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**Highlights**

Highlights of [GAO-03-396](#), a report to the Chairman, Subcommittee on National Security, Emerging Threats, and International Relations, House Committee on Government Reform

## Why GAO Did This Study

Since the mid-1990s, GAO has highlighted the need for the Department of State and other agencies to establish a systematic process for determining their overseas staffing levels. To support this long-standing need and in support of the *President's Management Agenda*, GAO developed a framework for assessing overseas workforce size and identified options for rightsizing. Because the framework was largely based on work at the U.S. embassy in Paris, GAO was asked to determine whether the rightsizing framework is applicable at U.S. embassies in developing countries. To accomplish this objective, we visited three U.S. embassies in West Africa—a medium-sized post in Dakar, Senegal; and two small embassies in Banjul, The Gambia; and Nouakchott, Mauritania—and applied the framework and its corresponding questions there.

## What GAO Recommends

GAO recommends that

- the Director of OMB, in coordination with the Secretary of State, ensure that application of our framework be expanded as a basis for assessing staffing levels at embassies and consulates worldwide; and
- the Secretary of State adopt the framework as part of the Mission Performance Planning process.

[www.gao.gov/cgi-bin/getrpt?GAO-03-396](http://www.gao.gov/cgi-bin/getrpt?GAO-03-396).

To view the full report, including the scope and methodology, click on the link above. For more information, contact Jess T. Ford at (202) 512-4128 or [fordj@gao.gov](mailto:fordj@gao.gov).

## OVERSEAS PRESENCE

# Rightsizing Framework Can Be Applied at U.S. Diplomatic Posts in Developing Countries

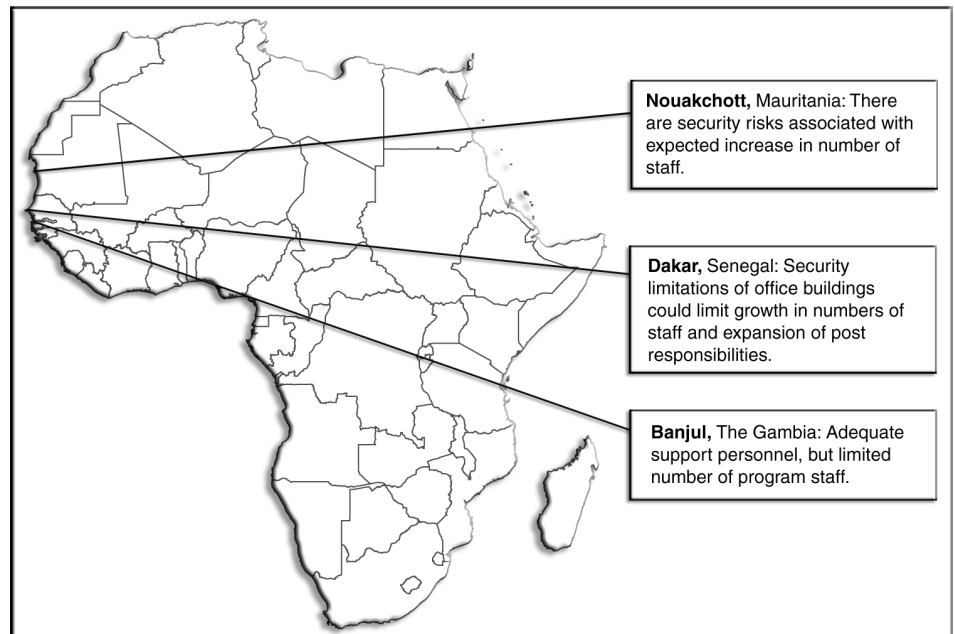
## What GAO Found

GAO's rightsizing framework can be applied at U.S. embassies in developing countries. Officials from the Bureau of African Affairs, and U.S. embassy officials in Dakar, Senegal; Banjul, The Gambia; and Nouakchott, Mauritania, said that the framework's questions highlighted specific issues at each post that should be considered in determining staffing levels. Officials in other State bureaus also believed that the security, mission, cost, and option components of the framework provided a logical basis for planning and making rightsizing decisions.

At each of the posts GAO visited, application of the framework and corresponding questions generally highlighted

- **physical and technical security** deficiencies that needed to be weighed against proposed staff increases;
- **mission priorities and requirements** that are not fully documented or justified in the posts' Mission Performance Plans;
- **cost of operations** data that were unavailable, incomplete, or fragmented across funding sources; and
- **rightsizing actions and other options** that post managers should consider for adjusting the number of personnel.

### Specific Rightsizing Issues Identified at Each West African Post



Source: [www.worldatlas.com](http://www.worldatlas.com).