



Highlights of [GAO-07-612T](#), a report to House Armed Services Committee, Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations

Why GAO Did This Study

The National Strategy for Victory in Iraq articulates the desired end-state for U.S. operations in Iraq: a peaceful, united, stable, and secure Iraq, well integrated into the international community, and a full partner in the global war on terrorism. Developing capable Iraqi security forces is a critical component in U.S. efforts to achieve this important goal. Since 2003, the United States has provided \$15.4 billion to develop Iraqi military and police forces. DOD has also asked for an additional \$5.8 billion in its fiscal year 2007 supplemental request and fiscal year 2008 Global War on Terror budget request to continue U.S. efforts to develop Iraq forces and transition security responsibilities to them.

This testimony discusses the (1) results of U.S. efforts to develop Iraqi security forces, and (2) factors that affect the development of effective Iraqi security forces.

This testimony is based on GAO's issued reports and ongoing work on U.S. efforts to stabilize Iraq. Although we reviewed both classified and unclassified documents, the information in this statement is based only on unclassified documents. We completed this work in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards.

www.gao.gov/cgi-bin/getrpt?GAO-07-612T.

To view the full product, including the scope and methodology, click on the link above. For more information, contact Joseph Christoff, 202-512-8979, christoffj@gao.gov.

STABILIZING IRAQ

Factors Impeding the Development of Capable Iraqi Security Forces

What GAO Found

As of February 2007, DOD reported that it had trained and equipped 327,000 Iraqi security forces—a substantial increase from the 142,000 reported in March 2005. The Iraqi security force level is double that of the 153,000-strong U.S.-led coalition currently in Iraq. While the Iraqi security forces are increasingly leading counterinsurgency operations in Iraq, they and the coalition have been unable to reduce the levels of violence throughout Iraq. Enemy-initiated attacks per day have increased from about 70 in January 2006 to about 160 in December 2006.

Several factors affect the development of effective Iraqi security forces and help explain why the reported growth in Iraqi security forces has not decreased violence. First, the Iraqi security forces are not a single unified force with a primary mission of countering the insurgency in Iraq. About 40 percent of the Iraqi security forces have a primary mission of counterinsurgency—specifically, the Iraqi army. The other major component—the Iraqi police—has civilian law enforcement as its primary mission.

Second, high rates of absenteeism and poor ministry reporting result in an overstatement of the number of Iraqi security forces present for duty. The Ministry of the Interior does not maintain standardized reports on personnel strength. As a result, DOD does not know how many coalition-trained police the ministry still employs or what percentage of the 180,000 police thought to be on the payroll are coalition trained and equipped.

Third, sectarian and militia influences have divided the loyalties of Iraqi security forces. In November 2006, for example, the Director of the Defense Intelligence Agency stated that the Ministry of Interior and the police were heavily infiltrated by militia members of the Badr Organization and Mahdi Army. According to the 2007 National Intelligence Estimate on Iraq, sectarian divisions have eroded the dependability of many Iraqi army units.

Fourth, as we previously reported, Iraqi units remain dependent upon the coalition for their logistical, command and control, and intelligence capabilities. As of December 2006, the coalition was providing significant levels of support to the Iraqi military, including fuel and ammunition.

The extent of these problems cannot be fully assessed without detailed information on the readiness of each Iraqi unit. While DOD captures this information in its Transition Readiness Assessments (TRAs), it does not provide this critical information to Congress. These data provide information on capabilities and gaps in Iraqi units' manpower, equipment, and training levels, and as of late 2006, assess each unit's operational effectiveness. Congress needs this information to make informed appropriations decisions and engage in meaningful oversight. Despite repeated attempts over many months, we have yet to be provided the TRA information we are seeking.