



Highlights of [GAO-10-179](#), a statement before the Commission on Wartime Contracting in Iraq and Afghanistan

### Why GAO Did This Study

The United States and the Government of Iraq have signed a Security Agreement calling for the drawdown of U.S. forces from Iraq. Predicated on that agreement and U.S. Presidential guidance, Multi-National Force-Iraq (MNF-I) has issued a plan for the reduction of forces to 50,000 U.S. troops by August 31, 2010, and a complete withdrawal of forces by the end of 2011. The drawdown from Iraq includes the withdrawal of approximately 128,700 U.S. troops, over 115,000 contractor personnel, the closure or transfer of 295 bases, and the retrograde of over 3.3 million pieces of equipment.

Today's statement will focus on (1) the extent to which the Department of Defense (DOD) has planned for the drawdown in accordance with timelines set by the Security Agreement and presidential directive; and (2) factors that may impact the efficient execution of the drawdown in accordance with established timelines. This statement is based on GAO's review and analysis of DOD and MNF-I plans, and on interviews GAO staff members conducted with DOD officials in the United States, Kuwait, and Iraq. It also draws from GAO's extensive body of issued work on Iraq and drawdown-related issues.

[View GAO-10-179 or key components.](#)  
For more information, contact William M. Solis at (202) 512-8365 or [solisw@gao.gov](mailto:solisw@gao.gov).

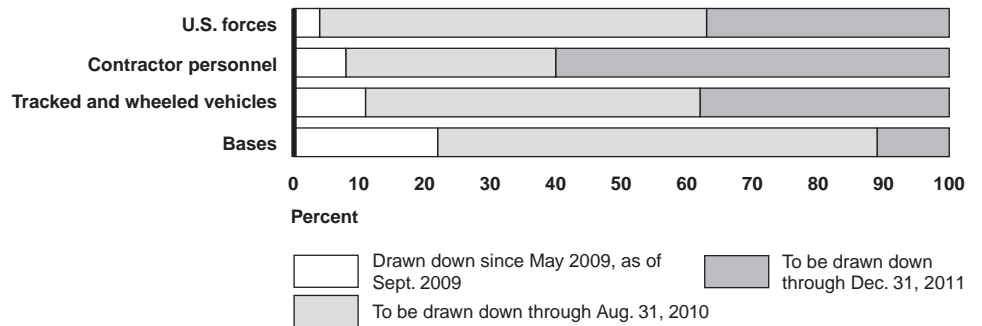
## OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM

### Preliminary Observations on DOD Planning for the Drawdown of U.S. Forces from Iraq

#### What GAO Found

While DOD's primary focus remains on executing combat missions and supporting the warfighters in Iraq, several DOD organizations have issued coordinated plans for the execution of the drawdown within designated time frames. In support of these plans, processes have been established to monitor, coordinate, and facilitate the retrograde of equipment from Iraq. DOD's organizations have reported that their efforts to reduce personnel, retrograde equipment, and close bases have thus far exceeded targets; since May 2009, for example, DOD reports that the number of U.S. servicemembers in Iraq has been reduced by 5,300, and another 4,000 are expected to be drawn down in October. However, many more personnel, equipment items, and bases remain to be drawn down. For U.S. forces, contractor personnel, selected vehicles, and bases, the graphic below depicts drawdown progress since May 2009, as well as what remains to be drawn down by August 31, 2010 and December 31, 2011, respectively.

**Drawdown Progress Since May 2009 and What Remains to Be Drawn Down through August 31, 2010, and December 31, 2011**



Source: GAO analysis based on DOD data.

Efficient execution of the drawdown from Iraq, however, may be complicated by crucial challenges that, if left unattended, may hinder MNF-I's ability to meet the time frames set by the President, the Security Agreement, and MNF-I's phased drawdown plan. First, DOD has yet to fully determine its future needs for contracted services. Second, the potential costs and other concerns of transitioning key contracts may outweigh potential benefits. Third, DOD lacks sufficient numbers of contract oversight personnel. Fourth, key decisions about the disposition of some equipment have yet to be made. Fifth, there are longstanding incompatibility issues among the information technology systems that may undermine the equipment retrograde process. And sixth, DOD lacks precise visibility over its inventory of some equipment and shipping containers. While much has been done to facilitate the drawdown effort, the efficient execution of the drawdown will depend on DOD's ability to mitigate these challenges. We will continue to assess DOD's progress in executing the drawdown from Iraq and plan to issue a report.