sample of fusion centers to contact, the information we obtained from these locations may not be generalized to all fusion centers nationwide. However, because we selected these centers based on their geographic location, maturity, and whether an I&A officer had been deployed to the center (5 had officers deployed and 5 did not), the information we gathered from these locations provided us with a general understanding of information sharing between I&A and state and local agencies. We also met with officials from associations that represent state and local interests—the Major Cities Chiefs Association and International Association of Chiefs of Police—to discuss their views on I&A efforts to address state and local needs. These associations do not represent the views of all state and local entities, but provide additional context regarding state and local information sharing. Further, we reviewed pertinent statutory provisions and other documentation related to the Interagency Threat Assessment and Coordination Group (ITACG) to determine its role in incorporating state and local needs and perspectives into federal intelligence products, as well as any issues ITACG officials identified regarding the dissemination of federal intelligence products.[12]

Regarding other services I&A has provided to facilitate information sharing with state and local partners, we analyzed relevant laws and strategies to determine criteria and activities that I&A has been charged with leading. These documents include the October 2007 *National Strategy for Information Sharing* and the 9/11 Commission Act, which provides for the establishment of a State, Local, and Regional Fusion Center Initiative at DHS and contains numerous provisions that address the federal government's information-sharing responsibilities to fusion centers. To obtain details on services I&A provides to state and local partners, we reviewed I&A's quarterly reports to Congress regarding its support to fusion centers from fiscal year 2009 through the first quarter of fiscal year 2010. We also reviewed internal quarterly reports on an I&A initiative to respond to state and local requests for information and administrative support (i.e., the Single Point of Service) from May 2008 through the first quarter of fiscal year 2010.[13] In addition, we reviewed

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[12]ITACG is a group of state, local, tribal, and federal homeland security, law enforcement, and intelligence officers at the National Counterterrorism Center—the federal government's primary entity for integrating and analyzing intelligence on international terrorists—that review federal reports and provide counsel and subject matter expertise in order to better meet the information needs of state, local, tribal, and private entities.

[13]See, for example, I&A, *State and Local Fusion Center Program: Quarterly Report, Fiscal Year 2010 Report to Congress, First Quarter* (Feb. 26, 2010); and *Single Point of Service Performance Management Report, 1st Quarter of Fiscal Year 2010* (January 2010).

third-party reports containing information on these efforts, such as the 2008 report on I&A fusion center support, a Congressional Research Service report on the DHS intelligence enterprise,[14] and an I&A-sponsored evaluation of I&A's various programs.[15] We interviewed senior officials from various I&A components—including the State and Local Program Office and the Production Management Division—to gain an understanding of I&A's activities that directly support fusion centers. We also interviewed senior officials from the 10 fusion centers and two associations that we contacted to discuss I&A's direct support to state and local partners at fusion centers and obtain their views on these services.

To determine the extent to which I&A has defined how it intends to meet its state and local information-sharing mission, we reviewed requirements contained in applicable federal guidance, including guidance to agencies from the Office of Management and Budget for developing strategic plans, Government Performance and Results Act of 1993 (GPRA),[16] Standards for Internal Control in the Federal Government,[17] and our recommended practices for strategic planning.[18] We then reviewed I&A's planning documents to identify where the required elements could be found. In addition, we reviewed reports and I&A-sponsored studies on its programs and planning. We also interviewed senior officials responsible for agencywide planning, including officials from I&A's Program and Performance Management Division and I&A's chief of staff. In addition, we interviewed management officials responsible for planning in I&A component divisions and branches to determine the processes used to

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[14]Congressional Research Service, *The Department of Homeland Security Intelligence Enterprise: Operational Overview and Oversight Challenges for Congress* (Mar. 19, 2010). The Congressional Research Service provides legislative research and policy analysis to Congress on a number of different topics and issues.

[15]Homeland Security Institute, *Independent Evaluation of Office of Intelligence and Analysis Programs* (Apr. 25, 2009).

[16]Pub. L. No. 103-62, 107 Stat. 285 (1993).

[17]GAO, *Standards for Internal Control in the Federal Government*, GAO/AIMD-00-21.3.1 (Washington, D.C.: November 1999).

[18]See, for example, GAO, *Combating Terrorism: Evaluation of Selected Characteristics in National Strategies Related to Terrorism*, GAO-04-408T (Washington, D.C.: Feb. 3, 2004); GAO, *Results-Oriented Government: GPRA Has Established a Solid Foundation for Achieving Greater Results*, GAO-04-38 (Washington, D.C.: Mar. 10, 2004); and GAO, *Results-Oriented Government: Practices That Can Help Enhance and Sustain Collaboration among Federal Agencies*, GAO-06-15 (Washington D.C: Oct. 21, 2005).

create planning documents and ensure accountability for achieving program results.

As discussed above, we reviewed reports and studies prepared by I&A and third-party contractors related to I&A's efforts to support and facilitate information sharing with state and local partners. We have included data, findings, and recommendations from these documents in this report. We found the analyses and data in the internal reports and third-party studies to be sufficiently reliable for our purposes in this report. We performed our work on the sensitive version of this report from February 2009 to September 2010 in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives.

Background

History and Overview of I&A

In 2002, DHS established its Directorate of Information Analysis and Infrastructure Protection. In 2005, the directorate was divided into two offices—I&A and the Office of Infrastructure Protection. I&A is headed by the Under Secretary for Intelligence and Analysis, who is responsible for providing homeland security intelligence and information to the Secretary of Homeland Security, other federal officials and agencies, members of Congress, departmental component agencies, and the department's state, local, tribal, territorial, and private-sector partners. I&A also provides staff, services, and other support to the Under Secretary related to efforts to lead, integrate, and manage intelligence activities across the department.

I&A has undergone several transitions and realignments since its inception in 2002, which affect all of the office's customers, including state and local partners. Several of I&A's divisions, offices, and branches have some role in helping the office meet its mission to share information with these partners. Most importantly, I&A's State and Local Program Office was established to manage a program to accomplish DHS's fusion center mission. Specifically, the office is responsible for deploying DHS personnel with operational and intelligence skills to fusion centers to facilitate coordination and the flow of information between DHS and fusion centers, provide expertise in intelligence analysis and reporting, coordinate with local DHS and Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)

components, and provide DHS with local situational awareness and access to fusion center information.[19]

In addition to the State and Local Program Office's support to fusion centers, other entities within I&A are engaged in providing intelligence products and other products and services to state and local customers. For example, several analytic divisions—such as those that address border security and domestic threats—are responsible for conducting analysis and preparing intelligence reports on a variety of topics of interest to various stakeholders, including state and local entities. The Collections Requirement Division gathers information needs from state and local partners, among other things, and the Production Management Division is responsible for finalizing intelligence reports that are prepared by the analytic divisions and distributing them to I&A's customers, including state and local partners.[20] In addition, I&A's newly formed Customer Assurance Branch is now responsible for gathering and compiling feedback on the intelligence products that I&A provides to its customers, including state and local partners.

Federal Statutes and Strategies Governing Information Sharing with State and Local Entities

Since the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, several statutes have been enacted into law designed to enhance the sharing of terrorism-related information among federal, state, and local agencies, and the federal government has developed related strategies and guidelines to meet its statutory obligations.[21] Related to I&A, the Homeland Security Act of 2002 assigned the original DHS intelligence component—the

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[19]The FBI serves as the nation's principal counterterrorism investigative agency, and its mission includes protecting and defending the United States against terrorist threats. The FBI conducts counterterrorism investigations, in part, through field offices located throughout the nation.

[20]The Collection Requirements Division is the focal point for all DHS intelligence collection requirements, ensuring that the intelligence and information needs of DHS components and state, local, tribal, and private sector partners are articulated, clarified, assigned, and fulfilled in a timely manner. I&A's Production Management Division serves as the central point for production and dissemination of I&A's intelligence products.

[21]See, for example, the Homeland Security Act of 2002, the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004, and the 9/11 Commission Act; the *National Strategy for Homeland Security* and the *National Strategy for Information Sharing*; and the President's December 16, 2005, *Memorandum to Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies*, which includes guidelines in support of the development of an Information Sharing Environment to facilitate the sharing of terrorism and homeland security information.

Directorate of Information Analysis and Infrastructure Protection—with responsibility to receive, analyze, and integrate law enforcement and intelligence information in order to (1) identify and assess the nature and scope of terrorist threats to the homeland, (2) detect and identify threats of terrorism against the United States, and (3) understand such threats in light of actual and potential vulnerabilities to the homeland. Further, the 9/11 Commission Act directs the Secretary of Homeland Security—through the Under Secretary for I&A—to integrate information and standardize the format of terrorism-related intelligence products. The act further directed the Secretary to create a mechanism for state, local, and tribal law enforcement officers to provide voluntary feedback to DHS on the quality and utility of the intelligence products developed under these provisions. DHS is also charged through the 9/11 Commission Act with developing a curriculum for training state, local, and tribal partners in, among other things, federal laws, practices, and regulations regarding the development, handling, and review of intelligence and other information.

As part of DHS's information sharing with state and local entities, several provisions of the 9/11 Commission Act relate to support provided directly to fusion centers. Most states and some major urban areas have established fusion centers to, among other things, address gaps in terrorism-related information sharing that the federal government cannot address alone and provide a conduit for information sharing within the state. Specific to fusion centers, the act provides for the Under Secretary for Intelligence and Analysis to assign, to the maximum extent practicable, officers and intelligence analysts from DHS components—including I&A—to fusion centers. The act also provides that federal officers and analysts assigned to fusion centers in general are to assist law enforcement agencies in developing a comprehensive and accurate threat picture and to create intelligence and other information products for dissemination to law enforcement agencies.

In October 2007, the President issued the *National Strategy for Information Sharing*, which identifies the federal government's information-sharing responsibilities to include gathering and documenting the information that state and local agencies need to enhance their situational awareness of terrorist threats. The strategy also calls for authorities at all levels of government to work together to obtain a common understanding of the information needed to prevent, deter, and respond to terrorist attacks. Specifically, the strategy requires that state and local law enforcement agencies have access to timely, credible, and actionable information and intelligence about individuals and organizations intending to carry out attacks within the United States; their

organizations and their financing; potential targets; activities that could have a nexus to terrorism; and major events or circumstances that might influence state and local actions. The strategy also recognizes that fusion centers are vital assets that are critical to sharing information related to terrorism, and will serve as primary focal points within the state and local environment for the receipt and sharing of terrorism-related information. I&A has cited this strategy as a key document governing its state and local information-sharing efforts. Thus, in response to the designation of fusion centers as primary focal points, requirements in the 9/11 Commission Act, and the difficulty of reaching out to the thousands of state and local law enforcement entities nationwide, I&A views fusion centers as primary vehicles for sharing information with state and local partners.

Our Past Work on Terrorism-Related Information Sharing

In October 2001, we first reported on the importance of sharing information about terrorist threats, vulnerabilities, incidents, and lessons learned.[22] Since we designated terrorism-related information sharing a high-risk area in January 2005, we have continued to monitor federal efforts to remove barriers to effective information sharing. As part of this monitoring, in October 2007 and April 2008, we reported on our assessment of the status of fusion centers and how the federal government is supporting them.[23] Our fusion center report and subsequent testimony highlighted continuing challenges—such as the centers' ability to access information and obtain funding—that DHS and the Department of Justice (DOJ) needed to address to support the fusion centers' role in facilitating information sharing among federal, state, and local partners. Specifically, the October 2007 report recommended that federal officials determine and articulate the federal government's role in helping to ensure fusion center sustainability. In response, in late 2008, I&A reported that it had dedicated personnel and other resources, as well as issued guidance, directly supporting fusion centers. We have ongoing work that is assessing fusion center sustainability and efforts to protect privacy, and expect to report the results of this work later this year.

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[22]GAO, *Information Sharing: Practices That Can Benefit Critical Infrastructure Protection*, GAO-02-24 (Washington, D.C.: Oct. 15, 2001).

[23]GAO, *Homeland Security: Federal Efforts Are Helping to Alleviate Some Challenges Encountered by State and Local Information Fusion Centers*, GAO-08-35 (Washington, D.C.: Oct. 30, 2007) and GAO, *Homeland Security: Federal Efforts Are Helping to Address Some Challenges Faced by State and Local Fusion Centers*, GAO-08-636T (Washington, D.C.: Apr. 17, 2008).

In June 2008, we reported on the federal government's efforts to implement the Information Sharing Environment, which was established to facilitate the sharing of terrorism and homeland security information.[24] We recommended that the Program Manager for the Information Sharing Environment and stakeholders more fully define the scope and specific results to be achieved and develop performance measures to track progress. The Program Manager has taken steps to address these recommendations but has not fully addressed them. We are continuing to review federal agencies' efforts to implement the Information Sharing Environment and expect to report the results of this work later this year. Finally, in December 2009, we reported on our assessment of DHS and FBI efforts to share information with local and tribal officials in border communities and recommended that DHS and FBI more fully identify the information needs of, and establish partnerships with, local and tribal officials along the borders; identify promising practices in developing border intelligence products with fusion centers and obtain feedback on the products; and define the suspicious activities that local and tribal officials in border communities are to report and how to report them.[25] DHS agreed with the recommendations and provided a number of actions they were taking or planned to take to implement these suggested changes. The FBI did not provide comments.

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[24]GAO, *Information Sharing Environment: Definition of the Results to Be Achieved in Improving Terrorism-Related Information Sharing Is Needed to Guide Implementation and Assess Progress*, GAO-08-492 (Washington, D.C.: June 25, 2008). Section 1016 of the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004 (Pub. L. No. 108-458, 118 Stat. 3638, 3664-3670 (2004)), as amended by the 9/11 Commission Act (Pub. L. No. 110-53, 121 Stat. 266, 313-317 (2007)), mandated the President to establish an Information Sharing Environment that is to provide and facilitate the means for sharing terrorism and homeland security information among all appropriate federal, state, local, tribal, and private sector entities through the use of policy guidelines and technologies. The act also required that the President appoint a program manager to oversee the development and implementation of the Information Sharing Environment.

[25]GAO, *Information Sharing: Federal Agencies Are Sharing Border and Terrorism Information with Local and Tribal Law Enforcement Agencies, but Additional Efforts Are Needed*, GAO-10-41 (Washington, D.C.: Dec. 18, 2010).

I&A Has Initiatives to Enhance Its Intelligence Products, but Strengthening These Initiatives Could Help Ensure That Products Are Useful and Responsive to State and Local Needs

I&A has increased the number of intelligence products it disseminates to its state and local partners and is taking steps to work with fusion centers to increase their dissemination. I&A also has initiatives to identify state and local information needs to ensure that its products provide information of importance to these partners but it has not worked with states to establish milestones for identifying these needs, which could better hold I&A accountable for assisting states in completing this process in a timely manner. Further, I&A has developed a new customer survey intended to gather more detailed feedback on its products, but it could enhance the transparency and accountability of its efforts and provide assurance that partners' views are informing its products by periodically reporting to its state and local partners on the steps it has taken to assess and respond to this feedback.

I&A Has Increased the Number of Intelligence Products It Issues to State and Local Partners and Is Taking Steps to Ensure Better Dissemination of These Products

To address requirements of the Homeland Security Act of 2002, as amended, and the 9/11 Commission Act, I&A prepares intelligence products on a number of topics for its many customers, including its state and local partners. I&A prepares these intelligence products based on a number of factors, including departmental priorities, areas of expertise, and departmental and customer needs. Examples of I&A products that are targeted to or adapted for state and local partners are as follows:

- *Daily Intelligence Highlights:* Provide a compilation of significant and developing issues that affect homeland security.

- *Roll Call Release:* Designed to provide information on possible tactics or techniques that could be used by terrorists or criminals. I&A prepares these products jointly with the FBI and the ITACG. Topics covered in prior Roll Call Releases include concealment of explosive devices and homemade explosives.

- *Homeland Security Monitor:* Provides multiple articles on a theme or topic. Examples of Homeland Security Monitors include the Border Security Monitor and Cyber Security Monitor.

- *Homeland Security Reference Aid:* Provides information and context on an issue in various formats, such as primers, handbooks, historical overviews, organizational charts, group profiles, or standalone graphics such as annotated maps and charts.

From June 2009 through May 2010, I&A disseminated 16 percent more analytic intelligence products to its state and local partners through fusion centers than the previous year, and more than twice the number released over the previous 2 years. I&A also disseminates analytic products it develops jointly with the FBI, other federal agencies, and fusion centers. For example, of the products released from June 2009 through May 2010, approximately one-third were prepared jointly with the FBI or other federal agencies. In addition, from July 2007 through July 2010, I&A reported that it prepared several dozen joint products with fusion centers. These products included threat assessments for special events, such as the Presidential Inauguration and the Super Bowl.

I&A also provides intelligence reports to fusion centers, as well as to federal agencies and members of the intelligence community, in the form of Homeland Intelligence Reports.[26] These reports provide unanalyzed intelligence—generated by a single, unvalidated source—derived from operational or law enforcement data that I&A evaluated because of their homeland security relevance. From June 2009 through May 2010, I&A disseminated thousands of Homeland Intelligence Reports to its state and local partners through fusion centers. I&A officials noted that the number of reports disseminated has increased over time because of the overall increase in the number of submissions from DHS components, such as U.S. Customs and Border Protection and U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, as well as greater reporting by state and local partners.

In 2009, I&A commissioned a study in response to concerns voiced by state and local first responders and first preventers (e.g., law enforcement, fire departments, emergency management, health services, critical infrastructure providers, and other relevant stakeholders) that they were not receiving enough useful information products from fusion centers. The study examined a number of issues, such as how fusion centers disseminate products to these partners—what the study referred to as the "last mile" of dissemination—in order to identify common challenges and best practices. The March 2010 report contains recommendations for I&A and fusion centers.[27] Recommendations for I&A include

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[26]I&A generates Homeland Intelligence Reports and also further disseminates reports prepared by other DHS components or state and local analysts.

[27]MITRE Corporation, *Office of Intelligence and Analysis Fusion Center Dissemination Study* (March 2010).

- ensuring that the results of the study are made widely available;
- working with fusion centers to discuss how some ideas from the report (e.g., establishing a policy for product dissemination) could be implemented;
- ensuring that deployed I&A officers can help fusion centers adopt best practices and policies;
- expanding the development of products geared towards first responders and preventers; and
- incorporating descriptions of why the distributed product is relevant to the state or local entity.

In response to these recommendations, the Acting Director of I&A's State and Local Program Office said that I&A intelligence officers at fusion centers have been directed to work with their fusion centers to develop better policies and procedures for product dissemination.

I&A Is Taking Steps to Identify State Information Needs, but Establishing Milestones for Completing Efforts Could Better Hold I&A Accountable to Assist States and Support Future Product Development

As of August 2010, I&A had worked with 9 of 50 states to collect and validate their definition of the kinds of information they need for their homeland security efforts. I&A was also working with another 32 states to help identify and define their needs. In 2007, I&A began its initial effort to identify the information needs of its state and local partners in conjunction with a pilot study that found that I&A had not identified fusion center needs for product development or produced intelligence products tailored to those needs.[28] Specifically, the study found that fusion center leaders at pilot sites did not believe that DHS intelligence products fully met their mission needs by providing information of operational importance to state and local law enforcement. The study also found that DHS did not have an intelligence process that identified fusion center needs to inform reporting and analysis, produced products tailored to those requirements, or collected feedback from fusion centers on the value of these products.

During 2007, I&A identified the information needs from five of the six fusion centers that it contacted during its pilot study, according to I&A officials. These information needs included topics such as border security and threats posed by prison radicalization. I&A reached out to nine additional fusion centers in 2008, and was able to obtain and validate information needs from four of them, which submitted their needs on a

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[28]CENTRA Technology Incorporated, *Enhancing DHS Information Support to State and Local Fusion Centers: Results of the Chief Intelligence Officer's Pilot Project and Next Steps* (February 2008).

voluntary basis. Thus, over the first year and a half of these efforts, I&A obtained and validated information needs from a total of nine fusion centers. I&A planned to visit an additional eight fusion centers in 2009 but only visited one center before efforts were suspended in March 2009, with no resulting compendium of fusion center needs. According to a senior I&A official, the process I&A was using to obtain these needs was time consuming and inefficient. The official explained that a number of different I&A entities were involved in gathering these needs, visiting fusion centers one at a time, and following up with each to validate the needs.

In March 2009, I&A refocused its efforts to identify Standing Information Needs for each state, which I&A defines as "any subject, general or specific, for which there is a continuing need for intelligence, which will establish a foundation for guiding intelligence collection efforts and reporting activities." Examples include the need for information on individuals or groups that are capable of attacking critical infrastructure and key resources, and emerging cross-border connections between transnational criminal organizations or gangs. According to an Acting Deputy Director of I&A's Domestic Threat Analysis Division, Standing Information Needs are focused on long-term analytic needs, whereas prior efforts to collect information needs were focused on identifying and providing products in response to more immediate information needs—a function now handled through I&A's Single Point of Service initiative, which is discussed later in this report.

I&A describes its approach to assisting states in identifying their Standing Information Needs as a two-fold process. First, I&A provides states with a list of general topics—such as critical infrastructure protection—that align with DHS's Standing Information Needs for their use in identifying areas of interest. I&A then poses a series of questions to state fusion center personnel to help them define more detailed information needs under those topics in an organized and complete manner.[29] In October 2009, I&A began soliciting these needs from all state fusion centers with I&A

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[29]According to I&A, intelligence officers located on site at a state primary fusion center are responsible for working with fusion center officials to develop information needs. These primary fusion centers are designated by each state's governor and are responsible for passing relevant homeland security information to other fusion centers in the state, as well as nonparticipating law enforcement agencies. As intelligence officers are assigned to fusion centers, I&A begins working with those fusion centers to develop their needs. I&A also has two to three additional staff dedicated to working with these fusion centers on needs development.

intelligence officers, except for 3 that had taken part in the pilot phase of the program. As of August 2010, 9 states had completed efforts to identify their information needs, 12 states had completed drafts that were awaiting final state approval, and 20 states were in the process of drafting their needs. After the states have finalized their Standing Information Needs, I&A plans to assist them in prioritizing those needs.

According to the Deputy Director of I&A's Collection and Requirements Division, I&A has begun providing products to states in response to Standing Information Needs that the states have submitted. The official noted that these products are labeled in a manner that makes a clear link between the state's identified need and the product that is issued, and that the products are also sent to other stakeholders that may have similar interests. Thus, I&A reports that it can track states' needs from the time they are received through each product provided in response to those needs. According to I&A, this current effort is completed manually and is labor intensive. I&A is currently researching tools to automate the Standing Information Needs process to ensure that products are reaching as many customers as possible by distributing reports generated as a result of these needs to all interested parties.

I&A is making progress in gathering and responding to state Standing Information Needs and has developed internal milestones for completing the identification of these needs. According to standard program management principles, time frames or milestones should typically be incorporated as part of a road map to achieve a specific desired outcome or result; in this case, development of a nationwide compendium of state and local information needs.[30] According to I&A, because these needs are state-owned and approved documents, I&A cannot compel states to meet its internal milestones. Nevertheless, working closely with states to jointly develop such milestones is particularly important given the past challenges I&A has encountered in identifying these needs, and given that it has spent nearly 3 years in this process and has completed efforts to identify needs from nine states to date.

According to the Deputy Director of I&A's Collection Requirements Division, while assisting states in developing their Standing Information Needs is a significant priority, the biggest challenge the division faces in addressing this priority is limited resources. I&A has two to three staff

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[30]Project Management Institute, *The Standard for Program Management* © (2006).

assigned to work with states to gather these needs and those staff get pulled from this task to deal with other, higher priority issues. For example, the official noted that in the spring of 2010, the staff were taken from this work to advise the U.S. Coast Guard on methods of information gathering and reporting regarding the British Petroleum Deepwater Horizon oil spill. While we recognize that states have the lead in defining their needs, given the importance that both I&A and its state and local partners place on having state and local needs drive intelligence and product development, it is important that these needs be identified as expeditiously as possible. Working with states to establish milestones for developing their information needs and identifying and addressing any barriers to developing those needs and meeting milestones could better hold I&A accountable for assisting the states in the timely completion of this process.

I&A Is Analyzing Feedback on Intelligence Products, but Reporting the Results of the Analysis to State and Local Partners Could Provide Better Transparency and Accountability to Stakeholders

Historically, the primary mechanism I&A used to collect feedback on its intelligence products was to include a reference to an unclassified e-mail address in each product that recipients could use to submit comments. Other feedback mechanisms include Web sites used to disseminate information, teleconferences, and information gathered by I&A officers located at fusion centers, a practice that officials at 6 of the 10 fusion centers we contacted preferred versus replying via e-mail.

The level of feedback I&A has received on its products through this e-mail address has increased and has largely been positive. Specifically, from June 2008 through May 2009, I&A's report to Congress on voluntary customer feedback—required by the 9/11 Commission Act—shows that I&A received 175 feedback responses on intelligence products from state and local customers, versus 50 responses during the prior reporting period. I&A's analysis of the responses show that about 67 percent were positive, meaning that respondents felt they were useful for planning and resource allocation.[31] Appendix I presents more information on how I&A categorizes the feedback it has received. Officials at 9 of the 10 fusion centers we contacted said that they found I&A's products to be generally

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[31]See I&A, *Voluntary Feedback from State, Local, Tribal, and Private Sector Consumers, 2009 Report to Congress* (Sept. 15, 2009). The remaining 33 percent of responses were split between "neutral" and "constructive." I&A defines neutral comments as those that advised I&A to further disseminate the products, and constructive comments as those that requested additional analytic content, downgrade of classification to facilitate greater sharing, or formatting changes.

helpful. For example, officials from 2 fusion centers cited I&A reports on the attempted Christmas Day 2009 airline bombing as examples of relevant information that was provided to them in a timely manner. Regarding Homeland Intelligence Reports, I&A said that state and local partners' feedback has been minimal, and that it is continuing to encourage them to comment on these reports so that I&A can adjust these products to meet its partners' needs. One example cited in I&A's latest customer feedback report to Congress illustrates the importance of obtaining feedback for supporting I&A efforts to improve its future products. Specifically, a fusion center expressed concerns that the perspectives of 3 southwest border state fusion centers were not included in an assessment that I&A headquarters produced on border violence. The feedback resulted in teleconferences and other I&A actions to ensure that state and local perspectives are included in future assessments of border violence.

According to I&A officials, the amount and detail of feedback received to date, while positive, has been of limited use in improving product development. Thus, in 2010 I&A began using a new customer satisfaction survey to gather more meaningful feedback from state and local partners on its intelligence products and other areas of support.[32] For example, the survey asks respondents how the product was used to support their mission, how it could be improved, and their level of satisfaction with the timeliness and relevance of the product to the respondents' intelligence needs. I&A plans to use the survey results to establish who in the state and local community is accessing its reports, and to make improvements to intelligence products that increase customer satisfaction. According to the Chief of I&A's newly formed Customer Assurance Branch—which is responsible for managing efforts to collect and analyze feedback on I&A's analytic services—I&A began deploying the survey to all recipients of products marked "For Official Use Only" in March 2010. As of May 2010, I&A officials said that they had received several hundred responses to this survey, approximately half of which were from state, local, tribal, and territorial partners—more than double the number of responses from these partners over the previous year of reporting.

The results of these feedback surveys are to be sent directly to the analysts and divisions preparing intelligence products for incorporation

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[32]On September 25, 2009, I&A filed a 60-day notice in the *Federal Register* (74 *Fed. Reg.* 48994 (2009)), announcing its intent to conduct customer satisfaction surveys for state, local, and tribal officials—to meet 9/11 Commission Act requirements—and extended the public comment period by 30 days on December 15, 2009 (74 *Fed. Reg.* 66372 (2009)).

into ongoing and future work, according to agency officials. The officials noted that this survey is to be one part of a larger effort to capture and manage feedback on not only I&A's intelligence products, but also services that it provides internally to its analysts and report preparers.

According to I&A, once it has gathered data for one full quarter, it will begin to examine different ways that it can compile and assess the information gathered from these surveys. I&A anticipates that its efforts will include organizing feedback survey responses by the type of product issued (e.g., Homeland Security Monitor), analytic division, and product topic (e.g., border security or critical infrastructure). Organizing feedback in this way could help I&A determine the value and responsiveness of its particular product types to state and local customer needs, and in turn help I&A focus its limited resources. At the time of our review, I&A planned to report the results of such analyses to Congress through its upcoming 2010 report to Congress on voluntary feedback from state and local customers.

I&A has also taken initial steps to report the results of its feedback analysis directly to state and local customers. Specifically, during the summer of 2010, I&A provided briefings on the value of this feedback during two stakeholder forums, according to an official from I&A's Customer Assurance Branch. This official added that I&A plans to continue using stakeholder forums—such as conferences and meetings of fusion center directors—to report on I&A's assessment of state and local feedback and its use in refining I&A products. However, I&A had not developed plans on when it will provide such reporting, how frequently, or in what level of detail. Standards for Internal Control in the Federal Government require agencies to ensure effective communication with external stakeholders that may have a significant impact on an agency achieving its goals—in this case, I&A's state and local information-sharing partners. In addition, standard program management principles call for time frames or milestones to be developed as part of a road map to achieve a specific desired result. As I&A moves forward with its efforts to collect and analyze feedback from state and local partners, developing plans for reporting the results of its feedback analysis—including time frames and level of detail—to these partners and the actions it has taken in response could help I&A demonstrate that the feedback is important and makes a difference. In turn, this could encourage state and local partners to provide more feedback and ultimately make I&A's products and services more useful.

I&A Has Deployed Personnel to Fusion Centers and Provided Other Services to State and Local Partners That Generally Have Been Well Received

In addition to intelligence products, I&A provides a number of other services to its state and local partners to enhance information sharing, analytic capabilities, and operational support that generally have been well-received, based on our discussions with officials at 10 fusion centers and published third-party reports on I&A operations. For example, I&A has deployed intelligence officers—who assist state and local partners in a number of information-sharing efforts—to more than half of all fusion centers. I&A also facilitates access to information-sharing networks, provides training directly to fusion center personnel, and operates a 24-hour service to respond to state and local requests for information and other support.

## I&A Plans to Deploy Intelligence Officers to All Fusion Centers by the End of Fiscal Year 2011

As part of its efforts to support fusion centers, I&A's State and Local Program Office assigns intelligence officers to fusion centers. These officers serve as DHS's representative to fusion centers and assist them in a number of efforts—such as providing connectivity to classified data systems, training opportunities, and warnings about threats—and generally educating them on how to better use DHS capabilities to support their homeland security missions. In addition, I&A assigns regional directors to fusion centers who, among other things, are responsible for supervising I&A intelligence officers at fusion centers within their region and providing operational and intelligence assistance to the centers, particularly those without intelligence officers on-site. As of August 2010, I&A had deployed 62 intelligence officers and 6 regional directors to fusion centers. This represents an increase of 32 officers and the same number of regional directors since June 2009. I&A plans to have an intelligence officer deployed to each of its 72 designated fusion centers, as well as appoint 10 regional directors, by the end of fiscal year 2011.[33] Figure 1

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[33]Of the 72 designated fusion centers, 50 (one in each state) are considered the primary designated state fusion centers. The remaining 22 centers are "secondary designated" fusion centers. Secondary fusion centers are located in cities that receive Urban Area Security Initiative funding—grants administered by the Federal Emergency Management Agency to state, local, tribal jurisdictions, and urban areas to build and sustain national preparedness capabilities—and agree to work in conjunction with the primary fusion center. All 72 designated fusion centers are owned and operated by the state or urban areas in which they are located; agree to follow *Fusion Center Guidelines* (a DOJ- and DHS-developed set of guidelines for developing and operating a fusion center) and work to achieve baseline capabilities (a DOJ- and DHS-developed set of standards to help ensure that fusion centers will have the necessary structures, processes, and tools in place to support their missions); receive some level of federal support; and are comprised of two or more state or local agencies. Appendix IV contains additional information on the *Fusion Center Guidelines* and baseline capabilities.

shows the locations where I&A intelligence officers and regional directors had been deployed as of August 2010.

Figure 1: Locations of State and Local Fusion Centers and Deployed I&A Intelligence Officers and Regional Directors, August 2010
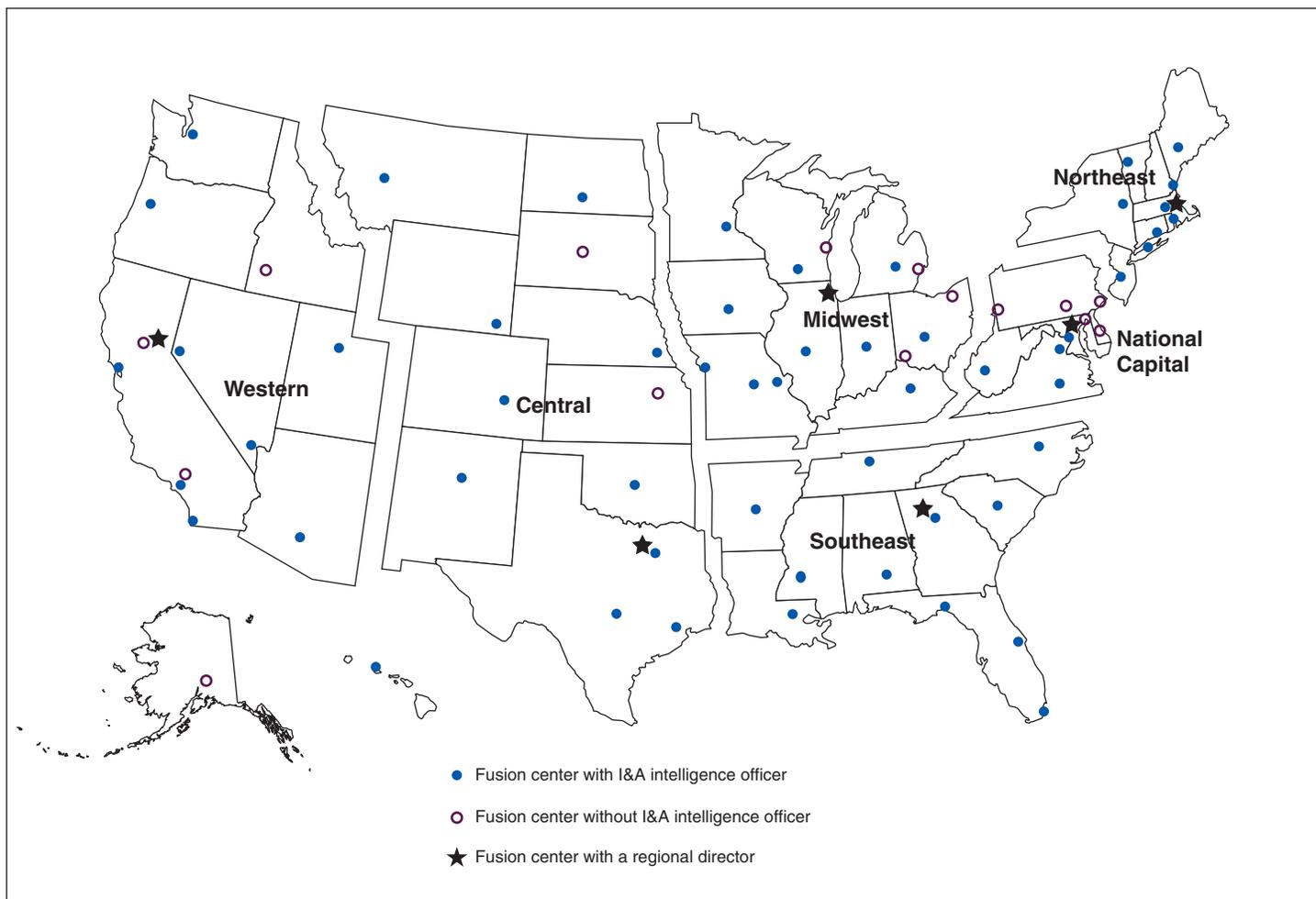
Sources: GAO analysis of I&A data and Map Resources.

Notes:

There are 2 fusion centers in the Los Angeles, California, area: 1 in Los Angeles with an I&A intelligence officer and 1 in Anaheim with no I&A intelligence officer.

Sacramento, California, has 2 fusion centers, 1 with no I&A intelligence officer deployed and 1 with a deployed I&A intelligence officer who is currently serving as the Acting Western Regional Director.

Maynard, Massachusetts has an I&A intelligence officer who is serving as the Acting Northeast Regional Director.

Of the 10 fusion centers we contacted, 7 had an I&A intelligence officer or regional director on site and fusion center officials at all 7 locations had positive comments about the support the I&A officials provided. Fusion center officials at the other 3 locations said that they received support through regional directors in their area or an I&A officer in a neighboring state. Fusion center officials at 8 of the 10 centers noted that the presence of I&A officers or regional directors (on site or in their region) was important for obtaining intelligence products from DHS. According to one director, the center was recently assigned an I&A officer who alerted center officials to products of which they were previously unaware. In particular, the director noted that the I&A officer was able to access and share Border Patrol daily reports that were very helpful to local law enforcement operations. In addition, officials at 9 of the 10 fusion centers we contacted said that the I&A officers were particularly helpful in providing technical assistance (e.g., guidance on how the center should operate) or in notifying the centers about available training.

I&A Has Facilitated Fusion Center Access to Classified and Sensitive Information

As of May 2010, I&A had funded and facilitated the installation of the Homeland Secure Data Network (HSDN) at more than half of all fusion centers, which allows the federal government to share Secret-level intelligence and information with state, local, and tribal partners. Additional centers are undergoing facilities certification in order to be accredited to house HSDN.[34] I&A has established a goal of deploying HSDN to all 72 fusion centers.

In addition, DHS's Homeland Security Information Network (HSIN) is used for sharing sensitive but unclassified information with state and local partners through a number of "community of interest" portals. One of the key portals is HSIN-Intel, which houses a section known as the Homeland Security State and Local Intelligence Community of Interest (HS SLIC)—a virtual community for federal, state, and local intelligence analysts to interact.[35] As of June 2010, HS SLIC had approximately 1,900 state and

[34]DHS and the FBI are jointly responsible for ensuring that a facility meets certification requirements, with final certification being granted following an inspection from the DHS Office of Security.

[35]Also within HSIN-Intel is the Homeland Security Federal, State, Local, and Tribal section. This section is similar to HS SLIC but is geared towards personnel who are not considered intelligence professionals and it does not contain sensitive information. According to I&A, there were approximately 1,200 Homeland Security Federal, State, Local, and Tribal section user accounts as of June 2010.

local users, an increase from the approximately 1,082 state and local users in September 2008. In addition to the HSIN portal, HS SLIC program officials in I&A facilitate weekly teleconferences, biweekly secure teleconferences, and quarterly conferences to share information with interested state and local parties. In an April 2009 report, the Homeland Security Institute (HSI) credited HS SLIC with fostering "the broader sharing of homeland security intelligence and information."[36] In addition, all 10 of the fusion centers we contacted were using HS SLIC, and 6 of the 10 cited it as useful for identifying relevant information that supports fusion center activities.

I&A Provides Analytic and Other Training to State and Local Officials, Which Has Also Received Positive Feedback

In response to a 9/11 Commission Act requirement to develop a curriculum for training state, local, and tribal partners in the intelligence cycle and other issues involving the sharing of federal intelligence, I&A has a number of courses for state and local analysts and officials. For example, I&A's State and Local Program Office offers training courses directly to fusion center personnel, as shown in table 1.

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[36]Homeland Security Institute, *Independent Evaluation of Office of Intelligence and Analysis Programs* (Apr. 25, 2009). This study was requested by I&A in 2008.

Table 1: DHS and I&A Training Courses Provided to Fusion Centers

Course	Description	Offerings
Analytic and Critical Thinking Skills Workshop[a]	This course provides knowledge in critical thinking and analytic methodologies. I&A, using contractors, delivers this training directly to fusion centers. Feedback obtained by I&A and provided to us for three specific course offerings in mid-2009 indicates that the majority of participants considered the course content to be "good" or "very good." I&A tracks the number of state, local, and tribal personnel that have received this training as a performance measure.	As of June 2010, I&A delivered this training to 320 state and local analysts.
Open Source Enterprise Practitioners Training	I&A created this training on use of open source tools and techniques based on direct feedback from fusion center participants during pilot training. I&A categorizes participant feedback on training offered as of June 2009 as "overall positive," and is working to develop additional training material.	From 2008 through June 2010, I&A has provided this training to 964 students at 45 fusion centers and has also provided the course to Immigration and Customs Enforcement offices and U.S. Coast Guard headquarters.
Privacy and Civil Liberties Training	DHS—through its Office of Civil Rights and Civil Liberties and Privacy Office—provides training on privacy, civil rights, and civil liberties for all DHS intelligence officers before they are deployed to fusion centers and throughout their careers, and supports the training of fusion center personnel. DHS employs a "three-pronged" approach to deliver this training, as follows: • Providing privacy and civil liberties training to each new I&A intelligence officer hired for deployment to a fusion center. • In fiscal year 2010, DHS developed an expanded "toolkit" of civil rights and civil liberties resources to support training for all fusion center personnel. Funding for the toolkit is provided by DOJ's Bureau of Justice Assistance, I&A, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, and the Program Manager for the Information Sharing Environment. In conjunction with this effort, the Office of Civil Rights and Civil Liberties and the Privacy Office have partnered with Bureau of Justice Assistance and the Global Justice Information Sharing Initiative to launch a web portal with links to all federal privacy and civil liberties resources. • Delivering a Training of Trainers program, which is designed to allow DHS to train fusion center privacy officers so they can train staff at their home fusion centers. The program is administered by the Civil Rights and Civil Liberties Institute and the DHS Privacy Office.	Provided prior to each officer deployment. In fiscal year 2010, DHS trained officers who have been or will be deployed to 13 locations. DHS also provided follow-up training at the 2010 National Fusion Center Conference to all of the DHS officers deployed to fusion centers on privacy, civil rights, and civil liberties issues associated with Homeland Intelligence Reports. As of December 2009, DHS had delivered pilot training sessions to a total of 323 participants and to another 227 participants during related workshops. According to I&A, training participants provided an average rating of 4.11 (on a 1 to 5 scale) for overall usefulness and effectiveness. As of June 2010, I&A reported that 46 applications for the training were pending from fusion centers in 36 states and the District of Columbia. DHS launched this program during the third quarter of fiscal year 2010. The training was held in conjunction with regional fusion center conferences. During this quarter, DHS trained 60 privacy, civil rights, and civil liberties officers from 58 fusion centers.

Source: I&A.

[a]According to I&A, the Critical Thinking and Analytic Methods course replaced the Analytic and Critical Thinking Skills Workshop in 2010 and covers similar subject matter, but I&A provided no further details.

Course feedback that I&A provided to us is largely positive. Further, officials from 8 of the 10 fusion centers we contacted reported receiving training provided or sponsored by I&A and were generally satisfied with this training. In addition to the courses above, I&A's Intelligence Training Branch offers courses that are geared towards DHS intelligence analysts but made available to state and local analysts. These cover various topics, such as basic overviews of the intelligence community, critical thinking and analytic methods, and skills for writing intelligence products and briefings. Participant feedback scores provided as of late 2009 indicate that the courses are well-received, and I&A has begun to provide some of this training directly to state and local analysts at field locations.

Single Point of Service Is Intended to Allow I&A to Provide Products in Response to Immediate State and Local Needs

I&A also provides products and support in response to a variety of state and local information requests through a 24-hour support mechanism called the Single Point of Service. The service was established in May 2008 in response to an I&A-sponsored contractor study that recommended that I&A provide state and local partners with a 24-hour resource to request support, communicate product requirements, and share critical information with DHS and its components.[37] Through the Single Point of Service, I&A has consolidated and standardized its tracking of state and local customer queries and communication by use of a single term—State and Local Support Request—which includes requests for information, production, administrative tasks, analysis, and various support functions. In addition, I&A has developed a set of goals, key performance indicators, and measures to track various performance aspects of service, such as the timeliness of responses and percentage of responses completed. Additional information on these items, as well as descriptions of State and Local Support Request categories is contained in appendix II.

To date, fusion centers that have I&A intelligence officers on site have used the Single Point of Service the most. Specifically, in the first quarter of fiscal year 2010, deployed I&A intelligence officers accounted for 76 percent of all requests submitted. According to I&A officials, the I&A intelligence officers on site are the focal points for the fusion center to submit requests to the Single Point of Service. According to the HSI report, the Single Point of Service program "greatly increased I&A's response to

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[37]CENTRA Technology Incorporated, *Enhancing DHS Information Support to State and Local Fusion Centers: Results of the Chief Intelligence Officer's Pilot Project and Next Steps* (February 2008).

the information needs of fusion centers," and that the 11 fusion centers that it spoke with "credited this program with significantly improving the process for requesting and receiving a timely response from DHS."[38]

Appendix III contains additional information on I&A products and services and other initiatives designed to support fusion centers and facilitate information sharing.

Defining How I&A Intends to Meet Its State and Local Information-Sharing Mission and Establishing Accountability for Results Could Better Position I&A for the Future

Part of I&A's mission is to share information with state and local partners, but I&A has not defined how it intends to meet this mission or established a framework to hold itself and its divisions accountable for meeting it. As of September 2010, I&A had developed a high-level officewide strategy that defines goals and objectives and had taken initial steps to further define the portion of its mission related to state and local information sharing. However, I&A had not yet identified and documented the programs and activities that are most important for executing this mission or how it will measure its performance in meeting this mission and be held accountable for results.

I&A Has Taken Initial Steps to Assess How It Could Better Achieve Its State and Local Information-Sharing Mission

I&A has undertaken a variety of initiatives to support its state and local information-sharing mission and has taken initial steps to determine how it could better achieve this mission. Historically, I&A's state and local programs and activities have been in response to a variety of factors, including its focus on addressing statutory requirements and efforts to leverage and support fusion centers that state and local agencies had established. I&A's efforts to implement this mission have also been affected by administration changes and changing and evolving I&A leadership priorities. In addition, I&A has had to balance resources for supporting fusion centers and other state and local information-sharing programs and activities against other competing priorities. State and local partners are one of a number of customer sets the office supports along with the Secretary, other DHS components such as U.S. Customs and

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[38]Homeland Security Institute, *Independent Evaluation of Office of Intelligence and Analysis Programs* (Apr. 25, 2009).

Border Protection, other federal agencies, and the intelligence community—with each competing for resources. For example, although Congress—through the 9/11 Commission Act—has stressed the importance of supporting fusion centers, DHS has not provided consistent funding for I&A to support the centers, although I&A has made investments on its own. Specifically, until the fiscal year 2010 budget cycle, DHS did not request funds to support the deployment of I&A personnel to these centers. Rather, I&A had to reprogram funds from other areas to support this critical part of its state and local mission. According to the then-Director of I&A's State and Local Program Office, the lack of a consistent funding stream to support these deployments delayed I&A's efforts to provide needed resources to these centers.

I&A sponsored a study in 2007 to identify how it could enhance DHS's support to fusion centers, a key part of its efforts to meet its state and local mission. The results of the study identified several areas for improvement, including the need to better respond to fusion center requests for information and provide centers with reporting and analysis that addresses their mission-critical information needs.[39] One of the initiatives I&A took in response that provided a more organized and integrated approach to supporting state and local customers was creating a single point within the office that these customers could contact for their questions and requests for support and that would be held accountable for responding to these needs.

In addition, in 2008, I&A sponsored an agencywide study that was conducted by the HSI to evaluate I&A programs related to its role in providing homeland security intelligence and information to various federal officials and agencies, members of Congress, and the department's state and local partners, among others. The resulting April 2009 report noted that I&A is an emerging organization that is still in the initial stages of its organizational development, including developing its strategic planning capabilities and strategic business processes.[40] The report also noted that the lack of a strategic plan hindered I&A's efforts to conduct any type of officewide program or resource planning that could be

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[39]CENTRA Technology Incorporated, *Enhancing DHS Information Support to State and Local Fusion Centers: Results of the Chief Intelligence Officer's Pilot Project and Next Steps* (February 2008).

[40]Homeland Security Institute, *Independent Evaluation of Office of Intelligence and Analysis Programs* (Apr. 25, 2009).

appropriately tied to its mission, goals, and objectives. As a result, HSI found that various I&A components had developed their own goals, priorities, processes, and procedures and, in some cases, may be working at cross-purposes. HSI also found that the lack of I&A efforts to allocate resources to support strategic goals and objectives prevented managers from organizing their efforts for long-term effectiveness, which left them unable to plan for growth or to adapt to emerging issues.

As a first step, HSI recommended that I&A go through a strategic planning process and develop an overarching strategic plan in order to provide I&A leadership with a road map for making organizational changes. Specifically, HSI recommended that I&A develop a strategy that defines its overall mission, goals, objectives, priorities, and performance measures. In December 2009, I&A developed a strategy that contains 4 overall goals that the office as a whole is to meet. For example, 1 of the goals is to serve as the premier provider of homeland security information and intelligence, and another goal is to build partnerships and foster teamwork. The strategy also contains 12 objectives that I&A plans to use to meet these goals. Two of these objectives focus on its state and local partners. The first is to strengthen the national network of fusion centers. Specifically, through a proposed Joint Fusion Center Program Management Office, I&A was to lead a DHS-wide effort to support fusion centers. The role of this office was to ensure coordination across all departmental components with the dual priorities of strengthening fusion centers and DHS intelligence products.[41] According to DHS, the office was to have five primary responsibilities to make fusion centers more effective. Specifically, the office was to

- survey state, local, and tribal law enforcement to get feedback on what information these "first preventers" need to do their job;
- develop a mechanism to gather, analyze, and share national, regional, and local threat information up and down the intelligence network;
- coordinate with fusion centers to continuously ensure they get the appropriate personnel and resources from DHS;
- provide training and exercises to build relationships between fusion center personnel and promote a sense of common mission; and
- train fusion center personnel to respect the civil liberties of American citizens.

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[41]JFC-PMO Planning Team, *A Plan for Establishing a Joint Fusion Center Program Management Office* (Feb, 5, 2010).

According to I&A officials, in August 2010, I&A did not receive congressional approval to establish this office. The officials noted that I&A's State and Local Program Office would assume the roles and responsibilities that were planned for the Joint Fusion Center Program Management Office.

The second objective that specifically addresses state and local partners is "to build, support, and integrate a robust information sharing capability among and between federal, state, local, tribal, and private sector partners." According to the Director of I&A's Program and Performance Management Division, most of the other 10 objectives will affect state and local partners—even though the objectives do not articulate this or discuss related programs and activities—and will involve components from across I&A's divisions and branches. For example, other goals and objectives involve identifying customer information needs, developing analytic products, obtaining feedback on products, and measuring performance. The Director noted that I&A may revise the strategy's goals and objectives in response to the February 2010 DHS Quadrennial Homeland Security Review Report to Congress, which outlines a strategic framework to guide the homeland security activities of DHS components.[42] Appendix IV contains additional information on the goals and objectives in I&A's strategy.

Defining and Documenting Programs and Activities That Collectively Support I&A's State and Local Mission Could Help Provide Transparency and Accountability for Results

I&A has begun its strategic planning efforts, but has not yet defined how it plans to meet its state and local information-sharing mission by identifying and documenting the specific programs and activities that are most important for executing this mission. Congressional committee members who have been trying to hold I&A accountable for achieving its state and local mission have been concerned about I&A's inability to demonstrate the priority and level of investment it is giving to this mission compared to its other functions, as evidenced by hearings conducted over the past several years.

I&A recognizes that it needs to take steps to address its state and local information-sharing mission and define and document priority programs and activities. For example, in June 2010, I&A conducted focus groups

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[42]See DHS, *Quadrennial Homeland Security Review Report: A Strategic Framework for a Secure Homeland* (February 2010). The report offers a vision for a secure homeland, specifies key mission priorities, and outlines goals for each of those mission areas.

with representatives of various customer sets—including its state and local partners—to gain a better understanding of their needs, according to the Director of I&A's Program and Performance Management Division. In addition, I&A has defined how it expects the State and Local Program Office to support fusion centers (through the roles and responsibilities originally envisioned for the Joint Fusion Center Program Management Office). However, I&A has not defined and documented the programs and activities that its other components—such as the Collections and Requirements Branch and the Production Management Division—will be held accountable for implementing that collectively will ensure that I&A meets its state and local mission.

In addition, I&A's current strategy addresses the role of the then-proposed Joint Fusion Center Program Management Office, but it generally does not provide information on the state and local programs and activities that I&A's components will be responsible for implementing. In its April 2009 report, HSI recommended that I&A divisions and branches create derivative plans that are linked to the strategy. Among other things, the derivative plans were to identify priority programs and activities, assign roles and responsibilities, and describe performance measures and incentives tied to performance. I&A leadership would then be responsible for ensuring that the divisions and branches implement their plans. I&A has decided not to develop the more specific derivative component plans or a plan or road map for how it will specifically meet its state and local mission. As a result, I&A cannot demonstrate to state and local customers, Congress, and other stakeholders that it has assessed and given funding priority to those programs and activities that it has determined are most effective for sharing information with state and local partners.

According to the Director of I&A's Program and Performance Management Division, more detailed plans are not needed because the organizational components know which parts of the strategy—and related state and local programs and activities—they are responsible for completing. However, relying on these components to know their roles and responsibilities without clearly delegating, documenting, and tracking implementation does not provide a transparent and reliable system of accountability for ensuring that the state and local mission is achieved. I&A officials said that the State and Local Program Office is to guide I&A's efforts to share information with state and local partners. However, they could not distinguish, for example, how this office would operate in relation to the other components or what authority or leverage it would have over these components' competing programs, activities, and investment decisions to ensure the state and local mission is achieved.

Our prior work has found that successful organizations clearly articulate the programs and activities that are needed to achieve specified missions or results, and the organization's priorities—including investment priorities—among these programs and activities.[43] Defining and documenting how I&A plans to meet its state and local information-sharing mission—including programs, activities, and priorities—could help I&A provide transparency and accountability to Congress, its state and local partners, and other stakeholders.

Defining Expected Results and Establishing Measures to Track Progress Could Help I&A Demonstrate How Well It Is Meeting Its State and Local Mission

I&A has not defined what state and local information-sharing results it expects to achieve from its program investments and the measures it will use to track the progress it is making in achieving these results. Currently, I&A has four performance measures related to its efforts to share information with state and local partners. All four of these measures provide descriptive information regarding activities and services that I&A provides to these partners. For example, they show the percentage of fusion centers that are staffed with I&A personnel and count the total number of state and local requests for support, as shown in table 2 below.

Table 2: I&A Performance Measures Related to Information Sharing with State and Local Partners

Performance Measure
Percentage of fusion centers staffed with personnel from I&A
Percentage of fusion centers with access to the Homeland Secure Data Network
Percent of Analytics and Critical Thinking Skills training delivered to state and local personnel
Total number of State and Local Support Requests reported quarterly.

Source: I&A.

However, none of these are measures that could allow I&A to demonstrate and report on the actual results, effects, or impacts of programs and activities or the overall progress it is making in meeting the needs of its partners. For example, the measure on the percentage of I&A personnel in fusion centers provides useful information on I&A efforts to deploy analysts to the field, but it does not provide information related to the effectiveness of the I&A personnel or the value they provide to their

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[43]See, for example, GAO, *Results-Oriented Government: GPRA Has Established a Solid Foundation for Achieving Greater Results*, GAO-04-38 (Washington, D.C.: Mar. 10, 2004).

customers, such as the extent to which these personnel enhance information sharing, analytic capabilities, and operational support. Developing such measures could help I&A support program and funding decisions.

Our past work and the experience of leading organizations have demonstrated that measuring performance allows organizations to track progress they are making toward intended results—including goals, objectives, and targets they expect to achieve—and gives managers critical information on which to base decisions for improving their programs.[44] They also show that adhering to results-oriented principles provides a means to strengthen program performance.[45] These principles include defining the results to be achieved and the measures that will be used to track progress towards these results. Our prior work also indicates that agencies that are successful in measuring performance strive to establish goals and measures at all levels of an agency so that decision makers have as complete information as they need for measuring and managing an agency's performance.[46]

I&A recognizes that it needs to develop more results-oriented measures to assess the effectiveness of its state and local information-sharing efforts. I&A intends to add additional performance measures to its strategic plan later this year, according to the Director of I&A's Program and Performance Management Division. The official noted, however, that these new measures will initially provide descriptive information about I&A's state and local programs and activities. The official said that I&A would develop measures that allow it to evaluate the extent to which these programs and activities are achieving their intended results at a later date, but he could not provide any details or documentation on next steps or time frames. The official explained that developing such measures for

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[44]For example, see GAO, *Managing for Results: Enhancing Agency Use of Performance Information for Management Decision Making*, GAO-05-927 (Washington, D.C.: Sept. 9, 2005); GAO, *Program Evaluation: Studies Helped Agencies Measure or Explain Program Performance*, GAO/GGD-00-204 (Washington, D.C.: Sept. 29, 2000); GAO, *Agency Performance Plans: Examples of Practices That Can Improve Usefulness to Decisionmakers*, GAO/GGD/AIMD-99-69 (Washington, D.C.: Feb. 26, 1999); and GAO, *Managing for Results: Strengthening Regulatory Agencies' Performance Management Practices*, GAO/GGD-00-10 (Washington, D.C.: Oct. 28, 1999).

[45]Project Management Institute, *The Standard for Program Management* © (2006).

[46]Appendix VI contains additional information on the attributes of results-oriented management.

information sharing and obtaining related data needed to track performance is a challenge not only to I&A but to other federal agencies. Standard program management principles note that time frames or milestones should typically be incorporated as part of a road map to achieve a specific desired outcome or result.

We also have recognized and reported that it is difficult to develop performance measures that show how certain information-sharing efforts have affected homeland security.[47] Nevertheless, we have recommended that agencies take steps towards establishing such measures to hold them accountable for the investments they make. We also recognize that agencies may need to evolve from relatively easier process measures that, for example, count the number of products provided to more meaningful measures that weigh customer satisfaction with the timeliness, usefulness, and accuracy of the information provided, until the agencies can establish outcome measures that determine what difference the information made to state or local homeland security efforts.

I&A may have the opportunity to develop measures that would provide more meaningful information by using the results of its new customer satisfaction survey. For example, I&A is gathering feedback on, among other things, how timely and responsive state and local customers find the information that I&A provides to them. I&A could possibly use this feedback to set annual targets for the level of timeliness and responsiveness that it would like to achieve and use the survey results to track progress towards these targets over time. I&A could in turn use this performance data to decide on future improvements. Since I&A was just beginning to collect and analyze the results of its customer satisfaction survey, it was too soon to tell if the survey results could produce the data on which to base performance measures. Nevertheless, establishing plans and time frames for developing ways to measure how I&A's information-sharing efforts have affected homeland security could help I&A, the department, and Congress monitor and measure the extent to which I&A's state and local information-sharing efforts are achieving their intended results, make needed improvements, and inform funding decisions.

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[47]See, for example, GAO, *Aviation Security: A National Strategy and Other Actions Would Strengthen TSA's Efforts to Secure Commercial Airport Perimeters and Access Controls*, GAO-09-399 (Washington, D.C.: Sept. 30, 2009); and GAO, *Department of Homeland Security: Progress Report on Implementation of Mission and Management Functions*, GAO-07-454 (Washington, D.C.: Aug. 17, 2007).

Conclusions

I&A has evolved in the more than 5 years since it was created and has developed more effective relationships with its state and local partners, especially through its support to fusion centers. It has also developed a variety of products and services to support these partners. I&A has opportunities, however, to build on these relationships, leverage these efforts, and demonstrate to Congress and these partners that it is meeting its statutory mission to share information with these partners to help protect the homeland. For example, working with states to establish milestones for identifying each state's information needs and identifying and working to resolve any barriers to completing this process could help hold I&A accountable for the timely completion of this process, which is an important step in supporting the development of future I&A products. Periodically informing state and local partners of how I&A analyzed the feedback they provided and what actions I&A took in response to this feedback and analyses could help strengthen I&A's working relationships with these partners and encourage them to continue to provide I&A feedback, which could ultimately make I&A's products and services more useful. Defining and documenting the specific programs and activities I&A's components and divisions will be held responsible for implementing so that I&A collectively can meet its state and local mission could help to establish clear direction and accountability. Finally, committing to plans and time frames for developing outcome-based performance measures that gauge the information-sharing results and impacts of I&A's state and local efforts and how these efforts have affected homeland security could help I&A and Congress establish accountability for funding provided. By taking all of these steps, I&A could potentially increase the usefulness of its products and services, the effectiveness of its investments, and the organization's accountability to Congress, key stakeholders, and the public for sharing needed homeland security information with state and local partners.

Recommendations for Executive Action

To help I&A strengthen its efforts to share information with state and local partners, we recommend that the Secretary of Homeland Security direct the Under Secretary for I&A to take the following four actions:

- Work with states to establish milestones for the timely completion of efforts to identify state information needs and identify and work to resolve any barriers to this timely completion.

- Periodically report to state and local information-sharing partners on the results of I&A's analysis of the product and services feedback these

partners provide and the actions I&A took in response to this feedback.

- Define and document the programs and activities its divisions and branches will be expected to implement in order for I&A to collectively meet its state and local information-sharing mission and provide accountability and transparency over its efforts.

- Establish plans and time frames for developing performance measures that gauge the results that I&A's information-sharing efforts have achieved and how they have enhanced homeland security.

Agency Comments and Our Evaluation

On August 6, 2010, we provided a draft of the sensitive version of this report to DHS for review and comment. In its written comments, DHS stated that the department, particularly I&A, concurred with all four recommendations and discussed efforts planned or underway to address them. Specifically, DHS agreed with our first recommendation related to the need for I&A to work with states to establish milestones for the timely completion of efforts to identify state information needs and identify and work to resolve any barriers to this timely completion. According to DHS, I&A has established internal milestones for the timely completion of this process. DHS noted, however, that while I&A advises and assists states with the development of their information needs, ultimately those outcomes are owned and controlled by the states themselves and, thus, I&A is unable to impose its milestones on them. Nevertheless, DHS noted that I&A is confident that it can work with states to develop mutually-agreed upon milestones for completing this process and will report progress towards meeting these milestones on a regular basis. Working with states to develop such milestones and reporting on progress will address the intent of our recommendation.

DHS also agreed with our second recommendation that I&A periodically report to state and local partners on the results of I&A's analysis of the products and services feedback these partners provide and the actions I&A took in response to this feedback. DHS noted that I&A plans to regularly report the results of its partners' products and services feedback, as well as the actions I&A took in response to that feedback, to these partners, DHS management, and Congress. In September 2010, after providing written comments, I&A officials informed us that they have taken steps to report the results of feedback analysis to state and local customers. Specifically, during the summer of 2010, I&A provided briefings on the value of this feedback during two stakeholder forums,

according to an official from I&A's Customer Assurance Branch. The official added that I&A plans to continue using stakeholder forums—such as conferences and meetings of fusion center directors—to report on I&A's assessment of state and local feedback and its use in refining I&A products. However, I&A had not developed plans for reporting the results of its feedback analysis moving forward—including time frames and level of detail—which would address the intent of this recommendation.

Further, DHS agreed with our third recommendation that I&A define and document the programs and activities its divisions and branches will be expected to implement in order for I&A to collectively meet its state and local information-sharing mission and provide accountability and transparency over its efforts. DHS noted that I&A was in the process of developing a new strategic plan that will include strategic-level measures and implementation plans. DHS added that the plan will establish organizational strategic objectives that I&A—through its divisions and branches—will be expected to achieve, to include information sharing with state and local entities, and will provide the measures by which its success will be gauged. Developing a plan that defines and documents how I&A plans to meet its state and local information-sharing mission—including programs, activities, and priorities—will meet the intent of this recommendation.

Finally, DHS agreed with our fourth recommendation that I&A establish plans and time frames for developing performance measures that gauge the results that I&A's information-sharing efforts have achieved and how they have enhanced homeland security. DHS noted that I&A is in the process of developing a new strategic implementation plan that will include strategic-level measures. DHS added that the plan will provide a basis for gauging, among other things, the results of I&A's information sharing efforts. We support I&A's intention to develop additional performance measures. However, to fully address the intent of our recommendation, I&A should commit to plans and time frames for developing outcome-based performance measures that gauge the information-sharing results and impacts of I&A's state and local efforts and how these efforts have affected homeland security.

The full text of DHS's written comments is reprinted in appendix VI. DHS also provided technical comments, which we considered and incorporated in this report where appropriate.

We are sending copies of this report to the Secretary of Homeland Security, appropriate congressional committees, and other interested parties. The report is also available at no charge on GAO's Web site at http://www.gao.gov.

If you or your staff have any questions about this report, please contact me at (202) 512-8777 or larencee@gao.gov. Contact points for our Offices of Congressional Relations and Public Affairs may be found on the last page of this report. Other key contributors to this report were Eric Erdman, Assistant Director; David Alexander; Adam Couvillion; Elizabeth Curda; Geoffrey Hamilton; Gary Malavenda; and Linda Miller.

Sincerely yours,

Eileen R. Larence
Director, Homeland Security and Justice Issues

Appendix I: Voluntary Feedback Responses for I&A Intelligence Products

Table 3 presents data on how the Office of Intelligence and Analysis (I&A) categorized the voluntary feedback responses over the past 2 annual periods for which data were gathered.

Table 3: Voluntary Feedback Response Categories for I&A Intelligence Products

Feedback category	Responses, June 2007 through May 2008[a]		Responses, June 2008 through May 2009	
	Number	Percent of total	Number	Percent of total
Positive[b]	29	58	118	67
Neutral[c]	9	18	28	16
Constructive[d]	12	24	29	17
Total	**50**	**100**	**175**	**100**

Source: GAO analysis of I&A data.

[a]I&A attributes low response totals in the June 2007 through May 2008 reporting period to the voluntary nature of the feedback and the "newness" of their requirements to gather feedback under the 9/11 Commission Act.

[b]I&A defines positive feedback as that which generally characterized intelligence products as useful for local planning and resource allocations. For the June 2008 through May 2009 data, I&A stated that "most of these responses were provided through deployed I&A intelligence officers on behalf of their respective state and local contacts and partners."

[c]I&A defines neutral feedback as that which generally advised I&A to further disseminate—or provide guidance on further dissemination of—specific products, but may not have provided any other specific feedback.

[d]I&A defines constructive feedback for June 2007 through May 2008 as that which often took the form of requests for additional analytic content or offered formatting suggestions to improve the presentation of analytic content. For the latter reporting period, it defines this feedback as generally taking the form of requests for a downgrade of the classification of the product in order to facilitate information sharing with state and local authorities.

Appendix II: Information on Single Point of Service Request Categories, Performance Metrics, and Performance to Date

Table 4 below describes the categories of Single Point of Service (SPS) State and Local Support Requests (SLSRs) received and tracked by the Office of Intelligence and Analysis (I&A).

Table 4: Categories of SLSRs

SLSR Category	Description
Administrative	Includes technical support, information assistance, contact information, and requests pertaining to procedural tasks.
Further Dissemination	Requests to actively increase exposure and visibility for a specific product within the intelligence community and state and local communities. These include postings to multimedia web pages and community forums, requests for internal distribution, dissemination to Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Components or the intelligence community, foreign disclosure, translation and classification changes.
Intelligence Production	Intelligence requests for assessments that require intensive analytical support, intelligence collaboration, or intelligence community or DHS Component input. These SLSRs include detailed trend analysis, production, or any joint intelligence product.
Homeland Intelligence Report Production	A separate and recognizable category that denotes production, nomination, and review of Homeland Intelligence Reports.
Name Trace	Requests involve searching one or more databases for information on a specific person or persons. Name traces include searches on law enforcement and intelligence databases.
Watch Intelligence	Includes intelligence or law enforcement requests for immediate requirements for products or information of intelligence value. This category includes intelligence evaluation, information requests, and fusion.
Suspicious Activity Report Evaluation	These SLSRs require distribution, clarification, or fusion of information pertaining to suspicious or potentially suspicious activities [a].
Suspicious Activity Report Analysis	Requests, spurred by a suspicious activity, that indicate a need for, or are best supported through, analysis or assessment. This category reflects requests that require an analytical effort by DHS, its Components, or other members of the intelligence community. This category includes Suspicious Activity Report trend analysis, predictive analysis, or impact assessment.

Source: I&A.

[a] A suspicious activity is any person or group collecting intelligence or conducting preoperational planning related to terrorism, criminal, or other illicit activity. These activities include surveillance, photography of facilities, site breaches or physical intrusions, cyber attacks, and the examination of security.

I&A has developed a set of priorities for its state and local customers and External Operations Division—shown in table 5—which it reports using as the basis for determining performance measures and quantifying data collected through the SLSR acceptance and response process.

Table 5: SPS Priorities for Servicing State and Local Customers and Its External Operations Division

State and Local Customer Priorities	External Operations Division Priorities
Create an efficient and standardized means of requesting information	Identify and improve information flow through the SLSR process
Gain a full understanding of DHS capabilities and legality of search requests	Increase customer satisfaction with the SLSR process and products
Improve communication of product timelines and notification if timelines change	
Ensure accurate products that meet substantive requirements	
Offer skills development and analytic-specific training opportunities	
Identify and prioritize timely support following critical incidents	
Identify and utilize proper dissemination channels	
Consolidate point of access for requests	

Source: I&A.

Note: Priorities are not in order of importance and are weighted equally.

In order to measure its progress towards meeting these priorities, I&A has developed a set of measures, goals, key performance indicators, and metrics for the SPS program as shown in table 6.

Appendix II: Information on Single Point of
Service Request Categories, Performance
Metrics, and Performance to Date

Table 6: Measures, Goals, Key Performance Indicators, and Metrics for the SPS

Measure	Goal	Key Performance Indicator	Metrics
Accessibility/ Availability	To provide State and local customers with a single, efficient point of entry for information requests, communication, and feedback	Increase / Decrease in the number of requests submitted through the SPS	Quarterly comparisons of SLSR submission
		Geographic Expansion	Submissions by State
			Submission by Fusion Center
		Speed of SLSR acceptance / acknowledgement by the SPS	Acceptance Rate
Timeliness	To provide timely and optimally useful analysis for State and local customers	Length of time taken to complete a SLSR	Production Timelines
		Number of closed SLSRs are at least 80 percent of the total number submitted	Completion Ratio
Pertinence	To ensure that the SPS can connect State and local customers with the DHS or intelligence community element that can provide customers a complete and relevant product	Requests routed to organizations that have the expertise and resources to address the SLSR	Distribution of SLSRs
			Status of Open SLSRs
Depth and Precision	To respond with sufficient detail and exactness to best inform the different needs of State and local customers	State and local customers seek intelligence support through the SPS	SLSR requests by category and State
			SLSR identification

Source: I&A.

The results of data gathered for many of these metrics are presented in tables 7 through 10.

Number of State and Local Support Requests

I&A has seen an increase in SLSR submissions since the SPS was initiated in May 2008, which leveled off in the last two quarters of fiscal year 2009, but saw a subsequent increase in the first quarter of fiscal year 2010, as shown in table 7.

Table 7: Number of SLSRs Received Quarterly Through the First Quarter of Fiscal Year 2010

	May through July 2008	Quarter 1, fiscal year 2009	Quarter 2, fiscal year 2009	Quarter 3, fiscal year 2009	Quarter 4, fiscal year 2009	Quarter 1, fiscal year 2010
Number of SLSRS received	516	659	863	697	669	733

Source: GAO analysis of I&A data

I&A attributes the surge in Quarter 2 to SPS marketing at the 2009 National Fusion Center Conference. Regarding the Quarter 3 decline, I&A cited

several factors, such as credibility concerns by customers following the release of a report on "right wing extremism" that drew criticism from Congress and the media, the extension of production time frames due to a more rigorous report review process, and/or natural decline. I&A did not address the subsequent decline in Quarter 4, though it did indicate that the final month of the quarter saw a rebound in submissions due to an outreach program conducted by SPS leadership that month. Regarding the first quarter of fiscal year 2010, I&A attributed this increase to a surge in administrative requests, as it began tracking all administrative-type SLSRs regardless of their significance. Thus, this growth is at least partially attributable to enhanced data collection rather than demand-driven growth.

Sources of State and Local Support Requests

As shown in table 8, a majority of SLSRs are submitted from states with embedded I&A intelligence officers at fusion centers, and many of the requests are coming directly from these officers.

Table 8: Sources of SLSRs Through the First Quarter of Fiscal Year 2010

Percentage	May-July 2008	Quarter 1, Fiscal Year 2009	Quarter 2, Fiscal Year 2009	Quarter 3, Fiscal Year 2009	Quarter 4, Fiscal Year 2009	Quarter 1, Fiscal year 2010
SLSRs from states with I&A officers at fusion centers	82	75	90	Not provided	96	96
SLSRs directly from I&A officers at fusion centers	Not provided	Not provided	68	Not provided	70	76

Source: DHS I&A.

Note: I&A, in its Single Point of Service quarterly reports, presents data on the number of states and fusion centers submitting SLSRs each quarter in graphic form. However, specific data points are not presented, so quarterly comparisons of states submitting SLSRs are difficult to present.

In addition, California, Texas, Ohio, and North Carolina—all states with deployed I&A intelligence officers—have consistently been among the states with the highest number of SLSRs.

Production Time Lines

The average number of days to completion steadily increased through the first three quarters of fiscal year 2009, but saw a decline in the fourth quarter, and this rate held steady in the first quarter of fiscal year 2010.

Appendix II: Information on Single Point of
Service Request Categories, Performance
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Table 9: Average Days to Completion for SLSRs Through the First Quarter of Fiscal Year 2010

May-July 2008	Quarter 1, Fiscal Year 2009	Quarter 2, Fiscal Year 2009	Quarter 3, Fiscal Year 2009	Quarter 4, Fiscal Year 2009	Quarter 1, Fiscal year 2010
N/A	4.47	6.65	8.42	6	6

Source: I&A.

Status of Open SLSRs

As shown in table 10, the number of SLSRs that remained open at the end of each quarter has steadily increased.[1]

Table 10: Number of Open SLSRs Each Quarter, Through the First Quarter of Fiscal Year 2010

May-July 2008	Quarter 1, Fiscal Year 2009	Quarter 2, Fiscal Year 2009	Quarter 3, Fiscal Year 2009	Quarter 4, Fiscal Year 2009	Quarter 1, Fiscal Year 2010
77	123	257	373	464	517

Source: I&A.

I&A attributes much of this increase, in part, to the increased number of Homeland Intelligence Report Production SLSRs, which have an estimated 90-day production time line. In its first quarter fiscal year 2010 report, I&A reported that it has a number of initiatives in place to improve SLSR response times, which include the following:

- Developing an I&A policy to define the roles and responsibilities of the stakeholders.

- Updating the performance measures to better reflect the timeliness of workflow processes throughout the SLSR life cycle.

- Introducing a standardized request form to ensure customer needs are clearly articulated before a SLSR is submitted.

- Assigning individuals to closely communicate and work with I&A branches to reduce the number of open and overdue SLSRs.

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[1]I&A also reports on the number of open SLSRs by facilitating entity each quarter; however, these are often grouped in a different manner each quarter, making comparisons difficult.

Appendix III: Additional Initiatives That Support Information Sharing with State and Local Partners

Technical Assistance to Fusion Centers (Workshops, Conferences, Privacy Policy Development)

In support of the Office of Intelligence and Analysis's (I&A) objective to strengthen the national network of fusion centers, the Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) National Preparedness Directorate and the Department of Justice's (DOJ) Bureau of Justice Assistance—in coordination with the Office of the Director of National Intelligence, the Office of the Program Manager for the Information Sharing Environment, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), and representatives from the state and local community—partnered in 2007 to develop the Fusion Process Technical Assistance Program. As part of this program, the DHS/DOJ partnership delivers and facilitates a number of publications, training courses, workshops, and other initiatives to fusion centers. [1] Examples of these programs include training on fusion process orientation and development, state and local anti terrorism training workshops, and regional fusion center workshops. I&A's role in this partnership involves, among other things, serving as the subject matter expert to support program development, reviewing and approving materials developed in support of the program, and having its intelligence officers at fusion centers serve as primary contacts for coordination of service deliveries. As of the end of 2009, this program has delivered 184 programs and services to fusion centers and their staff.

One form of technical assistance comes through direct outreach efforts with fusion centers. One example is the National Fusion Center Conference, which takes place annually and provides fusion centers with opportunities to learn about key issues, such as funding and sustainment, achieving baseline capabilities, privacy and civil liberties protection, and many other issues. These agencies in conjunction also support regional fusion center conferences and other training programs. In addition, I&A— along with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)—has jointly sponsored regional FEMA workshops with the intent of fostering understanding between regional FEMA and fusion center staff regarding their missions, information-sharing systems, and available intelligence products.

Another key area of technical assistance provided to fusion centers involves the development of privacy policies. DHS' Offices of Privacy and Civil Rights and Civil Liberties are working in partnership with the Bureau

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[1]I&A also reports that it is working with the Technical Assistance Program to add standing information need development services—discussed earlier in this report—to the catalog of capabilities available to fusion centers.

of Justice Assistance, the Global Justice Information Sharing Initiative, and the Office of the Program Manager for the Information Sharing Environment to assist fusion centers in developing privacy policies with the intent of safeguarding privacy and civil liberties without inhibiting information sharing.[2] In 2007 and 2009, these entities provided Privacy Policy Technical Assistance sessions to fusion centers. As of July 2010, 63 fusion centers had received the Privacy Policy Technical Assistance sessions. In addition, in response to fusion center input, these entities have developed a session called "Discussion on Development, Review, and Dissemination of Fusion Center Products," which focuses on the need for a privacy policy and implementation and how to avoid difficulty when developing intelligence products. This partnership has also begun to collect and review the privacy policies of fusion centers. As of July 2010, DHS's Office of Privacy had received a total of 63 draft privacy policies for review, with 11 fusion centers having completely satisfied the privacy policy review and development process.

Involvement with the Interagency Threat Assessment and Coordination Group (ITACG)

I&A also supports information sharing with its state and local partners through its involvement with the ITACG. ITACG is a group of state, local, tribal, and federal homeland security, law enforcement, and intelligence officers at the National Counterterrorism Center that facilitates the development, production, and dissemination of federally coordinated terrorism-related intelligence reports through existing FBI and DHS channels. The state, local, and tribal analysts in ITACG review these federal reports and provide counsel and subject matter expertise to these entities developing the reports in order to better meet the information needs of state, local, and tribal and private entities. Section 521(a) of the 9/11 Commission Act required the Director of National Intelligence, through the Program Manager for the Information Sharing Environment and in coordination with DHS, to coordinate and oversee the creation of ITACG. I&A supports ITACG by chairing and providing other membership on the ITACG Advisory Council, which is tasked with setting policy and developing processes for the integration, analysis, and dissemination of federally coordinated information. The Advisory Council's membership is at least 50 percent state and local. I&A also funds the costs of detailing state, local, and tribal analysts to ITACG.

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[2]DOJ's Global Justice Information Sharing Initiative serves as a Federal Advisory Committee to the U.S. Attorney General on critical justice information-sharing initiatives. This initiative is administered by the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Assistance.

Regarding the ITACG state, local, and tribal detailees' contributions to federal intelligence reports, the Program Manager for the Information Sharing Environment reports that as of November 2009, these detailees have participated in the production of 214 intelligence products.[3] The ITACG detailees have also participated in the development of the Roll Call Release, discussed earlier in this report, in coordination with I&A and FBI. The Program Manager for the Information Sharing Environment reported that from December 2008 (when this product line was created) through November 2009, 26 Roll Call Release documents were published. In addition, the detailees work with the National Counterterrorism Center to develop a daily, secret-level digest of intelligence that is of interest to state and local entities.

Guidelines for Fusion Center Baseline Capabilities (in Conjunction with DOJ)

DHS/I&A contributed to development of the Baseline Capabilities for State and Major Urban Area Fusion Centers, published by DOJ's Global Justice Information Sharing Initiative in September 2008. [4] I&A officials have stated that one of their key responsibilities—particularly for those officers at fusion centers—is to help ensure that fusion centers are taking appropriate steps to meet these baseline capabilities. At the 2010 National Fusion Center Conference, it was announced that I&A and its federal partners had developed an assessment tool for fusion centers' use in determining how they measure against the baseline capabilities, and where gaps in meeting the capabilities exist so that resources can be most effectively targeted. This document stems from the previously developed Fusion Center Guidelines, published by the Global Justice Information Sharing initiative in August 2006.

Facilitating Access to Department of Defense (DOD) Classified Information Portal

In August 2009, DHS entered into an agreement with DOD that grants select fusion center personnel access to DOD's classified information network, the Secure Internet Protocol Router Network. Under this

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[3]Program Manager, Information Sharing Environment, *Report on the Interagency Threat Assessment and Coordination Group: Second Report for the Congress of the United States, the Secretary of Homeland Security, the Attorney General, and the Director of National Intelligence* (November 2009).

[4] These baseline capabilities were developed in order to provide fusion centers with a set of standards to help ensure that they will have the necessary structures, processes, and tools in place to support the gathering, processing, analysis, and dissemination of terrorism, homeland security, and law enforcement information. The document also provides a common set of capabilities to allow DOJ, DHS, and other federal agencies to ensure that they are providing the right types of resources in a consistent and appropriate manner, and assist in ensuring that fusion centers have the basic foundational elements for integrating into the national Information Sharing Environment.

arrangement, properly cleared fusion center officials would be able to access specific terrorism-related information through the Homeland Security Data Network system. The Secretary of DHS cited this as "an important step forward in ensuring that first preventers have a complete and accurate picture of terrorism threats."

Fellows Program	Section 512 of the 9/11 Commission Act directed DHS to create a Homeland Security Information Sharing Fellows Program. This program would detail state, local, and tribal law enforcement officers and intelligence analysts to DHS in order to promote information sharing between DHS and state, local, and tribal officers and analysts, assist DHS analysts in preparing and disseminating products that are tailored to state, local, and tribal law enforcement officers, and intelligence analysts. I&A officials have stated that as of June 2010, there were two state and local fellows in-house, with a third to join by the end of the summer. I&A plans to have fellows serve on 90-day rotations, working with I&A's analytic divisions on product development.
Deployment of Reports Officers	In addition, I&A has also deployed Reports Officers to a number of border states (though not necessarily fusion centers), in accordance with DHS priorities to focus on analysis of border security issues. Reports Officers serve in key state and local partner locations (as well as DHS headquarters and select DHS components) to enhance information sharing and integration of information acquisition and reporting efforts. As of July 2010, I&A had deployed Reports Officers to six locations in Southwest Border states, as well as one additional southern state.
Granting Security Clearances	DHS's Office of the Chief Security Officer grants security clearances to state, local, and tribal personnel.

Appendix IV: Summary of I&A Strategic Goals and Objectives

Table 11 lists the goals and objectives from the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Office of Intelligence Analysis (I&A) Strategy.

Table 11: I&A's Strategic Goals and Objectives

GOALS
Goal 1: Serve as the premier provider of homeland security information and intelligence.
1.1: Provide warning and actionable intelligence analysis and information.
1.2: Understand and support the needs of customers and stakeholders.
Goal 2: Build partnerships and foster teamwork.
2.1: Strengthen the national network of fusion centers.
2.2: Build, support, and integrate a robust information sharing capability among and between Federal and state, local, territorial, tribal, and private sector partners.
2.3: Build and enhance the DHS Intelligence Enterprise.
2.4: Lead and coordinate DHS interaction with the Intelligence Community.
Goal 3: Enable the mission.
3.1: Promote a culture of professionalism.
3.2: Advance tradecraft proficiency, training, and career development.
3.3: Support and integrate counterintelligence and cyber security.
Goal 4: Maximize performance and accountability.
4.1: Implement and institutionalize transparent business and management processes.
4.2: Protect privacy and civil rights and civil liberties.
4.3: Ensure continued congressional and public outreach and understanding.

Source: I&A.

Establishing goals and measuring performance are essential to successful results-oriented management practices. Measuring performance allows organizations to track the progress they are making toward their goals and gives managers critical information on which to base decisions for improving their programs. Our body of work on results-oriented management practices has identified key attributes of success.[1] This work indicates that agencies that are successful in achieving goals strive to establish practices and performance systems at all levels of the agency that include the key attributes described in this appendix.

- *Addresses important dimensions of program performance and balances competing priorities.* Performance goals and measures that successfully address important and varied aspects of program performance are key aspects of a results-orientation. Federal programs are designed and implemented in dynamic environments where competing program priorities and stakeholders' needs must be balanced continuously and new needs must be addressed. As a result, programs are often forced to strike difficult balances among priorities that reflect competing demands, such as timeliness, service quality, customer satisfaction, program cost, and other stakeholder concerns. Sets of performance goals and measures could provide a balanced perspective of the intended performance of a program's multiple priorities.

- *Use intermediate goals and measures to show progress or contribution to intended results.* Intermediate goals and measures, such as outputs or intermediate outcomes, can be used to show progress or contribution to intended results. For instance, when it may take years before an agency sees the results of its programs, intermediate goals and measures can provide information on interim results. Also, when program results could be influenced by external factors, agencies can use intermediate goals and measures to identify the programs' discrete contribution to a specific result.

- *Show baseline and trend data for past performance.* With baseline and trend data, the more useful performance plans provided a context for drawing conclusions about whether performance goals are reasonable and appropriate. Decision makers can use such information

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[1]See, for example, GAO, *Results-Oriented Government: GPRA Has Established a Solid Foundation for Achieving Greater Results*, GAO-04-38 (Washington, D.C.: Mar. 10, 2004); and GAO, *Results-Oriented Government: Practices That Can Help Enhance and Sustain Collaboration among Federal Agencies*, GAO-06-15 (Washington D.C: Oct. 21, 2005).

to gauge how a program's anticipated performance level compares
with improvements or declines in past performance.

- *Identify projected target levels of performance for multiyear goals.*
  Where appropriate, an agency can convey what it expects to achieve in
  the long term by including multiyear performance goals in its
  performance plan. Such information can provide congressional and
  other decision makers with an indication of the incremental progress
  the agency expects to make in achieving results.

- *Aligns goals and measures with agency and departmentwide goals.*
  Performance goals and measures should align with an agency's long-
  term strategic goals and mission as well as with higher-level
  departmentwide priorities, with the relationship clearly articulated.
  Such linkage is important in ensuring that agency efforts are properly
  aligned with goals (and thus contribute to their accomplishment) and
  in assessing progress toward achieving these goals. Goals and
  measures also should cascade from the corporate level of the agency
  to the operational level to provide managers and staff with a road map
  that shows how their day-to-day activities contribute to achieving
  agency and departmentwide performance goals. In addition, measures
  used at the lowest levels of the agency to manage specific programs
  should directly relate to unit results and upwards to the corporate level
  of the agency.

- *Assigns accountability for achieving results.* We have previously
  reported that the single most important element of successful
  management improvement initiatives is the demonstrated commitment
  of top leaders in developing and directing reform efforts. Top
  leadership must play a critical role in setting results-oriented goals and
  quantifiable measures that are cascaded to lower organizational levels
  and used to develop and reinforce accountability for achieving results,
  maintain focus on the most pressing issues confronting the
  organization, and sustain improvement programs and performance,
  especially during times of leadership transition. One way to reinforce
  accountability is through the use of employee performance appraisals
  that reflect an organization's goals.

- *Provides a comprehensive view of agency performance.* For each key
  business line, performance goals and measures should provide a
  comprehensive view of performance, including customers' and
  stakeholders' priorities. Goals and measures should address key
  performance dimensions such as (1) factors that drive organizational
  performance—including financial, customer, and internal business

processes, and workforce learning and growth; and (2) aspects of customer satisfaction, including timeliness, quality, quantity, and cost of services provided. Doing so can allow managers and other stakeholders to assess accomplishments, make decisions, realign processes, and assign accountability without having an excess of data that could obscure rather than clarify performance issues.

- *Links resource needs to performance.* One of the ways that performance management can be promoted is if this information becomes relevant for (1) identifying resources (e.g., human capital, information technology, and funding) needed to achieve performance goals; (2) measuring cost; and (3) informing budget decisions. When resource allocation decisions are linked to performance, decision makers can gain a better understanding of the potential effect of budget increases and decreases on results.

Provides contextual information. Performance reporting systems should include information to help clarify aspects of performance that are difficult to quantify or to provide explanatory information such as factors that were within or outside the control of the agency. This information is critical to identifying and understanding the factors that contributed to a particular result and can help officials measure, assess, and evaluate the significance of underlying factors that may affect reported performance. In addition, this information can provide context for decision makers to establish funding priorities and adjust performance targets and assess means and strategies for accomplishing an organization's goals and objectives.

Appendix VI: Comments from the Department of Homeland Security

U.S. Department of Homeland Security
Washington, DC 20528

Homeland Security

August 31, 2010

Eileen Larence
Director, Homeland Security and Justice
U.S. Government Accountability Office
441 G Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20548

Dear Ms. Larence:

RE: Draft Report GAO-10-893SU, *Information Sharing: DHS Could Better Define How It Plans to Meet Its State and Local Mission and Improve Performance Accountability* (Job Code 440781)

The Department of Homeland Security (Department/DHS) appreciates the opportunity to review and comment on the draft report referenced above. The Department, particularly the Office of Intelligence and Analysis (I&A), concurs with the four recommendations contained therein.

Recommendation 1: To help I&A strengthen its efforts to share information with state and local partners, we recommend that the Secretary of Homeland Security direct the Under Secretary for I&A to work with states to establish milestones for the timely completion of efforts to identify state information needs and identify and work to resolve any barriers to this timely completion.

Response: Concur. The Office of Intelligence & Analysis has established internal milestones for the timely completion of identifying State Standing Information Needs (SIN's). While I&A advises and assists the States with the development of their information needs, ultimately those outcomes are owned and controlled by the States themselves, and thus I&A is unable to impose its milestones on them. DHS (not I&A) provides grant funding to States, which consequently limits the ability of I&A to leverage grant funding as a means to encourage State compliance with I&A milestones. Nevertheless, I&A is confident that it can work with the States to develop mutually-acceptable milestones for the completion of SIN's, and will report progress toward these milestones on a regular basis.

Recommendation 2: To help I&A strengthen its efforts to share information with state and local partners, we recommend that the Secretary of Homeland Security direct the Under Secretary for I&A to periodically report to state and local information sharing partners on the results of I&A's analysis of the product and services feedback these partners provide and the actions I&A took in response to this feedback.

- 2 -

Response: Concur. I&A plans to regularly report the results of its partners' product and services feedback, as well as the actions I&A took in response to that feedback, to I&A's partners, DHS management, and the Congress.

Recommendation 3: To help I&A strengthen its efforts to share information with state and local partners, we recommend that the Secretary of Homeland Security direct the Under Secretary for I&A to define and document the programs and activities its divisions and branches will be expected to implement in order for I&A to collectively meet its state and local information sharing mission and provide accountability and transparency over its efforts.

Response: Concur. I&A is in the process of developing a new strategic plan, which will include strategic-level measures and implementation plans. This plan will establish organizational strategic objectives that I&A, through its divisions and branches will be expected to achieve, to include information sharing with State and Local entities as well as our other customers, and will provide the measures by which our success will be gauged.

Recommendation 4: To help I&A strengthen its efforts to share information with state and local partners, we recommend that the Secretary of Homeland Security direct the Under Secretary for I&A establish plans and time frames for developing performance measures that gauge the results that I&A's information sharing efforts have achieved and how they have enhanced homeland security.

Response: Concur. I&A is in the process of developing a new strategic implementation plan, which will include strategic-level measures. This plan will provide the basis for gauging, among other things, the results of I&A's information sharing efforts.

Again, we appreciate this opportunity to review and comment on the draft report. In addition to this response, technical comments have been provided under separate cover.

Sincerely,
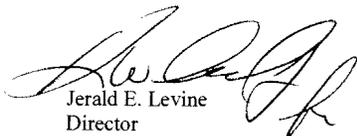
Jerald E. Levine
Director
Departmental GAO/OIG Liaison Office