



MISSION IRAQ

State and DOD Face Challenges in Finalizing Support and Security Capabilities

Highlights of [GAO-12-856T](#), a testimony before the Subcommittee on National Security, Homeland Defense, and Foreign Operations, Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, House of Representatives

Why GAO Did This Study

The transition from a predominantly U.S. military presence in Iraq led by DOD to a U.S. diplomatic presence led by State concluded on December 18, 2011, when the last units of U.S. Forces-Iraq left that country. State and DOD agreed that State's Mission Iraq needed to meet certain support and security criteria to be considered fully mission capable, and State planned for Mission Iraq to meet those criteria by October 1, 2011.

In this statement, GAO provides its assessment of (1) the U.S. plans for transitioning to the State-led diplomatic mission in Iraq, (2) Iraqi commitment to the U.S. presence, (3) the extent to which State and DOD have established basic infrastructure and support for Mission Iraq and (4) the extent to which State and DOD have established personnel and site security for Mission Iraq. To address these objectives, GAO analyzed past and current transition and interagency planning documents, bilateral correspondence, and security assessments, as well as past GAO reports. GAO interviewed State and DOD officials in Washington, D.C., and Iraq and conducted fieldwork in Iraq at U.S. facilities in Baghdad, Basrah, Erbil, and Kirkuk from July through December 2011.

What GAO Recommends

GAO is not making recommendations in this statement, which summarizes a more detailed Sensitive but Unclassified (SBU) briefing GAO provided to Congress. The briefing and related SBU draft report included a recommendation to DOD, whose official comments on the draft report are pending.

View [GAO-12-856T](#). For more information, contact Michael J. Courts at (202) 512-8980 or courtsm@gao.gov.

What GAO Found

The Departments of State (State) and Defense (DOD) planned for a civilian-led presence in Iraq consisting of more than 16,000 personnel at 14 sites in fiscal year 2012. As of May 2012, State and DOD were reassessing the Mission Iraq presence, and State had a plan to reduce the presence to 11,500 personnel at 11 sites by the end of fiscal year 2013. Even with the reductions, Mission Iraq would remain the largest U.S. diplomatic presence in the world. State and DOD allocated an estimated \$4 billion for the civilian-led presence for fiscal year 2012, 93 percent of which was for security and support costs. In addition, State requested \$1.9 billion in police and military assistance and \$471 million in other foreign assistance for fiscal year 2012. State officials said they are lowering their fiscal year 2012 and 2013 budget estimates as a result of reducing the presence.

The Government of Iraq's commitment to the U.S. presence has remained unclear. The Iraqi Foreign Minister questioned the size, location, and security requirements of U.S. sites. As of May 2012, Iraq had not signed all land-use, program, or operations agreements; State officials voiced concern about Iraq's ability to finalize these agreements. Iraq acknowledged a U.S. presence at 12 sites, but State held title or had land-use agreements or leases for only 5 sites.

Mission Iraq support functions were operational, but did not fully meet the three mission-capable support criteria by the planned target date of October 1, 2011. First, in establishing basic infrastructure and life support, Mission Iraq faced delays in housing, waste treatment, and food services. For example, State terminated one of its construction contractors for nonperformance, which led to delays. Second, though medical services were in place by October 2011, as of May 2012, Mission Iraq was still completing contingency plans for emergency evacuation from Iraq. Third, while not all communications systems were in place as planned by October 1, 2011, communication services were functional at all Mission Iraq sites as of May 2012.

Mission Iraq security capabilities were operational but did not fully meet the three mission-capable security criteria by the planned target date of October 1, 2011. First, as of May 2012, construction of site security features was not expected to be completed at all Mission Iraq sites until September 2013. State and DOD also experienced difficulty in recruiting, vetting, and training site security contractors and, as a result, had to extend existing DOD security contracts. Second and third, Mission Iraq's secure movement and emergency response capabilities were operational but not fully mission capable by the planned date of October 1, 2011. However, as of May 2012, emergency response was fully mission capable. In addition, State and DOD agreed that each department would establish secure facilities at the sites each managed and would apply their own enhanced security measures. As of May 2012, State had conducted security assessments at its sites and had taken mitigating steps to address vulnerabilities. U.S. Forces-Iraq conducted security assessments at DOD-managed sites. DOD officials reported some efforts to address the vulnerabilities identified by the assessments, but DOD did not fully document such efforts. DOD officials noted that the assessments assumed a follow-on military force and said that DOD was not obligated to address the vulnerabilities identified by U.S. Forces-Iraq. DOD has plans to conduct new vulnerability assessments of its sites by July 2012.