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HOMELAND DEFENSE

DOD Needs to Take Actions to Enhance Interagency Coordination for Its Homeland Defense and Civil Support Missions



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Highlights of [GAO-10-364](#), a report to congressional requesters

Why GAO Did This Study

Numerous occurrences in the United States—both scheduled events and emergencies—require the Department of Defense (DOD) to coordinate, integrate, and synchronize its homeland defense and civil support missions with a broad range of U.S. federal agencies. In response to congressional inquiry, GAO examined the extent to which DOD has (1) identified clearly defined roles and responsibilities for DOD entities to facilitate interagency coordination for homeland defense and civil support missions, (2) articulated to its federal partners the DOD entities' approach toward interagency coordination, and (3) adopted key practices for managing homeland defense and civil support liaisons. GAO reviewed numerous DOD policy and guidance documents and interviewed officials from DOD and its partner agencies, including the departments of Homeland Security, Justice, Health and Human Services, and Agriculture; and the Office of the Director of National Intelligence.

What GAO Recommends

GAO recommends that DOD update and integrate its strategy, policy, and guidance; develop a partner guide; and implement key practices for management of homeland defense and civil support liaisons. DOD agreed with these recommendations and noted several actions it is taking or plans to take to address them.

[View GAO-10-364](#) or [key components](#).
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HOMELAND DEFENSE

DOD Needs to Take Actions to Enhance Interagency Coordination for Its Homeland Defense and Civil Support Missions

What GAO Found

DOD has many strategy, policy, and guidance documents on interagency coordination for its homeland defense and civil support missions; however, DOD entities do not have fully or clearly defined roles and responsibilities. Key DOD documents are outdated, not integrated, or not comprehensive. Three separate directives, for example, respectively assign overlapping responsibilities related to law enforcement support to three different DOD entities. Because DOD's law enforcement support directive has not been updated or superseded since 1989, it is unclear which entity is responsible for certain coordination activities with law enforcement agencies. By updating, integrating, and ensuring the comprehensiveness of its strategy, policy, and guidance, DOD will be better positioned to enhance and institutionalize its interagency coordination efforts for homeland defense and civil support.

DOD makes great effort to communicate with its federal partners through conferences and other forums and multiple documents, but it lacks a single, readily accessible source for its interagency partners to find needed information about its processes. The 2008 *National Defense Strategy* notes that a unified "whole-of-government" approach to national security issues requires that federal partner agencies understand core competencies, roles, and missions, and the *National Response Framework* highlights the value of using a common concise partner guide for this purpose. DOD's communication approach, however, relies largely on personal relationships that are subject to frequent rotation of both DOD and non-DOD personnel. DOD identified over 30 documents that embody its approach and processes for interagency coordination. A concise and readily accessible partner guide would provide incoming personnel from both DOD and other agencies information that could enhance their mutual understanding and facilitate a unified and institutionalized approach to interagency coordination.

DOD has taken some actions to adopt key practices for managing homeland defense and civil support liaison personnel, but it has not fully implemented these practices. Key practices include situational awareness, staffing-needs assessments, position descriptions, training, and performance assessments. For example, while individual DOD entities may know the liaisons they have assigned to their federal partners, no single DOD entity knows the number or locations of all liaisons exchanged with other federal agencies. Also, while DOD policy recognizes the need to conduct personnel performance assessments, such assessments of its liaisons are not focused on coordination competencies, and DOD does not consistently request input from federal partners on the performance of its liaisons or provide feedback to its federal partners about their liaisons' performance. DOD could optimize its use of liaisons if it fully implemented current DOD human capital policies and issued policies and guidance for the remaining key practices identified above.

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Abbreviations

ASD/HD	Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Homeland Defense and Americas' Security Affairs
CDC	Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
DHS	Department of Homeland Security
DOD	Department of Defense
DOJ	Department of Justice
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
HHS	Department of Health and Human Services
NORTHCOM	U.S. Northern Command
PACOM	U.S. Pacific Command
USDA	U.S. Department of Agriculture

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United States Government Accountability Office
Washington, DC 20548

March 30, 2010

Congressional Requesters

Numerous events occurring in the United States—ranging from planned events, such as inaugurations, to unexpected emergencies, such as natural disasters—require that the Department of Defense (DOD) coordinate, integrate, and synchronize its homeland security missions with a broad range of U.S. federal agencies. Examples of such coordination include those with the Federal Aviation Administration for the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001; with the National Aeronautics and Space Administration for the Space Shuttle Columbia disaster in 2003; with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for Hurricane Katrina in 2005; with the Department of Transportation for the I-35 bridge collapse in Minnesota in 2007; and with the U.S. Secret Service for the Presidential Inauguration in 2009. According to DOD’s 2009 *Quadrennial Roles and Missions Review Report*, the increased demands created by today’s complex national security environment and DOD’s vision of supporting a whole-of-government approach to national security problems have made interagency coordination between DOD and its federal U.S. partners important.¹

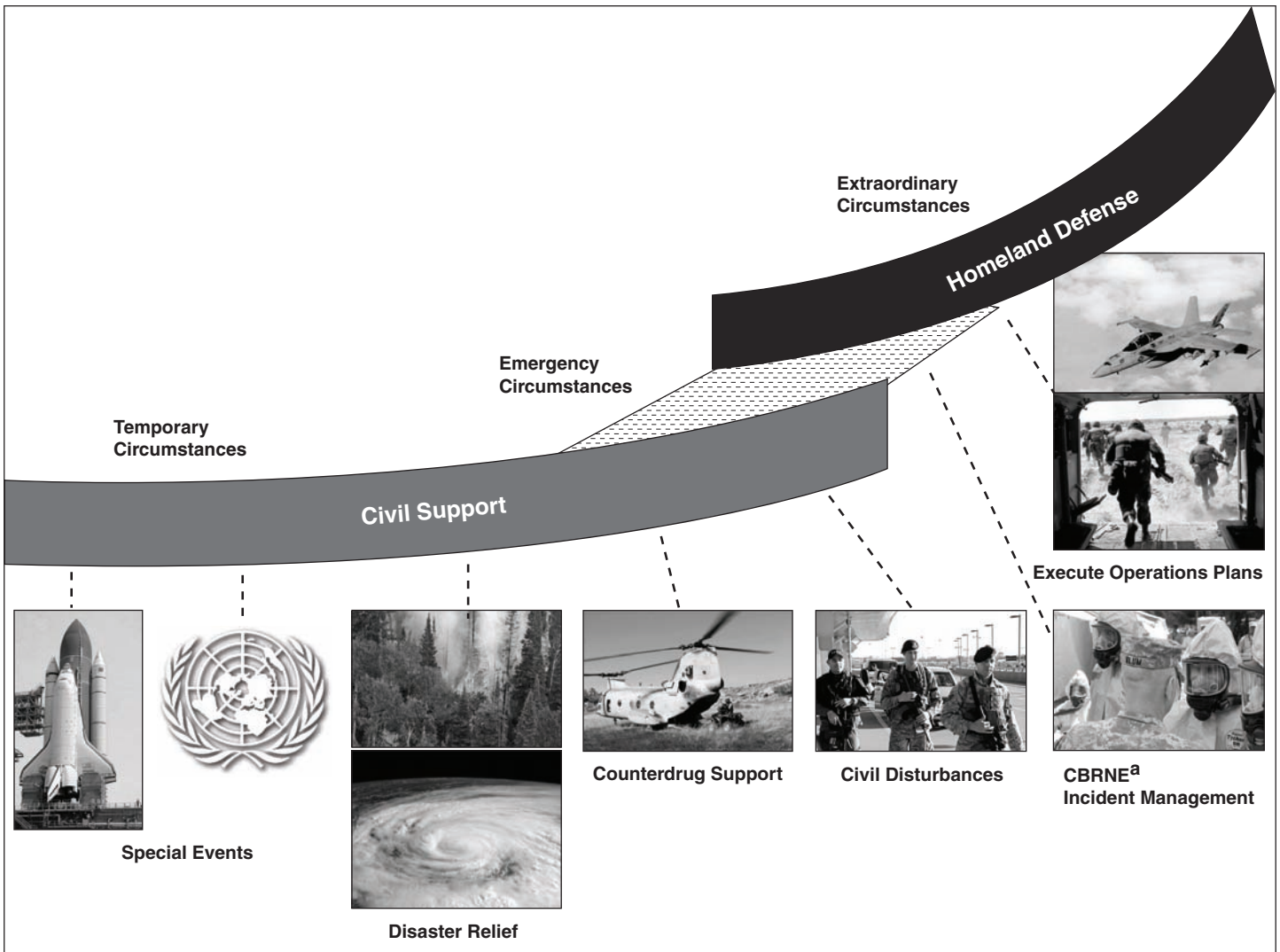
According to the 2007 *National Strategy for Homeland Security*, homeland security requires a truly national effort, with shared goals and responsibilities among agencies for protecting and defending the homeland.² DOD protects the homeland through two distinct but interrelated missions: homeland defense and civil support. Homeland defense is the protection of U.S. sovereignty, territory, domestic population, and critical defense infrastructure against external threats, as directed by the President. As the lead agency for homeland defense, DOD is responsible for the homeland defense mission, which it conducts through air, land, maritime, space, and other supporting operations; other departments and agencies support DOD’s efforts. Civil support is the overarching term for DOD’s support to U.S. civil authorities for domestic emergencies, designated law enforcement, and other activities. As shown in figure 1, DOD’s homeland defense and civil support missions can

¹ DOD, *Quadrennial Roles and Missions Review Report* (January 2009).

² White House, *National Strategy for Homeland Security* (Washington, D.C.: October 2007).

overlap or can be in effect simultaneously, depending on the particular circumstances of an event.

Figure 1: Homeland Defense and Civil Support Spectrum



Sources: GAO analysis of DOD agencies' information.

^aChemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear, and High-Yield Explosives.

DOD has assigned interagency coordination for homeland defense and civil support to a number of different DOD entities at different organizational levels, including organizations within the Office of the

Secretary of Defense (such as the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Homeland Defense and Americas' Security Affairs, referred to in this report as ASD/HD), the Joint Chiefs of Staff, various combatant commands [such as U.S. Northern Command (NORTHCOM) and U.S. Pacific Command (PACOM)], the National Guard Bureau, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, joint task forces (such as Joint Task Force-North),³ and the intelligence agencies (such as the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency and the Defense Intelligence Agency). Additional information about DOD's civil support operation categories and structural levels for facilitating interagency coordination for homeland defense and civil support missions appear in the Background section of this report. DOD entities are called upon to coordinate with their federal partners that have homeland security roles and responsibilities—including the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), the Department of Justice (DOJ), the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), and the respective agencies within these departments, such as FEMA, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Drug Enforcement Administration, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, U.S. Forest Service, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

You asked us to examine DOD's interagency coordination efforts with U.S. federal agencies for its homeland defense and civil support missions as part of an effort to examine a broad range of planning and operational considerations related to DOD and NORTHCOM. This report addresses the extent to which DOD (1) has identified clearly defined roles and responsibilities for DOD entities to facilitate interagency coordination for homeland defense and civil support missions, (2) has articulated to its federal partners the approach of its entities with regard to interagency coordination, and (3) has adopted and implemented key practices for managing homeland defense and civil support liaisons. We are reporting separately to you on DOD's capabilities and requirements for its civil support mission as requested.⁴

³ Joint Task Force-North, formerly referred to as Joint Task Force-6, was created in 1989 to serve as the planning and coordinating operational headquarters to support local, state, and federal law enforcement agencies within the southwest border region to counter the flow of illegal drugs into the United States. In the aftermath of the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks on the United States, the command was officially renamed Joint Task Force-North and its mission was expanded to include providing homeland security support to the nation's federal law enforcement agencies.

⁴ GAO, *Homeland Defense: DOD Can Enhance Efforts to Identify Capabilities to Support Civil Authorities During Disasters*, [GAO-10-386](#) (Washington, D.C.: Mar. 30, 2010).

To determine the extent to which DOD has clearly defined its roles and responsibilities, has articulated its approach to federal partners, and has managed its liaison exchanges for interagency coordination for its homeland defense and civil support missions, we reviewed and analyzed DOD's strategic documents, such as its *Strategy for Homeland Defense and Civil Support*;⁵ its policy documents, such as its 1989 directive on DOD Cooperation with Civilian Law Enforcement Officials and its 1993 directive on Military Support to Civil Authorities;⁶ and its guidance and doctrine, such as the Joint Chiefs of Staff doctrines on homeland defense, civil support, counterdrug operations, and interagency coordination.⁷ In addition, to specifically determine the extent to which DOD has articulated to its federal partners the approach of its entities with regard to interagency coordination, we reviewed more than 30 DOD documents, including classified documents, that DOD officials said articulated the department's homeland defense and civil support missions, its entities' roles and responsibilities, and its culture and concepts. To determine the extent to which DOD has adopted and implemented key practices for managing homeland defense and civil support liaisons, we reviewed established best practices identified in prior GAO reports on human capital best practices, DOD interagency coordination conference proceedings and white papers, as well as joint DHS-DOJ guidelines for interagency coordination for homeland security, which similarly recommend the use of such best practices. For all three objectives, we also met with knowledgeable DOD staff in multiple offices and commands within the Office of the Secretary of Defense, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, National Guard Bureau, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency, Defense Intelligence Agency, NORTHCOM, and PACOM to discuss their roles and responsibilities and the actions that they are taking to address interagency coordination. We discussed DOD's interagency coordination efforts with non-DOD officials from over a dozen U.S. federal agencies or offices, including four agencies or offices within DHS, four agencies or offices within DOJ, three agencies or offices within USDA, two agencies or offices within HHS, the Office of

⁵ DOD *Strategy for Homeland Defense and Civil Support* (Washington, D.C.: June 2005).

⁶ Department of Defense Directive, 5525.5, DOD Cooperation with Civilian Law Enforcement Officials (Dec. 20, 1989); and Department of Defense Directive 3025.1, Military Support to Civil Authorities (Jan. 15, 1993).

⁷ Joint Publication 3-07.4, *Joint Counterdrug Operations* (June 13, 2007); Joint Publication 3-27, *Homeland Defense* (July 12, 2007); and Joint Publication 3-28, *Civil Support* (Sept. 14, 2007).

the Director of National Intelligence, and the El Paso Intelligence Center. We selected and visited multiple locations where DOD coordinates with its federal partners on a daily basis, including four FEMA regions, NORTHCOM headquarters, PACOM headquarters, DHS headquarters, FEMA headquarters, the National Counter Terrorism Center, and the El Paso Intelligence Center and met with knowledgeable officials to discuss their roles and responsibilities and the actions that they are taking to address interagency coordination. In selecting the specific locations we visited, we used criteria such as locations of DOD commands that have key roles and responsibilities in coordinating with federal agencies for homeland defense and civil support, such as NORTHCOM headquarters. We used similar criteria when selecting non-DOD sites to visit. For example, we selected the four FEMA regions that we visited based on geographic location; region size; number of requests for assistance for the region between January 1, 2008, and May 31, 2009; types of assistance requested; and GAO resources required. Additional information on our scope and methodology appears in appendix I.

We conducted this performance audit from February 2009 to March 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.

Results in Brief

DOD has a number of strategy, policy, and guidance documents related to interagency coordination for its homeland defense and civil support missions; however, DOD entities do not have fully or clearly defined roles and responsibilities because key DOD documents are outdated, are not integrated, or are not comprehensive. Previous GAO work,⁸ the *National Response Framework*,⁹ and DOD strategy and guidance¹⁰ all identify the need for clearly defined roles and responsibilities to enhance interagency

⁸ GAO, *Results-Oriented Government: Practices That Can Help Enhance and Sustain Collaboration among Federal Agencies*, [GAO-06-15](#) (Washington, D.C.: Oct. 21, 2005).

⁹ DHS, *National Response Framework* (Washington, D.C.: January 2008).

¹⁰ DOD, *National Defense Strategy* (June 2008); and Joint Publication 3-08, *Interagency, Intergovernmental Organization, and Nongovernmental Organization Coordination During Joint Operations Volumes I and II* (Washington, D.C.: Mar. 17, 2006).

coordination. Regarding DOD's documents, its 2005 *Strategy for Homeland Defense and Civil Support*, its series of civil support policies and guidance,¹¹ and its joint guidance for interagency coordination¹² are outdated and not comprehensive. Also, conflicting directives create confusion as to which DOD office is responsible for coordinating with law enforcement agencies. For example, three separate DOD directives, including one on DOD's support to law enforcement agencies that was last updated in 1989,¹³ assign overlapping law enforcement support responsibilities to three different DOD entities. Planned changes to the 1989 law enforcement support directive will lead to a gap in DOD's policy on support to law enforcement agencies for the counterdrug mission. We also found that specific delineation in interagency coordination and external communication roles and responsibilities among ASD/HD, NORTHCOM, and PACOM is lacking. By updating, integrating, and ensuring the comprehensiveness of its strategy, policy, and guidance, DOD could enhance its interagency coordination efforts for homeland defense and civil support and clarify current overlapping roles. Therefore, we are recommending that DOD issue updated, integrated, and comprehensive strategy, policy, and guidance.

DOD makes significant effort to communicate with its federal partners through various formal and informal forums, such as conferences, and documents, but its approach to identifying roles and responsibilities and day-to-day coordination processes could be improved. Specifically, DOD and non-DOD officials told us that benefits accrued from relationships developed through forums are transient, and we found documented information is dispersed throughout multiple sources and may not always be available to federal partners. DOD has not articulated this needed information to federal partners in a single, readily accessible source.¹⁴ The

¹¹ DOD Directive 3025.1 (Jan. 15, 1993); Department of Defense Directive 3025.12, Military Assistance for Civil Disturbances (MACDIS) (Feb. 4, 1994); Department of Defense Directive 3025.13, Employment of Department of Defense Resources in Support of the United States Secret Service (Sept. 13, 1985); Department of Defense Directive 3025.15, Military Assistance to Civil Authorities (Feb. 18, 1997); Department of Defense Directive 3025.16, Military Emergency Preparedness Liaison Officer (EPL) Program (Dec. 18, 2000); DOD Manual 3025.1-M, Manual for Civil Emergencies (June 2, 1994).

¹² Joint Publication 3-08 (Mar. 17, 2006).

¹³ DOD Directive 5525.5 (Dec. 20, 1989).

¹⁴ Such a single, readily accessible source could be accomplished through a variety of formats, including a handbook or a Web-based tool.

National Response Framework recognizes that a concise, common guide is beneficial when addressing challenges to effective response. Similarly, the *National Defense Strategy* notes that a unified “whole-of-government” approach to national security issues is possible only when every government department and agency understands the core competencies, roles, missions, and capabilities of its federal partners. To its credit, DOD regularly holds numerous conferences and other forums that enable it to share information with its federal partners which enhances coordination. However, this communication approach relies on personal relationships that are subject to frequent rotation of both DOD and non-DOD personnel, and so the benefits can be transient. The lack of a DOD partner guide makes it difficult to institutionalize key information shared at such forums—such as roles and responsibilities and agreed-upon approaches to coordinating. DOD officials identified over 30 documents that discuss the roles and responsibilities of DOD entities. However, such information can be difficult to locate because it is dispersed and some documents, such as DOD plans for civil support, are not readily available to DOD’s federal partners.¹⁵ Without a concise and readily accessible guide, new and incoming personnel from both DOD and other agencies will lack the information that could provide them a better understanding of each other as federal partners and enable a unified and institutionalized approach to interagency coordination. We are, therefore, recommending that DOD develop and issue a partner guide.

DOD and non-DOD officials told us that the quality of the liaisons that their agencies have exchanged was generally very high; however, DOD has not fully implemented key practices for managing homeland defense and civil support liaisons. We have previously reported that key practices for effective and efficient workforce planning and management include: (1) ensuring situational awareness of personnel, to include liaisons who are currently exchanged, to be able to identify gaps and assess their performance in coordinating with their federal partners; (2) conducting routine staffing-needs assessments to identify personnel, to include liaisons, needed to further enhance interagency coordination; (3) developing position descriptions to identify roles and responsibilities; knowledge, skills, and abilities; and duration of the exchange; (4) training personnel to ensure that they possess the critical skills and competencies needed for mission success; and (5) conducting performance assessments

¹⁵ On November 2, 2009, the Secretary of Defense created a category of civil support plans that could be released to DOD’s federal and other partners.

to evaluate the contributions that individuals have made toward achieving programmatic results.¹⁶ DOD, through various policies and guidance, has recognized the need to implement such human capital practices, and has sought to promote interagency coordination by exchanging liaison personnel with some of its federal partners. However, DOD has not fully implemented these key practices for managing such liaisons. Specifically, we found:

- **Situational awareness:** While individual DOD entities may be aware of the liaisons they have sent to their federal partners, no single DOD entity knows the number and location of all of the liaisons it has sent to other federal agencies, or of the non-DOD liaisons at DOD entities.
- **Staffing-needs assessments:** Staffing-needs assessments for the exchange of liaison personnel have been conducted to a limited extent by NORTHCOM, but an overall DOD staffing-needs assessment for the exchange of liaison personnel for homeland defense and civil support missions has not been conducted.
- **Position descriptions:** DOD has not consistently developed position descriptions for liaison personnel to define the roles and responsibilities; knowledge, skills, and abilities; or the duration of the exchange of DOD and non-DOD liaisons.
- **Training:** DOD offers some training opportunities for liaison personnel, but training adequacy cannot be assessed because DOD has not defined the roles and responsibilities; or requisite knowledge, skills, and abilities of its liaison personnel.
- **Performance assessments:** DOD's assessments of its liaisons are not focused on coordination competencies, and DOD does not consistently provide or obtain feedback from its federal partners about their liaisons' performance.

DOD could optimize its use of liaisons if it fully implemented current DOD human capital policies and issued policies and guidance for the remaining key practices identified above. Therefore, we are making

¹⁶ GAO, *Human Capital: Key Principles for Effective Strategic Workforce Planning*, GAO-04-39 (Washington, D.C.: Dec. 11, 2003); *Exposure Draft: A Model of Strategic Human Capital Management*, GAO-02-373SP (Washington, D.C.: Mar. 15, 2002).

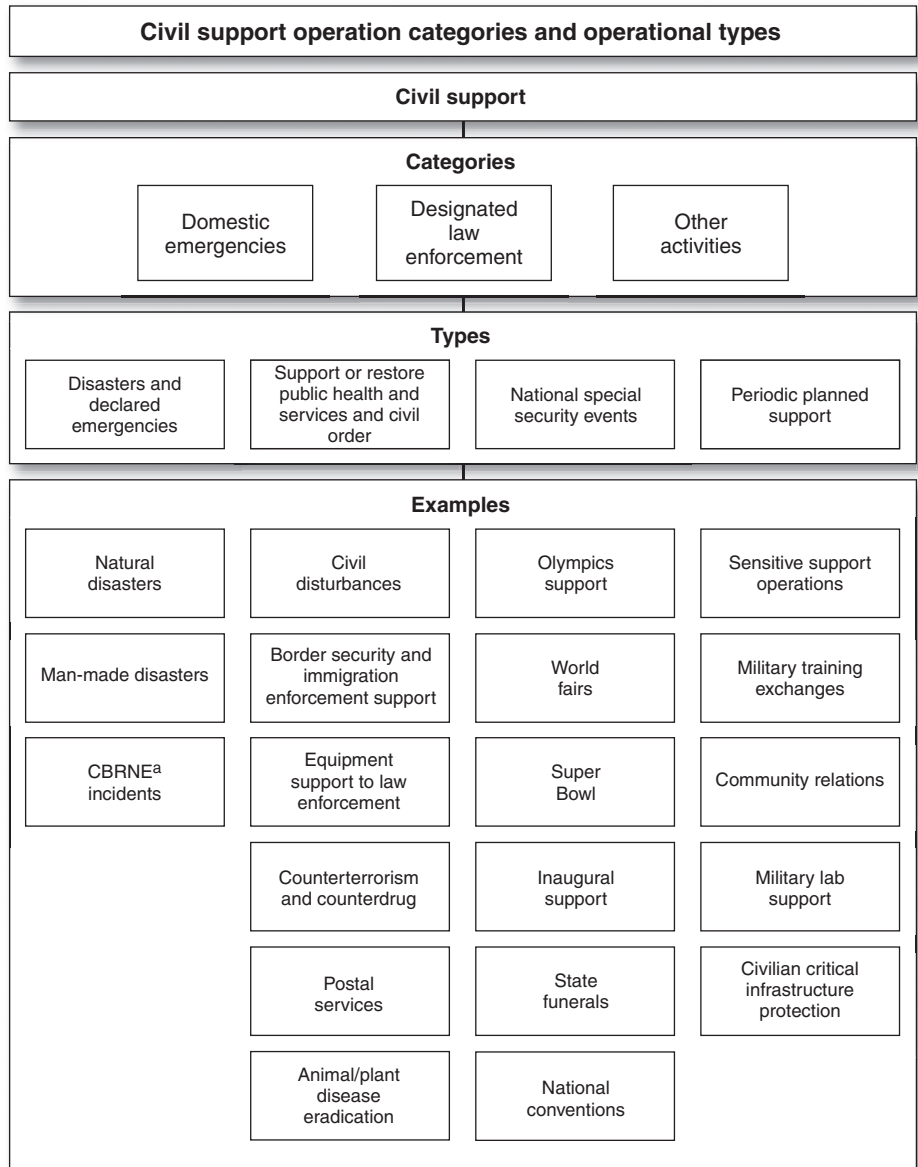
recommendations designed to improve DOD's workforce management of liaisons.

In written comments on a draft of this report, DOD agreed with our recommendations and described actions in process or needed to implement them. For example, DOD stated that several draft policy and guidance updates are in coordination and provided estimated time lines for completion. DOD also agreed with our recommendation to establish a time line to develop and issue a partner guide for interagency coordination. Additionally, DOD agreed with our recommendation to improve its workforce management of liaisons. DOD's written comments are reprinted in appendix III.

Background

DOD protects the sovereignty of the United States through its homeland defense missions, which it conducts through air, land, maritime, space, and other supporting operations. While DOD is the lead federal agency for these types of operations, it coordinates with and receives support from its federal partners. Contrary to its homeland defense mission where it is the lead federal agency, DOD serves in a support capacity when it conducts civil support missions. DOD's civil support missions include providing support during disasters and declared emergencies (both natural and man-made); providing support for restoring public health and services and civil order (for example, counterdrug, or animal/plant disease eradication); providing support for national special security events (for example, national political conventions); and periodic planned support (for example, military lab support), as shown in figure 2.

Figure 2: Civil Support Operation Categories and Operational Types



Source: DOD.

^aChemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear, and High-Yield Explosives.

DOD has established a structure to facilitate interagency coordination at three different levels: strategic, operational, and tactical; however, some DOD entities coordinate across multiple levels as shown in table 1. Other

U.S. federal agencies do not necessarily operate with a similar structure for interagency coordination.

Table 1: DOD’s Structure for Interagency Coordination for Its Homeland Defense and Civil Support Missions

Structural level	DOD entity ^a	Primary responsibility
Strategic	Office of the Secretary of Defense <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ASD Homeland Defense • ASD (Special Operations and Low-Intensity Conflict and Interdependent Capabilities) • ASD (Health Affairs) 	Develop and oversee implementation of policy, represent the department.
	Joint Chiefs of Staff	Ensure that homeland defense and civil support plans and operations are compatible with other military plans.
	National Guard Bureau	Facilitate and coordinate with federal agencies regarding the use of National Guard personnel and resources for operations conducted under Title 32. ^b
	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers	Operate as the coordinating federal agency for an emergency support function within the <i>National Response Framework</i> based on the agency’s historical relationship with FEMA.
	DOD Intelligence Entities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency • Defense Intelligence Agency 	Provide direct or indirect intelligence support to federal agencies’ headquarters.
	NORTHCOM and PACOM	Coordinate homeland defense and civil support operations with federal partners through each department’s and agency’s headquarters.
Operational	NORTHCOM and PACOM	Coordinate homeland defense and civil support missions through their respective command structure, including NORTHCOM’s interagency directorate. PACOM has divided its coordination efforts among multiple components and directorates.
	Joint Task Force–Homeland Defense (PACOM)	Coordinate with various federal interagency partners to plan, coordinate, and synchronize its homeland defense and civil support missions.
	Defense Coordinating Officers/Elements	Provide day-to-day DOD planning support to FEMA regional officials.
Tactical	Defense Coordinating Officers/Elements	Serve as DOD’s single point of contact for requesting assistance from DOD in accordance with the <i>National Response Framework</i> . Specific responsibilities of this entity can include processing requirements for military support, forwarding mission assignments to the appropriate military organizations, and assigning military liaisons, as appropriate.
	Joint Task Force–North (NORTHCOM)	Provide military support to law enforcement agencies.
	National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency	Provide intelligence support (e.g., graphics and maps) to federal agency field locations through support teams.

Source: GAO analysis based on interviews with DOD officials.

^aAgencies represented in this column have been identified by DOD and non-DOD officials as key DOD entities for the department's interagency coordination for its homeland defense and civil support missions.

^bTitle 32 refers to a section of the United States Code. Units operating in a Title 32 status are under the command and control of the governor of the state, but are federally funded.

DOD Has Issued Documents to Facilitate Coordination, but Its Entities Lack Clearly Defined Roles and Responsibilities

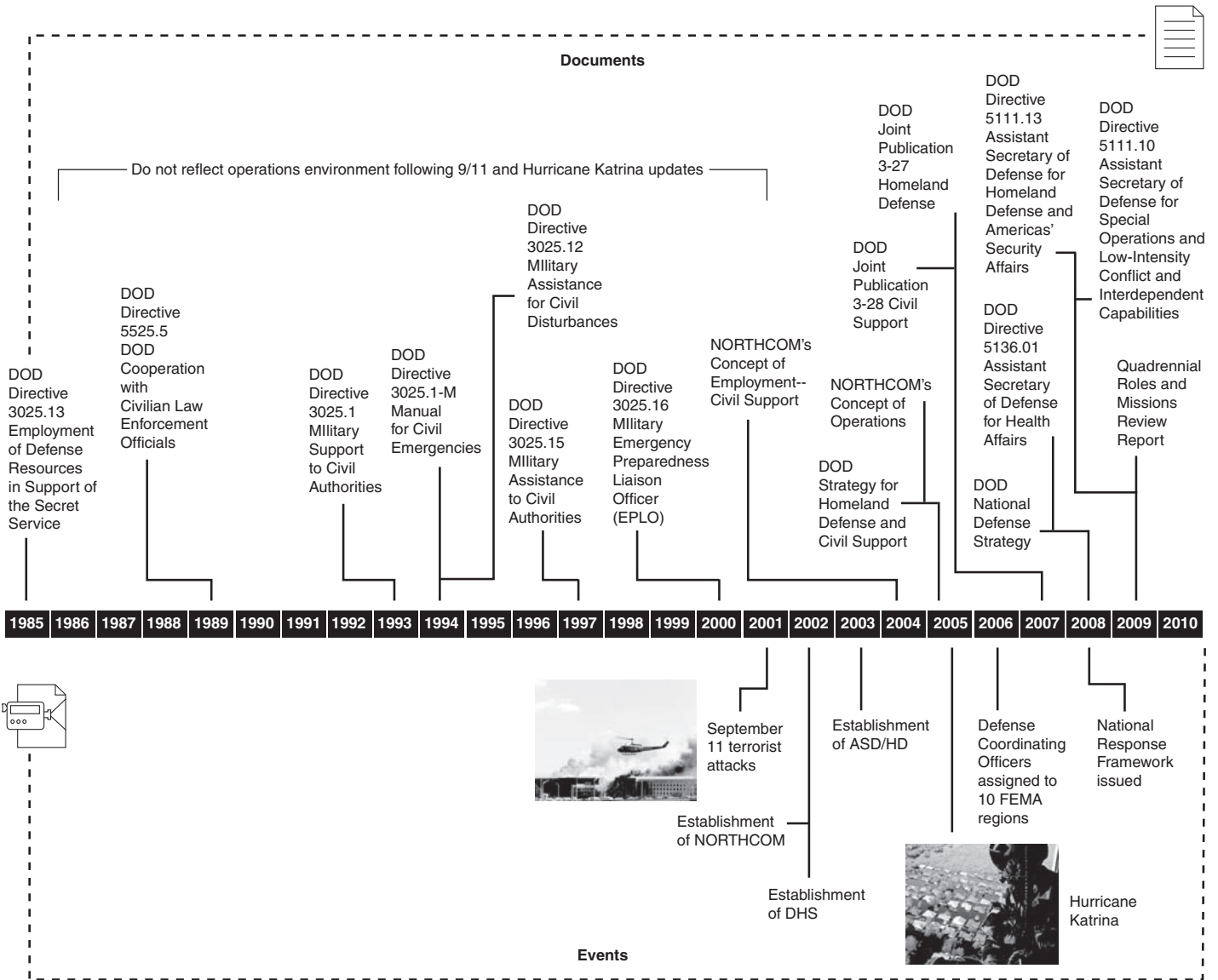
While DOD has issued a number of strategies, policies, and guidance related to interagency coordination for its homeland defense and civil support missions, DOD entities lack clearly defined roles and responsibilities because key documents are outdated, are not fully integrated, or are not comprehensive. Previous GAO work,¹⁷ the *National Response Framework*, and DOD strategy and guidance¹⁸ all identify the need for clearly defined roles and responsibilities to enhance interagency coordination. In addition, DOD policy requires the department to review DOD directives to ensure that they are necessary, current, and consistent with DOD policy, existing law, and statutory authority 4 years from the date that the directive is issued.¹⁹ Although DOD's civil support directives were issued between 1985 and 2000, DOD has yet to fulfill this requirement. We found that roles and responsibilities identified in DOD's homeland defense and civil support strategy, its series of civil support directives, its interagency guidance for support to law enforcement authorities, and its joint publication on interagency coordination no longer provide a clear, comprehensive, and current description of DOD's interagency coordination efforts for its civil support mission. A detailed time line of the outdated strategy, guidance, and policies is shown in figure 3.

¹⁷ [GAO-06-15](#).

¹⁸ *National Defense Strategy* and Joint Publication 3-08.

¹⁹ DOD Instruction 5025.01, DOD Directives Program (Oct. 28, 2007).

Figure 3: Time Line of DOD Homeland Defense and Civil Support Policies and Guidance and Historical Events That Have Affected How DOD Operates within the United States



Source: GAO analysis of DOD information.

Strategy for Homeland Defense and Civil Support is Outdated

DOD issued its *Strategy for Homeland Defense and Civil Support* in June 2005. Among other things, this strategy identifies the roles and responsibilities of some of the key DOD entities for support to civil authorities. For example, the strategy identifies ASD/HD, Chairman of the

Joint Chiefs of Staff, NORTHCOM, and PACOM as several key DOD entities responsible for coordinating with federal partners for homeland defense, and it provides brief descriptions of their roles in homeland defense missions. However, the 2005 strategy does not reflect the current environment in which DOD supports civil authorities. For example, while the strategy primarily discusses DOD's civil support mission in the context of the department's response to a weapon of mass destruction—DOD's primary focus after the 2001 terrorist attacks—it does not address the breadth of civil support missions that DOD must be prepared to support subsequent to Hurricane Katrina in 2005. Such civil support missions include catastrophic natural or man-made disasters, pandemic influenza, and the southwest border counterdrug efforts.

Additionally, DOD's *Strategy for Homeland Defense and Civil Support* has not been updated to incorporate important recommendations made to DOD to define roles and responsibilities for its entities during federal response activities. For example, in a February 2006 report on lessons learned after Hurricane Katrina, the White House recommended DOD should provide imagery support and coordinate with DHS through the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency.²⁰ However, the strategy does not identify this agency's roles and responsibilities for coordination. The strategy also does not reflect changes to the national preparedness system since September 2005—such as the issuance of the *National Response Framework*.²¹ Additionally, the June 2005 strategy does not incorporate changes made in the *National Defense Strategy* when it was reissued in June 2008, nor does it reflect changes made in the *National Homeland Security Strategy* when it was reissued in October 2007. According to ASD/HD officials, revision of the strategy began in October 2008 but was postponed due to the change in presidential administrations. ASD/HD officials told us that they expect this strategy will be updated and issued no later than December 2011. In commenting on a draft of this report, DOD estimated the updated strategy will be completed in March 2011.

²⁰ White House, *The Federal Response to Hurricane Katrina: Lessons Learned* (Washington, D.C.: Feb. 23, 2006).

²¹ DHS issued the *National Response Plan* in December 2004 and made revisions to the plan in May 2006 to address lessons learned from Hurricane Katrina, such as a lack of clarity in federal leadership roles and responsibilities which resulted in disjointed and delayed efforts by emergency responders. DHS issued the *National Response Framework* in January 2008 to replace the *National Response Plan*.

DOD's Series of Military Support to Civil Authorities Policies and Guidance Is Outdated

In addition to DOD's outdated *Strategy for Homeland Defense and Civil Support*, we found that DOD's series of civil support policies and guidance, such as its 1997 DOD directive *Military Assistance to Civil Authorities*, are also outdated, as most of them were written in the 1990s and thus do not reflect changes that occurred subsequent to their issuance.²² For example, none of these directives identify the roles and responsibilities of either NORTHCOM or ASD/HD—both of whom have had key interagency coordination roles and responsibilities with federal partners since their establishment in 2002 and 2003, respectively. These directives also do not reflect the substantial changes that occurred in the national preparedness system after the late 1990s, including the establishment of DHS in November 2002 and the subsequent issuance of extensive civilian policy and doctrine for homeland security.²³ For example, the directives do not identify the current roles and responsibilities of DOD entities supporting civil authorities under the *National Response Framework*, such as DOD's Defense Coordinating Officers. According to ASD/HD officials, DOD intends to replace current directives on military support and assistance to civil authorities with a new draft directive on military support to civil authorities that is currently undergoing internal revision by DOD.²⁴ ASD/HD officials stated this new directive will likely be updated in early 2010; however, this office has previously extended deadlines for making these needed revisions.

²² DOD Directive 3025.1 (Jan. 15, 1993), DOD Directive 3025.12 (Feb. 4, 1994), DOD Directive 3025.13 (Sept. 13, 1985), DOD Directive 3025.15 (Feb. 18, 1997), DOD Directive 3025.16 (Dec. 18, 2000), and DOD Manual 3025.1-M (June 2, 1994).

²³ For more details on civilian policy and doctrine that defines roles and responsibilities for emergency response activities, see app. II of GAO, *National Preparedness: FEMA Has Made Progress, but Needs to Complete and Integrate Planning, Exercise, and Assessment Efforts*, GAO-09-369 (Washington, D.C.: Apr. 30, 2009).

²⁴ ASD/HD officials stated that a number of instructions to implement the directive are planned as well; however, the total number of instructions to be developed has not yet been finalized. Two of the instructions are currently in draft—one for DOD support for special events (e.g., the Super Bowl) and another for DOD support to law enforcement. ASD/HD is currently in the process of developing a third instruction detailing defense liaison coordination activities.

Roles and Responsibilities for Support to Law Enforcement Are Unclear

DOD's directive on supporting law enforcement agencies, which was last updated in 1989 and is still in effect, is outdated and results in unclear roles and responsibilities.²⁵ This directive assigns several responsibilities to the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Force Management and Personnel—subsequently renamed the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Personnel—related to coordination with civilian law enforcement officials.²⁶ However, this directive conflicts with a 2009 directive that assigns many of the same responsibilities to ASD/HD²⁷—and additionally, another directive tasks the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low-Intensity Conflict and Interdependent Capabilities with overseeing DOD's counterdrug mission in support of federal law enforcement agencies instead of ASD/HD.²⁸ Because DOD's law enforcement support directive has not been updated or superseded in 20 years, it is unclear which DOD office is responsible for coordinating with law enforcement agencies.

DOD plans to cancel its directive on DOD cooperation with civilian law enforcement agencies and integrate aspects of its policy for law enforcement support into a new DOD instruction to be issued in 2010. However, according to ASD/HD officials, this policy revision will not include DOD's support for counterdrug missions. As DOD does not have another directive for its support to law enforcement agencies for its homeland defense missions—such as Joint Task Force-North's support of federal partners for counterdrug missions—there will be a gap in DOD's law enforcement support policy.

Roles and Responsibilities between Homeland Defense and Health Affairs Are Unclear

Furthermore, DOD's directive delineating the roles and responsibilities of ASD/HD and other offices within the Office of the Secretary of Defense that directly coordinate with federal partners are not integrated, which leads to unclear roles and responsibilities. For example, ASD/HD is designated as the principal DOD representative to interagency partners. However, the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Health Affairs has a DOD liaison located at CDC who does not directly coordinate with ASD/HD. CDC officials and the DOD liaison to CDC told us that they were not aware

²⁵ DOD Directive 5525.5 (Dec. 20, 1989).

²⁶ DOD Directive 5525.5 § 5.1 (Dec. 20, 1989).

²⁷ DOD Directive 5111.13 § 4.b.(1) (Jan. 16, 2009).

²⁸ Department of Defense Directive 5111.10 (Jan. 16, 2009).

of ASD/HD's roles and responsibilities as the principal DOD representative to interagency partners. Consequently, it is unclear as to the extent to which ASD/HD or the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Health Affairs is the principal DOD representative to CDC. We found similar issues in September 2006, when we reported that there was uncertainty about the roles and responsibilities among DOD entities, including ASD/HD and the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Health Affairs, for preparing for a pandemic influenza.²⁹

Joint Doctrine on Interagency Coordination Is Not Comprehensive

DOD's joint doctrine on interagency coordination, which is supposed to provide DOD entities information that will enable them to work with their federal partners in meeting the entities' missions, does not provide comprehensive information to the DOD entities. Specifically, we found that this guidance primarily focuses on interagency coordination overseas, leaving DOD entities supporting homeland defense and civil support missions with limited information regarding their federal partners. For example, DOD's joint guidance focuses only on USDA's roles and responsibilities for foreign activities and does not delineate the role of the USDA entity or DOD's potential relationship to it during civil support operations.

This joint doctrine on interagency coordination is designed to provide guidance to DOD personnel by providing descriptions of federal agencies that DOD may encounter during the course of contingency operations, but it is not comprehensive.³⁰ USDA, for example, is identified as the lead coordinating agency within the *National Response Framework* for the Emergency Support Function annex regarding Agriculture and Natural Resources, and DOD is identified within the annex as a supporting agency to USDA.³¹ Within the annex, the homeland security and emergency response roles and responsibilities for a range of USDA entities, such as

²⁹ GAO, *Influenza Pandemic: DOD Has Taken Important Actions to Prepare, but Accountability, Funding, and Communications Need to be Clearer and Focused Departmentwide*, GAO-06-1042 (Washington, D.C.: Sept. 21, 2006).

³⁰ Joint Publication 3-08 (Mar. 17, 2006).

³¹ The National Response Framework Emergency Support Function Annexes provide the structure for coordinating federal interagency support for a federal response to an incident. Each annex designates a federal agency as the lead coordinator for that particular Emergency Support Function Annex. The Emergency Support Function coordinator—in this case, USDA—is the entity with management oversight for that particular Support Function.

the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, are detailed,³² and DOD is expected to provide civil support to this USDA entity if needed during an emergency or disaster. However, DOD's joint doctrine on interagency coordination does not describe this USDA entity's domestic roles and responsibilities and thus does not provide DOD entities sufficient information that would facilitate their coordination efforts.

Roles and Responsibilities between ASD/HD, NORTHCOM, and PACOM Are Unclear

We found that roles and responsibilities among DOD entities, such as ASD/HD, NORTHCOM, and PACOM were unclear with regard to interagency coordination and external communication because ASD/HD had not developed a memorandum or other policy document that described the relationships among these entities. Specifically, while the Deputy Secretary of Defense tasked ASD/HD in 2003 to prepare a memorandum within 30 days describing the relationships between that office, NORTHCOM, and other combatant commands,³³ ASD/HD did not develop such a memorandum. In January 2009, DOD issued a directive identifying the roles and responsibilities of ASD/HD and canceled the Deputy Secretary of Defense memorandum with this tasking. However, the January 2009 directive did not describe the relationships between that office, NORTHCOM, PACOM, and other combatant commands. If developed as instructed, this memorandum could have clarified the interagency coordination and external communication roles and responsibilities for homeland defense and civil support matters among ASD/HD, NORTHCOM, and PACOM especially since two of these DOD entities—ASD/HD and NORTHCOM—have representatives at DHS headquarters.

By updating, integrating, and ensuring the comprehensiveness of its strategy, policy, and guidance, DOD would be better positioned to improve and institutionalize its interagency coordination and external communication efforts for homeland defense and civil support matters. Similarly, the relationships among ASD/HD, NORTHCOM, and PACOM could be clearer for interagency coordination if DOD issued a policy

³² As a lead coordinator for an emergency support function under the *National Response Framework*, USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service is responsible for providing an integrated response to an animal or plant disease outbreak. DOD may need to provide civil support to the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service to assist in these efforts.

³³ DOD, Deputy Secretary of Defense Memorandum, *Implementation Guidance Regarding the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Homeland Defense* (Mar. 25, 2003).

document that clarifies the interagency coordination and external communication roles and responsibilities of DOD entities.

DOD Communicates with Federal Partners through Various Means, but Its Approach Could be Improved

DOD communicates with its federal interagency partners through numerous formal and informal forums, such as conferences, and documents; however, DOD has not clearly identified the roles and responsibilities and day-to-day coordination processes with its federal partners through a single, readily accessible source for DOD's federal partners that articulates such information. DOD and interagency-related documents, such as DOD's joint doctrine on interagency coordination,³⁴ consistently recognize that sharing information—including information about the agency's mission, roles and responsibilities, culture, and lexicon—is critical for the success of interagency coordination between federal agencies. For example, the 2008 *National Defense Strategy* states that a unified “whole-of-government” approach is possible only when every government department and agency understands the core competencies, roles, missions, and capabilities of its partners. DOD's 2009 *Quadrennial Roles and Mission Review Report* states that the department supports a coherent framework that includes commonly understood strategic concepts, operational principles, relationships between agencies, and roles and responsibilities that could help delineate how to best coordinate and synchronize efforts between DOD and other federal agencies. The *National Response Framework* recognizes that a concise, common guide is valuable when addressing challenges to effective response, such as the relatively high turnover and short tenure among officials responsible for response at all levels. DOD officials also agreed that given the growing importance of whole-of-government planning, there is a need to inform interagency partners of DOD's coordination approach.

DOD hosts or participates in numerous forums to enhance interagency coordination and share information with its federal partners. For example, DOD leadership, including the Secretary of Defense and ASD/HD, participates in National Security Council meetings and Homeland Security Council meetings to discuss national security policy matters with the President of the United States and other federal partners. NORTHCOM hosts a biweekly planning conference via telephone that includes DOD and non-DOD officials from locations across the United States. DOD officials stated that the department sends representatives to the annual

³⁴ Joint Publication 3-08 (Mar. 17, 2006).

pre- and postwildfire season conferences hosted by the National Interagency Fire Center in Boise, Idaho. DOD and non-DOD officials told us that these forums are great tools for sharing current information and establishing and maintaining relationships between and among DOD and its federal partners. However, DOD, DHS, and DOJ officials also stated that the benefits gained through these forums (such as establishing interagency relationships) are transient because they depend on personnel who rotate out of their positions frequently.

The *National Response Framework* similarly identifies high turnover and short tenure of officials responsible for response activities throughout government as a challenge for effective response. To address this challenge, the National Interagency Fire Center created a partner handbook that identifies key information, such as the roles and responsibilities, missions, and agreed-upon protocols of its mission partners. However, DOD has not developed a similar vehicle for institutionalizing its information-sharing efforts so that its federal partners can maintain institutional knowledge and have readily accessible information about key issues, such as the different DOD entities that have homeland defense and civil support missions—including their missions, roles and responsibilities, agreed-upon coordination protocols and procedures, and processes for initiating new coordination relationships.

For those cases in which DOD has internally documented its missions, roles, and responsibilities, we found that the information is dispersed among multiple sources (for example, DOD strategy, directives, manuals, and joint publications); the documents may not always be readily accessible to federal partners; and they may be written in a manner that leads to unclear expectations. We reviewed more than 30 DOD documents, including classified documents, that DOD officials said articulated the department's homeland defense and civil support missions, its entities' roles and responsibilities, and its culture and concepts. For example, there are 5 DOD strategy documents (including 2 that are classified); 9 DOD directives that articulate DOD's policy for civil support (including those that we have previously identified as outdated resulting in unclear roles and responsibilities); 4 joint doctrine documents that guide DOD entities on matters pertaining to interagency coordination, homeland defense, civil support, and counterdrug operations; 2 joint instructions; 6 NORTHCOM-specific guidance documents on the command's interagency coordination policy and the roles and responsibilities of its different command components; 2 DOD handbooks or manuals that discuss civil support processes or provide guidance on interagency coordination; and 8 concept plans that focus on interagency coordination and civil support missions.

DOD has no single directive that articulates DOD's policy for homeland defense. DHS, HHS, and USDA officials told us that they are unable to access classified information on a regular basis because their agencies do not provide security clearances or access to classified systems with the information to all of their personnel, including their liaisons. DOD also generally prohibits its concept plans from being shared with its federal partners, even though DOD entities are supposed to support these federal agencies within the homeland, and several of these concept plans are unclassified documents.³⁵ By not providing a single, readily accessible partner guide to its federal partners, DOD is in effect expecting them to research, attempt to obtain access to, and then determine the mission of, roles and responsibilities of, protocols for, and methods for initiating relationships with DOD entities. The *National Response Framework* recognizes the importance of partner guides, as they provide stakeholder-specific ready references describing key roles and actions for response partners. In March 2010, FEMA issued a series of partner guides to serve as ready references of key roles and actions for local, tribal, state, federal, and private-sector response.

In addition, some of the DOD documents were written in a manner that could lead to misunderstandings and unclear expectations between DOD and its federal partners. For example, Joint Task Force-North officials told us that they believed their command had clearly communicated to its law enforcement partners through command briefings that it does not serve as the DOD entity those partners should contact for immediate or near-term (i.e., within a week) DOD law enforcement support assistance. The estimated time frame for fulfilling a support request, according to Joint Task Force-North officials, would be at least 180 days, and sometimes more than a year. However, officials from a law enforcement agency told us that they would contact Joint Task Force-North if they needed immediate or near-term DOD assistance, as it was their belief that this would be part of that command's mission. Our review of the briefing slides that the command presents to its federal partners showed that they were written from the perspective of Joint Task Force-North officials, who understood the differences between the different types of requests that

³⁵ In December 2008, the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy allowed NORTHCOM to provide some of its federal partners copies of certain civil support concept plans. In a November 2, 2009, memorandum, the Secretary of Defense created a category of civil support plans that could be released to DOD's federal and other partners. DOD, Secretary of Defense Memorandum, *Creation of the Civil Support Category of Plans* (Nov. 2, 2009).

DOD could receive from its law enforcement partners—differences that were not clearly described in the briefing slides to these partners. DHS officials told us that such examples highlight the need for DOD to do a better job of sharing information regarding its civil support missions in a single, readily accessible partner guide that is written for use by the department’s federal partners.

DOD officials told us that while there is a general recognition among DOD officials and non-DOD officials of the need to proactively share information about their respective agencies, DOD has yet to issue any policy or guidance requiring a particular DOD entity to issue a single, readily accessible partner guide written for use by the department’s federal partners. Such a guide would provide DOD’s federal partners more readily accessible information about key issues, such as information about the different DOD entities that have a homeland defense and civil support mission—including their missions, roles and responsibilities, agreed-upon coordination protocols and procedures, and processes for initiating new coordination relationships.³⁶

³⁶ Such a single, readily accessible source could be accomplished through a variety of formats, including a handbook or a Web-based tool.

DOD Has Generally Successfully Exchanged Liaisons with Some Federal Agencies, but Greater Use of Key Practices Would Enhance Their Effectiveness

DOD and non-DOD officials told us that the quality of the liaisons that their agencies have exchanged was generally very high; however, DOD has not fully implemented key practices for managing homeland defense and civil support liaisons. We have previously reported³⁷ and DOD recognizes³⁸ that leading organizations' key practices for effective and efficient workforce planning and management include:

- ensuring situational awareness of liaisons that are currently exchanged to be able to leverage resources, identify gaps, and assess their performance in coordinating with their federal partners;
- conducting routine staffing-needs assessments to identify liaison personnel needed to further interagency coordination;
- developing position descriptions to identify roles and responsibilities; knowledge, skills, and abilities; and duration of the exchange;
- training personnel to ensure that they possess the critical skills and competencies needed for mission success; and
- conducting performance assessments to evaluate the contributions that individuals have made toward achieving programmatic results.

DOD Does Not Have Comprehensive Knowledge Regarding Exchanged DOD and Non-DOD Liaisons

While various DOD entities, such as NORTHCOM and ASD/HD, may be aware of the liaisons they have individually assigned to their federal partners, neither of these two entities nor any other DOD entity has comprehensive situational awareness of liaisons exchanged with other federal agencies. We have previously reported that key practices for effective and efficient workforce planning and management include, among others, ensuring complete situational awareness of personnel—in this case, liaisons exchanged for interagency coordination—to be able to identify gaps or redundancies, as well as to be able to identify assigned personnel whose performance needs to be assessed.³⁹ DOD recognizes the need to have situational awareness of its liaisons. For example, at a

³⁷ [GAO-04-39](#) and [GAO-02-373SP](#).

³⁸ Department of Defense Instruction 1000.17, Detail of DOD Personnel to Duty Outside the Department of Defense (Apr. 16, 2008); Department of Defense Instruction 1400.25, DOD Civilian Personnel Management System (Nov. 18, 2008); Department of Defense Instruction 1315.18, Procedures for Military Personnel Assignments (Jan. 12, 2005); U.S. Joint Forces Command, *The Commander's Handbook for the Joint Interagency Coordination Group (JIACG)* (Suffolk, Va.: March 2007); and U.S. Joint Forces Command, *Insights and Best Practices: Interagency, Intergovernmental, and Nongovernmental Coordination, Focus Paper #3* (Suffolk, Va.: July 2007).

³⁹ [GAO-04-39](#) and [GAO-02-373SP](#).

January 2009 interagency coordination conference that the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy hosted with DOD and non-DOD agencies,⁴⁰ DOD officials found that the department should increase the level of awareness of the liaisons it has detailed to non-DOD agencies, as well as non-DOD liaisons that have been detailed to DOD entities, to minimize duplication and widen the overall interagency collaborative effort. Similarly, a DOD instruction⁴¹ requires the department's Washington Headquarters Services to track and record approved liaisons.⁴²

We found that DOD's Washington Headquarters Services and ASD/HD, the principal DOD representative with interagency partners for homeland defense and civil support matters, did not have a complete list of all the liaisons DOD has detailed to its partners, or vice versa. According to Washington Headquarters Services' records, there were only 2 DOD personnel at DHS headquarters for fiscal year 2009—yet an informal survey of DOD personnel conducted by the ASD/HD representative to DHS headquarters during the summer of 2009 found more than 110 DOD personnel, from a variety of DOD entities, working at DHS as liaisons, subject-matter experts, or in other capacities.⁴³ Officials at DOD's Washington Headquarters Services told us that they did not have complete awareness of DOD liaisons sent to DOD's federal partners because this information had not been provided to Washington Headquarters Services by the DOD entities exchanging liaisons. Similarly, ASD/HD and DOD's Washington Headquarters Services lacked knowledge of the liaisons whom their federal partners had assigned to different DOD entities, because DOD lacks policy or guidance that requires such action. As a result, DOD entities, such as Defense Coordinating Officers and Joint Task Force-North, may not be fully aware of the liaisons whom they could leverage for their specific missions. For example, a Defense Coordinating

⁴⁰ According to a post-conference DOD report, conference participants included a range of senior DOD and federal partner agency officials. DOD officials in attendance included representatives from eight combatant commands, the Office of the Secretary of Defense, and the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Federal partner agency officials in attendance included representatives from 10 departments and agencies.

⁴¹ DOD Instruction 1000.17, § 5.2.3 (Apr. 16, 2008).

⁴² DOD's Washington Headquarters Services is a DOD entity aligned under the Director of Administration and Management that manages DOD-wide programs and operations for the Pentagon Reservation and DOD-leased facilities in the National Capital Region.

⁴³ The ASD/HD official stated that he did not believe that he had identified all the DOD representatives located at DHS headquarters during this informal survey.

Officer told us that a point of contact and relationship with a representative from the Department of Energy would enhance his ability to meet some of his responsibilities. The Defense Coordinating Officer told us he was not aware of the Department of Energy liaison assigned at NORTHCOM headquarters and available for his needs.

Further, while Washington Headquarters Services and ASD/HD are not precluded from sharing information with each other, they have not done so. ASD/HD officials told us they were not utilizing the information possessed by Washington Headquarters Services regarding DOD liaisons detailed to other federal agencies because they were not aware of the instruction directing Washington Headquarters Services to track and record approved liaisons. Officials from ASD/HD acknowledged that DOD currently has a gap in its guidance regarding situational awareness of liaisons exchanged for homeland defense and civil support missions, and that it plans to issue such guidance by the end of 2010. By enforcing compliance with DOD's current instruction on tracking its liaisons and by issuing additional guidance regarding liaisons exchanged for homeland defense and civil support matters, DOD will be better positioned to have complete situational awareness of exchanged liaisons, minimize duplication of resources, and broaden the overall interagency collaborative effort.

DOD Has Not Conducted an Overall Staffing-Needs Assessment for the Exchange of Liaison Personnel

DOD has not conducted a departmentwide staffing-needs assessment of liaisons that the department sends to its federal partners and vice versa to ensure that the department is leveraging resources appropriately and is sensitive to its federal partners' missions and capacities. DOD guidance recognizes the need to determine resource requirements for the exchange of liaison personnel, stating that DOD combatant commanders are to utilize liaison officers, as appropriate, to facilitate coordination with other federal agencies and ensure sound management of DOD resources.⁴⁴ At the same time, DOD officials at the January 2009 interagency coordination conference recognized that DOD needs to be sensitive to the capacity of its federal partners to provide liaisons to a range of DOD entities requesting such liaisons. We have also previously reported that key practices for effective and efficient workforce planning and management include, among others, conducting routine staffing-needs assessments to

⁴⁴ DOD Instruction 1000.17, § 4.1 (Apr. 16, 2008) and DOD Directive 3025.1, § 4.4.6.3 (Jan. 15, 1993).

identify personnel resource requirements needed to further the agency's mission.⁴⁵

According to NORTHCOM officials, the command has conducted informal staffing-needs assessments for some of its non-DOD liaisons. Specifically, DOD initially assessed the command's need for liaisons from other federal agencies when the department funded three liaisons to the command upon its establishment in 2003.⁴⁶ Subsequently, NORTHCOM conducted informal staffing-needs assessments by surveying the command staff to determine whether they had identified additional liaisons who should be located at the headquarters to support the command's mission.⁴⁷ As a result of these informal determinations of staffing needs at NORTHCOM's headquarters, the number of federal agencies with representatives located at the command's headquarters has increased from 3 in 2003 to 18 in 2009. NORTHCOM has additional representatives from agencies that are not located at the command's headquarters. According to NORTHCOM officials, these personnel are able to set up temporary offices at the command's headquarters for exercises and other events, as needed. NORTHCOM used a similar informal approach to assign 2 liaisons to DHS and FEMA headquarters and 3 additional interagency coordination representatives to the command's Washington Office.⁴⁸ As with NORTHCOM, PACOM officials stated that PACOM has not conducted a formal staffing needs assessment for the exchange of liaisons. Rather, the federal partner liaisons located at PACOM reflect evolving informal determinations of staffing needs. ASD/HD has also placed liaisons with its federal partners, including 11 officials at DHS, 1 official at the Homeland Security Council, and 1 official at the White House.

However, officials from ASD/HD—the principal DOD entity responsible for coordinating the determination of requirements for the DOD-wide exchange of liaisons with federal partners for homeland defense and civil

⁴⁵ [GAO-04-39](#) and [GAO-02-373SP](#).

⁴⁶ The three initial liaisons assigned to NORTHCOM were from the Department of State, HHS, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

⁴⁷ According to NORTHCOM officials, lessons learned from contingency responses or exercises may be another informal means that has been used to determine the need for the exchange of additional liaisons with NORTHCOM's federal partners.

⁴⁸ The representatives located at the Washington Office are interdepartmental coordination officers to support health and medical issues, law enforcement issues, and training and exercises.

support—told us that they have not conducted a formal DOD-wide staffing-needs assessment to determine which DOD entities should exchange liaisons with which federal partners. As a result, ASD/HD does not have a way of ensuring that DOD entities, which have been able to establish their own liaison requirements without a DOD-wide staffing-needs assessment, have not placed too many liaisons at certain agencies and have not neglected to place an adequate number of liaisons with DOD's other federal partners. In addition, NORTHCOM officials told us that they lack guidance on determining the appropriate number and selection of agencies from which they should be exchanging liaisons. Officials from ASD/HD acknowledged that DOD currently has a gap in its guidance for determining the appropriate number and selection of agencies and that it plans to issue such guidance in 2010. A DOD-wide staffing-needs assessment would better position DOD to ensure the most appropriate and efficient exchange of liaisons between DOD entities and DOD's federal partner agencies, and thus maximize the effectiveness of interagency coordination efforts.

DOD Has Not Consistently Developed Position Descriptions to Define the Roles and Responsibilities of DOD and Non-DOD Liaisons

DOD has not consistently developed position descriptions for liaison personnel to define their roles and responsibilities; requisite knowledge, skills, and abilities; or the duration of exchanges for DOD and federal partner liaisons. We have previously reported that leading organizations' key practices for effective and efficient workforce planning and management include the development of such position descriptions.⁴⁹ DOD policy and guidance also state that both uniformed and civilian personnel, which include DOD liaisons to federal agencies, should have position descriptions that identify their duties, qualifications, supervisory status, and other requirements of the position.⁵⁰ For example, in March 2007, DOD's Joint Forces Command issued guidance for combatant commanders that provided generic position descriptions, qualifications, and exchange durations for federal partner liaisons assigned to a Joint Interagency Coordination Group within a combatant command.⁵¹ Participants at the January 2009 DOD interagency coordination conference endorsed the need for liaisons to have defined roles and responsibilities,

⁴⁹ [GAO-04-39](#) and [GAO-02-373SP](#).

⁵⁰ DOD Instruction 1400.25-V250, § 4.e.2 (Nov. 18, 2008) and DOD Instruction 1315.18, Enclosure 5 (Jan. 12, 2005).

⁵¹ *The Commander's Handbook for the Joint Interagency Coordination Group (JIACG)*.

and recommended that the department ensure that memoranda of understanding—one approach to identifying position descriptions—are developed early in relationships between DOD and federal partner agencies. For example, the position description for the DOD personnel assigned to FEMA regional offices should be developed with input from FEMA so that both agencies understand what FEMA needs from the person filling this position as well as what it needs from DOD.

According to officials from ASD/HD and NORTHCOM, DOD liaisons sent to federal partners do not consistently have formal position descriptions that are specific to their interagency coordination role for homeland defense and civil support missions. For example, we found that the principal DOD representative to DHS does not have a position description that describes that position's roles and responsibilities; requisite knowledge, skills, and abilities; or duration of the exchange. DOD entities have not fully complied with the policy and guidance requiring them to develop position descriptions for their liaison personnel.

We also found that DOD has not consistently issued position descriptions or guidance to federal agencies sending liaisons to DOD entities. DOD officials told us that they do not believe it is their responsibility to identify the roles and responsibilities; requisite knowledge skills, and abilities; and duration of exchange of non-DOD personnel. Instead, they said, that responsibility belongs to the non-DOD liaisons' agencies. We note, however, that while that responsibility might belong with the other agencies, DOD exposes itself to potentially conflicting expectations and negative relationships with liaisons or their agencies by not consistently identifying the DOD entity's expectations to its federal partners before the liaisons are selected. For example, we were told about two separate instances in which expectation differences between NORTHCOM and non-DOD liaisons limited the command's ability to fully utilize the non-DOD liaisons as the command had initially intended. NORTHCOM officials told us that they have learned from both of these instances and are developing a standard memorandum of understanding that identifies the roles and responsibilities; requisite knowledge, skills, and abilities; and duration of exchange for each non-DOD liaison assigned to the command, and that it will be signed by the command and the liaison's home agency.⁵² DOD

⁵² In its technical comments on a draft of this report, DOJ stated that NORTHCOM should be prepared to modify the standard memorandum of understanding that it is developing if a non-DOD agency believes that it does not meet their needs.

entities have not consistently developed position descriptions for their non-DOD liaisons, either through memoranda of understanding or other means, because they lack policy that requires them to take such action.

Officials from ASD/HD acknowledged that DOD currently has gaps in its guidance with regard to defining the roles and responsibilities; requisite knowledge, skills, and abilities; and duration of exchange for liaison positions, as well as for the use of memoranda of understanding to define such positions. They said that they plan to issue related guidance in 2010. By enforcing compliance with DOD's current policies requiring such position descriptions for DOD personnel as well as by having ASD/HD issue additional guidance, DOD will be better positioned to ensure that roles and responsibilities, requisite knowledge, skills, and abilities, and the duration of exchange of DOD and federal partner liaison personnel are well defined; and that they have mitigated the risk of having conflicting expectations with their federal partners and their representatives.

DOD Cannot Assess Training Adequacy Because It Has Not Identified Requisite Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities for Liaisons

DOD offers some training opportunities for liaison personnel, but training adequacy cannot be assessed because, as noted previously, DOD has not consistently developed position descriptions for liaison personnel to define their roles and responsibilities as well as requisite knowledge, skills, and abilities. We have previously reported that key practices for effective and efficient workforce planning and management include, among other practices, training personnel to ensure that they possess the critical skills and competencies needed for mission success.⁵³ DOD policy and guidance also recognize the importance of specialized training, calling for the use of liaisons specifically trained for their liaison duties.⁵⁴ For example, DOD's 2009 *Quadrennial Roles and Missions Review Report* stated that training is a critical element in achieving the department's vision of an institutionalized, whole-of-government approach to addressing national security challenges. DOD's Joint Forces Command 2007 focus paper on interagency coordination best practices stated that DOD and non-DOD liaisons should receive training that enhances that coordination, such as training that would allow the liaisons to develop a more thorough understanding of their federal partners.⁵⁵ Further, participants at the

⁵³ [GAO-04-39](#) and [GAO-02-373SP](#).

⁵⁴ DOD Directive 3025.1, §§1.2, 4.4.7, and 5.7.13 (Jan. 15, 1993).

⁵⁵ *Insights and Best Practices: Interagency, Intergovernmental, and Nongovernmental Coordination, Focus Paper #3*.

January 2009 interagency coordination conference stated that interagency coordination would be improved by having combatant commands devote additional resources to the training of exchanged liaisons, in part because liaison personnel from other federal agencies can have difficulty in adjusting to a military culture and working in the DOD joint environment.⁵⁶

Officials from ASD/HD, NORTHCOM, and PACOM told us that exchanged liaisons receive a variety of training through a range of forums. For example, liaison personnel may receive informal training by attending activities such as planning conferences, coordination working group meetings, and training opportunities offered prior to exercises. Joint Forces Command's focus paper on interagency coordination best practices states that getting people together has value because it supports the learning process. DOD also offers some more structured training that, according to DOD and DHS officials, enhances interagency coordination duties. For example, all staff assigned to NORTHCOM headquarters, including non-DOD liaisons, attend a weeklong set of indoctrination training sessions where new staff learn about the command's mission to support civil authorities and about some of the federal agencies that have representatives at the command. PACOM officials stated that the command also has indoctrination in-briefs for all new personnel, including non-DOD liaisons. However, PACOM officials acknowledged that non-DOD liaisons located off-site may be missing this training and this is an area where the command could improve. At both locations, non-DOD officials who represent their agencies but are not co-located at the command told us that they did not receive the indoctrination training that co-located liaisons received.

NORTHCOM, through its Army component command, offers a civil support training course that consists of three phases: an online course that takes about 8 hours to complete, a residential course that lasts 1 week, and ongoing training through e-mails that provide updates and reminders about information provided in the other two phases. While the residential course is offered to both DOD and non-DOD personnel, it has not been

⁵⁶ Among the recommendations developed at the conference, DOD combatant command officials recommended that DOD ensure that combatant commands establish a robust organizational entity that is responsible for the training and in-processing of liaisons sent by other federal agencies; develop a predeployment DOD orientation short course for incoming interagency personnel to introduce them to DOD as a whole; develop a comprehensive orientation and training program specifically designed to meet the needs of incoming non-DOD federal partner personnel with little or no prior exposure to the military; and mandate recurring education and training for interagency and DOD personnel.

widely attended by liaisons from the full range of DOD's federal partners. Specifically, 2,902 DOD personnel and 109 non-DOD federal personnel attended the residential training from April 2006 through June 2009.⁵⁷ Of the non-DOD personnel attendees, 101 came from FEMA, 5 from HHS, and 1 each from the Transportation Security Administration, Department of Transportation, and the Environmental Protection Agency. According to NORTHCOM records, agencies identified as coordinating federal agencies that DOD might be called upon to support in accordance with the *National Response Framework* (such as DOJ and USDA) have not attended this training program. Similarly, NORTHCOM's civil support training course does not address all of the different aspects of civil support as identified in DOD's civil support joint doctrine.⁵⁸

DOD recognizes that it needs to improve training for interagency coordination. For example, its January 2009 *Quadrennial Roles and Mission Review Report* concluded that lingering challenges for interagency personnel may be partially attributable to a lack of knowledge about other federal agencies. Tailored and specialized training for liaison personnel to develop this knowledge is valuable and necessary, because each federal agency has its own organizational culture, goals, priorities, requirements, practices, and processes. Additional DOD guidance and the development of position descriptions that identify specific roles and responsibilities as well as knowledge, skills, and abilities, for which liaisons should be trained, could enable DOD to ensure that its training programs are adequate.

DOD Conducts Performance Assessments of Its Liaisons but Has Opportunities to Enhance Their Scope

DOD policy recognizes the need to conduct personnel performance assessments. However, DOD's performance assessments of its liaisons are not focused on coordination competencies, and DOD does not consistently provide feedback to its federal partners about their liaisons' performance. We have previously reported that key practices for effective and efficient workforce planning and management include conducting performance assessments to evaluate the contributions that individuals

⁵⁷ In addition, NORTHCOM officials reported that 151 civilian contractors also took the training. However, NORTHCOM officials were unable to provide a breakdown of how many of the contractors were DOD contractors versus how many were contractors working for non-DOD entities, so these 151 recipients are not counted in the totals for DOD and non-DOD recipients of the training.

⁵⁸ Joint Publication 3-28.

have made toward achieving programmatic results—in this case, in interagency coordination efforts for homeland defense and civil support missions.⁵⁹ DOD policy also recognizes the need to conduct personnel performance assessments. For example, an Army regulation requires uniformed Army personnel to receive performance assessments based on their particular duties, responsibilities, tasks, and objectives.⁶⁰ Similarly, DOD civilian personnel are to be assessed on their performance based on their roles and responsibilities as defined within their position descriptions.⁶¹

DOD and non-DOD officials told us that they were generally very satisfied with the quality of the liaisons they received from each other. The officials stated that the liaisons have tended to be great ambassadors of their home agency and described them as being professional, cooperative, proactive, and team-oriented. However, we found that DOD liaisons' performance assessments do not consistently focus on the competencies and achievements required for interagency coordination. According to officials from ASD/HD and NORTHCOM, DOD liaisons sent to other federal agencies are not necessarily assessed on their performance specific to their role as liaisons for interagency coordination for homeland defense and civil support missions. For example, a DOD uniformed officer serving as a liaison could be assessed according to the position description for an officer of that individual's rank, but not necessarily as a liaison. Thus, the assessment is not specifically designed to assess the officer's performance as a liaison engaged in interagency coordination. Similarly, civilian DOD personnel were not consistently or fully assessed for their coordination efforts, because formal position descriptions are not yet in place. DOD's assessments of its interagency coordination efforts for homeland defense and civil support have not specifically focused on the performance of individual liaison personnel in part because, according to DOD officials, they lack guidance on how to include interagency coordination competencies and achievements in the current performance management policy.

⁵⁹ [GAO-04-39](#) and [GAO-02-373SP](#).

⁶⁰ Army Regulation 623-3, Personnel Evaluation: Evaluation Reporting System § 1-8 (a)(2)(d) (Aug. 10, 2007).

⁶¹ DOD Instruction 1400.25-V250, § 4.e. (Nov. 18, 2008).

We also found that DOD did not consistently request input from its federal partners on the performance of its liaisons, nor did it provide input for the performance assessments of non-DOD liaisons working at DOD entities. Such feedback would be valuable because the home agency performance rating official lacks the physical proximity needed to effectively judge the liaison's performance on a day-to-day basis. According to NORTHCOM officials, NORTHCOM's director of its interagency coordination directorate provides informal feedback to some federal agencies regarding the performance of their liaisons located at NORTHCOM headquarters. While in some cases the expectation for this input into the non-DOD liaisons' performance assessments is identified in memoranda of understanding between the command and the federal partners, in other cases input is provided at the request of the non-DOD liaisons or at the director's discretion. Conversely, DOD officials do not systematically request or receive performance feedback from the federal agencies that host DOD liaisons. ASD/HD officials told us that they believe memoranda of understanding between the DOD entity and the federal partner constitute the best approach to incorporate such feedback. However, DOD officials told us that they do not consistently request input from federal partners on the performance of DOD liaisons or provide input into the performance assessments of non-DOD liaisons working at DOD entities because they are not required to do so and because they lack guidance on how to incorporate this human capital practice into their current efforts.

Officials from ASD/HD acknowledged that DOD currently has gaps in its guidance regarding position descriptions for liaisons, as well as regarding performance assessments of liaison personnel specific to their role in interagency coordination. These officials told us they plan to issue related guidance in 2010, and that the Joint Chiefs of Staff is updating joint doctrine on interagency coordination. Until position descriptions for liaisons are consistently established, roles and responsibilities for interagency coordination will continue to lack clear definition, and DOD will be unable to assess liaisons from a performance perspective. Once liaison position descriptions are established and guidance is put into place requiring performance assessments—including feedback solicited from or offered by the receiving agency—specific to liaisons' roles and responsibilities in interagency coordination, DOD will be better positioned to ensure that liaisons are comprehensively assessed on a regular basis to evaluate the contributions they have made toward achieving program goals.

Conclusions

Close coordination between DOD and its federal partners is essential for DOD's two homeland security missions—homeland defense and civil support. The success of these missions depends fundamentally on clearly defined roles and responsibilities; DOD and its federal partners' mutual understanding of each other's entities, missions, organization, culture, and lexicon; and an effective and efficient liaison exchange program. Over the years, DOD has issued a number of strategy, policy, and guidance documents related to interagency coordination for its homeland defense and civil support missions. However, DOD entities still lack clearly defined roles and responsibilities, because key DOD documents are outdated, or not integrated, and are not comprehensive. Without updated policy and guidance to ensure its comprehensiveness, it is not always clear which DOD office is responsible for coordinating and communicating with certain federal agencies and for what purpose. Conversely, the roles and responsibilities of DOD entities that coordinate with federal partners would be more clearly defined and internally synchronized by updating, integrating, and ensuring the comprehensiveness of the department's key strategic and operational documents and issuing a policy document that defines the relationship between ASD/HD, NORTHCOM, and PACOM.

In an effort to develop and maintain relationships with its federal partners, DOD entities host and participate in a plethora of forums annually. However, there are opportunities to enhance the ability of those responsible for interagency coordination by more clearly communicating and identifying DOD entities, missions, organization, culture, and lexicon to DOD's federal partners. A DOD partner guide that identifies these components could facilitate and institutionalize DOD's efforts to share key information with its federal partners. The *National Response Framework* recognizes the importance of such partner guides as they provide stakeholder-specific references describing key roles and actions for response partners. A DOD partner guide could complement FEMA's *National Response Framework* Federal Partner Guide.

Liaisons exchanged between DOD and non-DOD agencies are one of the most critical components of interagency coordination. Considering DOD's overseas commitments and the nation's fiscal constraints, these resources should be used effectively and efficiently. During our review, DOD and non-DOD officials told us that they were generally very satisfied with the quality of the liaisons they received from each other and that they tended to be great ambassadors of their home agency. By fully implementing key practices for managing homeland defense and civil support liaisons, DOD will be better positioned to ensure that it has a fully effective and efficient liaison exchange program.

Recommendations for Executive Action

To more clearly define roles and responsibilities for interagency coordination within DOD, we recommend that the Secretary of Defense establish a time line and update and ensure the integration and comprehensiveness of DOD policy and guidance that delineate the roles and responsibilities of and relationships between DOD entities, such as ASD/HD, the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Health Affairs, the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low Intensity Conflict and Interdependent Capabilities, the combatant commands, the National Guard Bureau, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and DOD intelligence agencies. Specifically, updates of such policy and guidance should include:

- DOD's *Strategy for Homeland Defense and Civil Support*;
- DOD's law enforcement support policy (or policies) that address the different missions of such support, including civil support, counterdrug, and counterterrorism support;
- DOD's series of civil support policies and guidance (i.e., DOD's directive and instruction 3025 series);
- DOD's joint interagency coordination guidance (i.e., Joint Publication 3-08), ensuring sufficient and comprehensive coverage of homeland defense and civil support interagency coordination requirements and partners; and
- a policy document that clearly and specifically defines the relationships among ASD/HD, NORTHCOM, and other combatant commanders, including interagency coordination and external communication roles and responsibilities for homeland defense and civil support.

To facilitate and institutionalize a unified approach between DOD and its federal partners for interagency coordination for homeland defense and civil support missions, we recommend that the Secretary of Defense direct the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, in coordination with the Joint Chiefs of Staff, to establish a time line to develop and issue a partner guide that identifies the roles and responsibilities of DOD entities, processes, and agreed-upon approaches for interagency coordination for homeland defense and civil support efforts.

To ensure that DOD has adopted and implemented key practices for managing homeland defense and civil support liaisons, we recommend that the Secretary of Defense direct ASD/HD, in coordination with the Joint Chiefs of Staff, to establish a time line to take the following two actions:

-
- Ensure implementation of DOD's current instruction on the tracking of DOD liaisons assignments to other federal agencies, as well as the establishment of position descriptions for uniformed military and DOD civilian personnel.
 - Develop and issue additional workforce management policy and guidance regarding DOD liaisons to other federal agencies, as well as other federal agencies' liaisons to DOD. Such policy and guidance should ensure that:
 - routine staffing-needs assessments are conducted;
 - position descriptions or memoranda of understanding are developed;
 - appropriate interagency coordination training is available to liaisons; and
 - routine performance assessments of liaison personnel are conducted, to include feedback from the host agency or component.

Agency Comments and Our Evaluation

In comments on a draft of this report, DOD fully agreed with our recommendations and discussed steps it is taking or plans to take to address these recommendations. In response to our recommendation that DOD establish a time line and update DOD policy and guidance that delineate the roles and responsibilities of and the relationships between DOD entities, DOD agreed and stated that several draft policy and guidance updates are in coordination and provided estimated time lines for completion. In response to our recommendation to establish a time line to develop and issue a partner guide that identifies the roles and responsibilities of DOD entities, processes, and agreed-upon approaches for interagency coordination, DOD agreed and stated a time line would be developed by June 2010. In response to our recommendation that DOD ensure implementation of its current instruction on tracking liaison assignments to other federal agencies, establish position descriptions for personnel, and develop and issue additional workforce management policy and guidance regarding DOD liaisons to other federal agencies as well as other federal agencies' liaisons to DOD, the department agreed that it would implement this recommendation through ASD/HD.

DOD comments are reprinted in appendix III. DOD, DHS, DOJ, and HHS reviewed the draft of the report and provided technical comments, which we have incorporated into the report where appropriate. USDA and the Office of the Director of National Intelligence also reviewed a draft of this report but did not provide any comments.

As arranged with your office, unless you publicly announce its contents earlier, we plan no further distribution of this report until 30 days after its date. At that time, we will send copies to the appropriate congressional committees, the Secretary of Defense, the Secretary of Homeland Security, the Secretary of Agriculture, the Secretary of Health and Human Services, the Attorney General, and the Director of National Intelligence. We will also make copies available to others upon request. In addition, the report will be available at no charge on the GAO Web site at <http://www.gao.gov>.

If you or your staff have any questions about this report, please contact Davi M. D'Agostino at (202) 512-5431 or dagostinod@gao.gov or William O. Jenkins at (202) 512-8757 or jenkinswo@gao.gov. Contact points for our Offices of Congressional Relations and Public Affairs may be found on the last page of this report. GAO staff who made major contributions to this report are listed in appendix IV.



Davi M. D'Agostino
Director, Defense Capabilities and Management



William O. Jenkins
Director, Homeland Security and Justice

List of Requesters

The Honorable Joseph I. Lieberman
Chairman

The Honorable Susan M. Collins
Ranking Member
Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs
United States Senate

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

The Honorable Loretta Sanchez
Chairwoman
The Honorable Jeff Miller
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Terrorism, Unconventional Threats and Capabilities
Committee on Armed Services
House of Representatives

The Honorable Christopher S. Bond
United States Senate

The Honorable Patrick J. Leahy
United States Senate

The Honorable Adam Smith
House of Representatives

Appendix I: Scope and Methodology

As part of our review, we interviewed numerous officials from the Department of Defense (DOD) and non-DOD organizations to determine the extent to which DOD coordinates with its federal agency partners in support of its homeland defense and civil support missions. We selected the DOD entities with whom we met based on those that were identified by either DOD documents or officials as having a key role for interagency coordination for homeland defense and civil support missions. DOD officials at the strategic level with whom we met included representatives from the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Homeland Defense and Americas' Security Affairs, the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Health Affairs, the Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Counternarcotics and Global Threats, and the Joint Chiefs of Staff. We also met with U.S. Northern Command (NORTHCOM) and U.S. Pacific Command (PACOM) officials because they are the combatant commanders whose areas of responsibilities include the United States and its territories. During the engagement's design phase, we identified over 30 non-DOD agencies that had some type of relationship with NORTHCOM. As such, we selected other DOD and non-DOD entities to visit during our engagement using a nongeneralizable sample of entities that coordinate with NORTHCOM since it was established specifically to address homeland defense and civil support and its area of responsibility includes 49 states, the District of Columbia, 1 commonwealth, and 1 territory (compared to PACOM whose area of responsibility includes 1 state, 1 commonwealth, and 2 territories). Specifically, using five conduits through which NORTHCOM coordinates with its federal partners—including the command's interagency coordination directorate, the command's intelligence directorate, Defense Coordinating Officers, joint task forces, and liaison exchanges—we selected DOD and non-DOD agencies that coordinated with NORTHCOM officials through at least one of these conduits. In selecting the nongeneralizable sample of non-DOD agencies, we also considered whether the agencies were identified as a lead support agency under the *National Response Framework* with whom DOD would need to coordinate during a Stafford Act-declared event. Since Defense Coordinating Officers and their support elements are located at each of the 10 Federal Emergency Management Agency regions, we decided to select a nongeneralizable sample of Defense Coordinating Officers and their support elements to visit during our review. In selecting the specific regions we would visit, we used criteria such as geographic location; region size; number of requests for assistance for the region between January 1, 2008, and May 31, 2009; types of assistance requested; and GAO resources required. For the selection process, we identified the combination of regions that would meet every criterion so as to get a representative sample. As shown in table 2, we visited a number of DOD

and non-DOD organizations, including DOD and non-DOD entities that would provide a cross-selection of missions in which DOD supports civil authorities (e.g., law enforcement versus emergency management).

Table 2: DOD and Non-DOD Organizations Visited During Our Review

Federal agency	Entities visited during our review
Department of Defense	Office of the Secretary of Defense
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Office of the Executive Secretary • Assistant Secretary of Defense for Homeland Defense and Americas' Security Affairs (ASD/HD) • Assistant Secretary of Defense for Health Affairs • Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Counternarcotics and Global Threats • ASD/HD liaison to the Department of Homeland Security (DHS)
	Joint Chiefs of Staff
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joint Directorate of Manpower and Personnel • Joint Directorate of Military Support • Joint Directorate of Strategic Plans and Policy
	National Guard Bureau
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Headquarters • Liaison to Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Headquarters • Liaison to NORTHCOM • Liaison to PACOM • Liaison to Joint Task Force-North • Liaison to U.S. Coast Guard
	DOD Washington Headquarters Services
	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Headquarters • Liaison to ASD/HD • Liaison to FEMA headquarters • Liaison to PACOM
	Defense Intelligence Agency
National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency	

Federal agency	Entities visited during our review
	<p>NORTHCOM</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Directorate of Interagency Coordination • Directorate of Intelligence • Directorate of Operations • Directorate of Logistics and Engineering • Directorate of Plans and Policy • Directorate of Training and Exercise • Directorate of Programs, Resources, and Analysis • Washington Office • Liaison to DHS • Liaison to FEMA
	<p>U.S. Army North Command</p> <p>Joint Task Force North</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commanding General • Chief of Staff • Directorate of Personnel • Directorate of Intelligence • Directorate of Operations • Directorate of Logistics • Directorate of Plans and Policy • Directorate of Communications • Judge Advocate • Liaison to U.S. Army North Command
	<p>PACOM</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Directorate of Intelligence • Directorate of Operations • Directorate of Logistics, Engineering, and Security Assistance • Directorate of Plans and Policy • Joint Interagency Coordination Group • Joint Interagency Task Force West • Joint Task Force – Homeland Defense
	<p>U.S. Joint Forces Command</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joint Concept Development and Experimentation Directorate, Building Partnerships Division • Joint Doctrine and Education Group
	<p>Defense Coordinating Officer / Defense Coordinating Element located at</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FEMA Region II • FEMA Region IV • FEMA Region VI • FEMA Region IX (Oakland, California, office) • FEMA Region IX (Pacific Area Office)

Appendix I: Scope and Methodology

Federal agency	Entities visited during our review
Department of Homeland Security	DHS Headquarters <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Military Advisor to the Secretary of Homeland Security • Senior DHS liaison to DOD • Liaison to NORTHCOM
	FEMA <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Office of Policy, Program Analysis • Mitigation Directorate • Logistics Directorate • Operations Directorate • FEMA Region II • FEMA Region IV • FEMA Region VI • FEMA Region IX (Oakland, California, office) • FEMA Region IX (Pacific Area Office)
	Customs and Border Protection <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Headquarters • Border Patrol Special Coordination Center • Liaison to NORTHCOM • Liaison to PACOM
	Immigration and Customs Enforcement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Headquarters • U.S. Special Operations Command Headquarters • El Paso, Texas, office • Liaison to NORTHCOM
	Federal Bureau of Investigation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Headquarters • Liaison to NORTHCOM • Special-agent-in-charge Honolulu • FBI El Paso
	Drug Enforcement Administration <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Headquarters • Liaison to PACOM
Department of Justice	Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liaison to NORTHCOM • Honolulu, Hawaii office
	U.S. Attorneys <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Executive Office of the U.S. Attorneys • U.S. Attorney's Office El Paso, Texas • U.S. Attorney's Office Honolulu, Hawaii

Federal agency	Entities visited during our review
Department of Health and Human Services	Headquarters <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Liaison to NORTHCOM
	Centers for Disease Control and Prevention <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Headquarters Honolulu, Hawaii, office
U.S. Department of Agriculture	Office of Homeland Security
	Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Headquarters Liaison to NORTHCOM
	U.S. Forest Service headquarters
Office of the Director of National Intelligence	Headquarters <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Liaison to NORTHCOM Liaison to PACOM
Interagency Centers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> El Paso Intelligence Center National Counter Terrorism Center National Interagency Fire Center

Source: GAO.

To determine the extent to which DOD has identified clearly defined roles and responsibilities for DOD entities to facilitate interagency coordination for homeland defense and civil support missions, we reviewed a plethora of strategies, doctrine, policies, directives, guidance, concept plans, and other documents that address DOD’s homeland defense and civil support missions, as shown in appendix II. We analyzed these documents for currency, accuracy, and comprehensiveness based on discussions with DOD officials, including those listed above. We also obtained DOD leadership memoranda to identify the extent to which DOD had been required to take action that could enhance interagency coordination. To the extent that DOD had taken such action, we analyzed the extent to which it addressed the requirements and the extent to which it was comprehensive.

To determine the extent to which DOD has articulated its roles and responsibilities and day-to-day coordination processes with federal partners, we asked DOD and non-DOD officials about different means that DOD uses to communicate this information to its partners, including those listed above. The officials identified a variety of forums, such as planning conferences, and documents that DOD had issued. To determine the extent to which DOD hosts or participates in interagency forums, we asked department officials to identify forums involving DOD and its federal partners, including interagency planning conferences, educational

training, frequent interagency meetings, exercises, and working groups. We then reviewed charters, agendas, and meeting minutes from multiple forums such as working groups that involved the department coordinating with its federal partners. Additionally, we observed multiple forums hosted by DOD, such as a NORTHCOM biweekly interagency synchronization teleconference, to provide context to our assessment of the extent to which DOD coordinates with its federal partners. We also reviewed DOD documents that DOD officials told us they use to communicate this information to their partners. Such documents included DOD strategies, doctrine, policies, directives, guidance, and concept plans. In analyzing both the forums and DOD documents, we discussed with DOD and non-DOD officials the extent to which these means address factors that affect interagency coordination, including quality and availability of information about the agency's mission, roles and responsibilities, culture, and lexicon. In analyzing documents that DOD officials had identified, we evaluated the extent to which these documents were current, comprehensive, and readily available.

To determine the extent to which DOD has adopted and implemented key practices for managing homeland defense and civil support liaisons, we identified established best practices, reviewed related DOD documents, and interviewed officials from DOD and DOD's federal partner agencies. To identify key practices for workforce management that can enhance interagency coordination, we reviewed prior GAO reports on human capital best practices.¹ These reports identify, among others, key principles for effective strategic workforce planning and management as well as actions that agencies can take to enhance interagency coordination for national security. We also reviewed DOD interagency coordination conference proceedings and white papers, as well as joint Department of Homeland Security-Department of Justice guidelines for interagency coordination for homeland security, which similarly recommend the use of such best practices. To determine the extent to which DOD has adopted these practices, we reviewed DOD strategy, policy, doctrine, and guidance, as well as liaison position descriptions and training materials. For example, we reviewed DOD policy concerning its personnel management system and the detail of DOD personnel to duty outside of the department,

¹ GAO, *Results-Oriented Government: Practices That Can Help Enhance and Sustain Collaboration among Federal Agencies*, [GAO-06-15](#) (Washington, D.C.: Oct. 21, 2005); *Human Capital: Key Principles for Effective Strategic Workforce Planning*, [GAO-04-39](#) (Washington, D.C.: Dec. 11, 2003); *Exposure Draft: A Model of Strategic Human Capital Management*, [GAO-02-373SP](#) (Washington, D.C.: Mar. 15, 2002).

as well as combatant command guidance for interagency coordination. We also interviewed officials from a range of DOD entities and DOD's federal partner agencies who send and/or receive interagency coordination liaisons, or have a role in the management of such liaisons. Specifically, DOD entities with liaison management responsibilities with whom we interviewed included ASD/HD, the DOD's Joint Directorate of Manpower and Personnel, DOD Administration and Management's Washington Headquarters Services, as well as combatant command officials responsible for interagency coordination activities at NORTHCOM and PACOM.

We conducted this performance audit from February 2009 to March 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.

Appendix II: List of Key Documents That Identify the Roles and Responsibilities of DOD Entities Conducting Homeland Defense and Civil Support Missions

Document type	Title	Date
DOD Strategy	DOD's <i>Strategy for Homeland Defense and Civil Support</i>	June 2005
	DOD's <i>National Defense Strategy</i>	June 2008
	DOD Joint Operating Concept – Homeland Defense and Civil Support	October 1, 2007
DOD Directive	DOD Directive 3025.13 - Employment of Department of Defense Resources in Support of the United States Secret Service	September 13, 1985
	DOD Directive 5525.5 - DOD Cooperation with Civilian Law Enforcement Officials	December 20, 1989
	DOD Directive 3025.1 – Military Support to Civil Authorities (MSCA)	January 15, 1993
	DOD Directive 3025.12 - Military Assistance for Civil Disturbances (MACDIS)	February 4, 1994
	DOD Directive 3025.15 – Military Assistance to Civil Authorities	February 18, 1997
	DOD Directive 3025.16 - Military Emergency Preparedness Liaison Officer (EPLO) Program	December 18, 2000
	DOD Directive 5136.01 - Assistant Secretary of Defense for Health Affairs (ASD(HA))	June 4, 2008
	DOD Directive 5111.13 - Assistant Secretary of Defense for Homeland Defense and Americas' Security Affairs (ASD(HD&ASA))	January 16, 2009
	DOD Directive 5111.10 - Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low-Intensity Conflict and Interdependent Capabilities (ASD(SO/LIC&IC))	January 16, 2009
DOD Joint Publication	Joint Publication 3-08, Interagency, Intergovernmental Organization, and Nongovernmental Organization Coordination During Joint Operations Volumes I & II	March 17, 2006
	Joint Publication 3-07.4, Counterdrug Operations	June 13, 2007
	DOD Joint Publication 3-27, Homeland Defense	July 12, 2007
	DOD Joint Publication 3-28, Civil Support	September 14, 2007
DOD Concept Plans (CONPLANS)	Multiple CONPLANS for issues ranging from nuclear accident response to pandemic influenza planning	various dates
NORTHCOM Guidance Documents	NORTHCOM's Concept of Operations	June 13, 2005
	NORTHCOM's Concept of Employment – Homeland Defense	March 2, 2007
	NORTHCOM's Concept of Employment – Civil Support	August 20, 2004
	NORTHCOM Publication 1-01 - Battle Staff Standard Operating Procedures	July 22, 2008
	NORTHCOM Manual 38-153 - NORAD And USNORTHCOM Organizations and Functions	August 1, 2007
	NORTHCOM Instruction 10-165 – Interagency Coordination	March 16, 2009
DOD Reports	Report to Congress on Establishment of U.S. Northern Command	September 2003
	<i>Quadrennial Roles and Missions Review Report</i>	January 2009

**Appendix II: List of Key Documents That
Identify the Roles and Responsibilities of
DOD Entities Conducting Homeland Defense
and Civil Support Missions**

Document type	Title	Date
	DOD Report Responding to NDAA FY08, Sec. 952 (P.L. 110-181)	August 18, 2009
Joint Chiefs of Staff Instructions	Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Instruction (CJCSI) 5715.01B – Joint Staff Participation in Interagency Affairs	July 31, 2006
	Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Instruction (CJCSI) 3710.01B – DOD Counterdrug Support	January 26, 2007
DOD Manual/ Handbook	DOD Manual 3025.1-M – Manual for Civil Emergencies	June 1994
	Joint Forces Command – Commander’s Handbook for the Joint Interagency Coordination Group	March 1, 2007
Non-DOD Documents	DHS <i>National Response Framework</i>	January 2008
	FEMA Incident Management Handbook	March 2009

Source: GAO.

Appendix III: Comments from the Department of Defense



HOMELAND DEFENSE
& AMERICAS' SECURITY AFFAIRS

ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
2600 DEFENSE PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301-2600

MAR 10 2010

Ms. Davi M. D'Agostino
Director, Defense Capabilities and Management
U.S. Government Accountability Office
441 G Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20548

Dear Ms. D'Agostino:

This is the Department of Defense (DoD) response to the GAO draft report, GAO 10-364, "HOMELAND DEFENSE: DoD Needs to Take Actions to Enhance Interagency Coordination for Its Homeland Defense and Civil Support Missions" dated January 29, 2010 (Job Code 351320). DoD concurs with all three recommendations. Responses to the recommendations are enclosed.

Our point of contact for this action is LTC Kathleen McDill, Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Homeland Defense and Americas' Security Affairs (OASD (HD&ASA)), (703) 697-5358 or kathleen.mcdill@osd.mil.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Christine E. Wormuth".

Christine E. Wormuth
Principal Deputy

Enclosure:
As stated



GAO DRAFT REPORT – DATED JANUARY 29, 2010
GAO CODE 351320/GAO-10-364

"HOMELAND DEFENSE: DoD Needs to Take Actions to Enhance Interagency
Coordination for Its Homeland Defense and Civil Support Missions"

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE COMMENTS
TO THE RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATION 1: The GAO recommends that the Secretary of Defense establish a time line and update and ensure the integration and comprehensiveness of DoD policy and guidance that delineate the role and responsibilities of and the relationships between DoD entities, such as the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Homeland Defense and Americas' Security Affairs) ASD(HD&ASA), Assistant Secretary of Defense for Health Affairs (ASD(HA)), Assistant Secretary of Defense (Special Operations and Low Intensity Conflict and Interdependent Capabilities) (ASD (SOLIC/IC)), combatant commands, National Guard Bureau, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the DoD Intelligence Agencies. Specifically, updates of such policies and guidance should include:

- DoD's *Strategy for Homeland Defense and Civil Support*;
- law enforcement support policy (or policies) that address the different missions of such support , including civil support, counterdrug, and counterterrorism support;
- DoD series of civil support policies and guidance (i.e. DoD directives and instruction 3025 series);
- DoD's joint interagency coordination guidance (i.e. Joint Publications 3-08, ensuring sufficient and comprehensive coverage of the homeland defense and civil support interagency coordination requirements and partners; and
- A policy document that clearly and specifically defines the relationships among ASD(HD&ASA), U.S. Northern Command (NORTHCOM), and other combatant commanders, including interagency coordination and external communication roles and responsibilities for homeland defense and civil support.

DoD RESPONSE: Concur. Several draft issuances are in coordination; DoD Directive (DoDD) 3025.dd, Defense Support of Civil Authorities with estimated completion date (ECD) June 2010; the *Strategy for Homeland Defense and Civil Support*, ECD March 2011; DoD Instruction (DoDI) 3025.ff, Defense Support of Civilian Law Enforcement Agencies, which includes law enforcement support for civil support and counterterrorism missions, ECD August 2010 (counterdrug updates will be coordinated with applicable OSD offices under separate cover); DoDI 3025.gg, Defense Support of Special Events, ECD September 2010. Corresponding Joint Publications will be updated by September 2011. Also, a new issuance is in coordination to describe Office of the Secretary of

Defense, Joint Staff, combatant command, Service, and Defense Agency interagency coordination/communication roles and responsibilities for homeland defense and civil support.

RECOMMENDATION 2: The GAO recommends that the Secretary of Defense direct the Under Secretary of Defense (Policy), in coordination with the Joint Chiefs of Staff, to establish a time line to develop and issue a partner guide that identifies the roles and responsibilities of DoD entities, processes, and agreed-upon approaches for interagency coordination for homeland defense and civil support efforts.

DoD RESPONSE: Concur. A time line will be developed with the Joint Chiefs of Staff on a new issuance as described in Recommendation 1 response (ECD June 2010).

RECOMMENDATION 3: The GAO recommends that the Secretary of Defense direct the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Homeland Defense and Americas' Security Affairs), in coordination with the Joint Chiefs of Staff, to establish a time line to take the following two actions:

- Ensure implementation of DoD's current instruction on the tracking of DoD liaisons assignments to other Federal agencies, as well as the establishment of position descriptions for uniformed military and DoD civilian personnel.
- Develop and issue additional workforce management policy and guidance regarding DoD liaisons to other Federal agencies, as well as other Federal agencies' liaisons to DoD. Such policy and guidance should ensure that:
 - routine staffing-needs assessments are conducted;
 - position descriptions or memorandums of understanding are developed;
 - appropriate interagency coordination training is available to liaisons; and
 - routine performance assessments of liaison personnel are conducted, to include feedback from the host agency or component.

DoD RESPONSE: Concur. The Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Homeland Defense and Americas' Security Affairs) (OASD (HD&ASA)) will enforce procedures to ensure implementation of DoD's current instruction for tracking of homeland defense (HD) and civil support liaison assignments to other Federal agencies and establishment of position descriptions for uniformed military and DoD civilian personnel. To support development of these position descriptions and/or memoranda of agreement, OASD (HD&ASA) will coordinate an issuance document for assessments, feedback and training of HD and civil support liaisons to other Federal agencies, as well as other Federal agencies' liaisons to OASD (HD&ASA).

Appendix IV: GAO Contacts and Staff Acknowledgments

GAO Contacts

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Related GAO Products

Homeland Defense: DOD Can Enhance Efforts to Identify Capabilities to Support Civil Authorities During Disasters. [GAO-10-386](#). Washington, D.C.: March 30, 2010.

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