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IRAQ: IEDS AND MUNITIONS, ARE THEY SECURED?

HEARING

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL SECURITY
AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT
AND GOVERNMENT REFORM

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ONE HUNDRED TENTH CONGRESS

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IRAQ: IEDS AND MUNITIONS, ARE THEY SECURED?

THURSDAY, MARCH 22, 2007

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL SECURITY AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS,
COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM,
Washington, DC.

The subcommittee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:05 a.m. in room 2154, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. John F. Tierney (chairman of the subcommittee) presiding.

Present Representatives Tierney, Lynch, Yarmuth, McCollum, Shays, Burton, Platts, Duncan, and Foxx.

Staff present: Teresa Coufal, deputy clerk; Leneal Scott, information systems manager; Dave Turk, staff director; Andrew Su and Andrew Wright, professional staff members; Davis Hake, clerk; David Marin, minority staff director; A. Brooke Bennett, minority counsel; Grace Washbourne, minority senior professional staff member; Christopher Bright, minority professional staff member; Nick Palarino, minority senior investigator and policy advisor; and Benjamin Chance, minority clerk.

Mr. TIERNEY. Good morning. A quorum being present, the Subcommittee on National Security and Foreign Affairs hearing entitled, "Iraq: IEDs and Munitions, Are They Secured," will come to order.

I ask unanimous consent that the hearing record be kept open for 5 business days so that all members of the subcommittee be allowed to submit a written statement for the record. Without objection, so ordered.

We will take this opportunity to have opening statements. I would like to make one. I understand Mr. Shays would also like to make one.

I want to welcome folks here this morning. I want to welcome Mr. Shays, who has been a good partner in this committee's proceedings. I want to thank our witnesses for being with us here today.

General Newbold, thank you for your service to our country. We respect that a great deal. We appreciate your being here this morning.

And Ms. D'Agostino, thank you for the good work on your report, which allows us to have this discussion.

Earlier this month the subcommittee held a field hearing at Walter Reed Army Medical Center. We heard from Specialist Jeremy Duncan, who fractured his neck, lost an ear, and lost his sight in

his left eye due to an explosion of an improvised explosive device [IED], near Samarra in Iraq. We met with other soldiers who suffered severe injuries, ranging from the loss of limbs to serious traumatic brain injuries as a result of IEDs.

Defense Secretary Gates has stated that 70 percent of all casualties in Iraq are caused by IEDs. And the Pentagon, in its official February 2007 request for additional funding for the Iraqi effort specifically states, "Insurgents use munitions from stolen caches to construct IEDs."

What is even more troubling is that the Government Accountability Office raises serious questions about whether we have finally secured and destroyed all of these ammo dumps. That report concludes, "The sites remained vulnerable from April 2003 through the time of our review. . . . [I]n October, 2006, we could not verify that all sites had been physically secured."

The GAO has also reported very disturbing anecdotal evidence. For example, "in early 2006, local Iraqis stole rockets and mortars from an old storage area after rumors began to circulate that the site was to be cleaned up."

It is troubling, to say the least, and that is why this hearing was called this morning. There are so many unanswered questions that demand answers. What specifically is the Department of Defense doing in Iraq to deal with this problem? Do we, at the least, finally have our hands around the problem by having, fully undertaken an accounting of what is still out there? Has the Pentagon ever conducted a theater-wide survey of munition sites in Iraq as the Government Accountability Office has suggested? Are press reports accurate that the Defense Department has had a hard time maintaining a full complement of explosive disposal experts?

The administration is requesting money in the 2007 supplemental specifically to secure known weaponsites. Have we done all that we can to identify all weaponsites? If not, why not, given the potential consequences?

Finally, have we learned anything over the past 4 years that would assist in future military operational planning?

Unfortunately, we may not get all of the answers to these questions today. Although the Department of Defense responded in writing to the GAO draft report, we wanted to extend to the Department of Defense the opportunity to address the committee about the concerns raised by the report, and so we asked the Department of Defense to send us a representative of their choosing to testify today. They communicated that they would not care to have a witness present. We offered to postpone the hearing a week in case scheduling was a concern, and they still declined.

This is troubling at a number of levels. There are people tasked with having their act together to protect our troops going forward. What does it say that they don't even have their act together to put forward a single witness to talk to us about these issues?

Let me conclude by again thanking our witnesses who are here today. These are incredibly grave and important issues to be confronted. We have to do everything in our power by working together to protect our soldiers now and in any future missions. We owe the Jeremy Duncans of the world nothing less.

With that, I yield to Mr. Shays.

[The prepared statement of Hon. John F. Tierney follows:]

Statement of John F. Tierney
Chairman
Subcommittee on National Security and Foreign Affairs

Oversight Hearing on "Iraq: IEDs and Munitions, Are They Secured?"

As Prepared for Delivery

March 22, 2007

Good morning, and welcome to our National Security and Foreign Affairs Subcommittee members. I also want to thank our witnesses for being here today, especially to General Newbold for sharing with us your experience and your expertise.

Earlier this month, the Subcommittee held a field hearing at Walter Reed Army Medical Center. We heard from Specialist Jeremy Duncan, who fractured his neck, and lost an ear and sight in his left eye due to the explosion of an Improvised Explosive Device – an IED – near Samarra in Iraq. We met with other soldiers who suffered severe injuries, ranging from loss of limbs to serious traumatic brain injuries – as a result of IEDs.

Defense Secretary Gates has stated that 70 percent of all casualties in Iraq are caused by IEDs. And the Pentagon in its official February 2007 request for additional funding for the Iraqi effort specifically states, and I quote, "*Insurgents use munitions from stolen caches to construct IEDs.*"

Today's hearing asks the question of whether the Pentagon is doing everything in its power and ability to protect our military personnel by identifying and securing munitions storage sites in Iraq.

Unfortunately, the past record is not comforting. In a report that is being released today for the first time, the Government Accountability Office – whom we'll here from today – documents in great detail the dangerously-naïve assumptions imposed by top civilian leadership upon our troops – assumptions that we would be greeted as liberators and that this would be a short, easy war.

The GAO goes on to document how these controversial assumptions and poor planning led very directly to countless unsecured munitions sites throughout Iraq that has fed into widespread looting of the very material that is now being used in IEDs to injure and kill our troops. Or as one commentator has put it, Saddam "*never wanted to run out of bullets. And he never did.*"

400 tons of powerful conventional explosives, for example, disappeared from the Al Qaqaa military installation 30 miles south of Baghdad. But this is just one example, and there are countless undisputed others.

And this stolen ammo we didn't secure is maiming and killing our troops to this day. In a March 1, 2007 article, *USA Today* put it this way: "*Four years after the Iraq war began, the country remains awash in Saddam-era munitions that provide key ingredients for homemade bombs used against U.S. troops.*"

What is even more troubling is that the GAO report raises serious questions about whether we've finally secured and destroyed all of these ammo dumps. They conclude, "*the sites remained vulnerable from April 2003 through the time of our review... [I]n October 2006, we could not verify that all sites had been physically secured.*" The GAO also reported very disturbing anecdotal evidence, for example, "*in early 2006, local Iraqis stole rockets and mortars from an old storage area after rumors began to circulate that the site was to be cleaned up.*"

This is troubling to say the least, and this is why I called this hearing today. There are so many unanswered questions that demand answers:

- What specifically is the Department of Defense doing in Iraq to deal with this problem?

- Do we at the least finally have our hands around the problem by having undertaken a full accounting of what's still out there?

- Has the Pentagon ever conducted a theatre-wide survey of munitions sites in Iraq as the GAO has suggested?

- Are press reports accurate that the Defense Department has had a hard time maintaining a full complement of explosives disposal experts?

- The Administration is requesting money in the 2007 supplemental specifically to secure "*known weapons caches.*" Have we done all we can to identify all weapon sites, and if not, why not – given the potential consequences?

- And, finally, have we learned anything over the past four-plus years that would assist in future military operation planning?

Unfortunately, we may not get the full answers to these questions today. Although the Department of Defense responded in writing to the GAO draft report, we wanted to extend to DOD the opportunity to address the Committee about the concerns raised by the report and so asked the Department of Defense to send us a representative of their choosing to testify today. They communicated that they would not care to have a witness present. We offered to postpone our hearing a week in case scheduling was a concern. They still declined.

This is troubling on many levels. These are the people tasked with having their act together to protect our troops going forward. What does it say that they don't even have their act together to put forward a single witness to talk with us about these issues?

Let me again conclude by thanking our witnesses who are here today. These are incredibly grave and important issues and we must do everything in our power working together to protect our soldiers both now and in the future. We owe the Jeremy Duncans of the world nothing less.

Mr. SHAYS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for holding this hearing. I want to apologize. My statement may be a little bit longer on this one. I am not used the being in the minority, and so just give me a little chance to get it down a bit here.

Mr. Chairman, thank you again for holding this hearing. National security and foreign affairs whenever possible should be conducted on a bipartisan basis. You and your staff have demonstrated that you are willing to do that, and I thank you.

It is essential even now that weapon stockpiles from Saddam Hussein's regime be properly secured and accounted for. These munitions have killed and maimed our brave men and women and wrought havoc throughout Iraq. So many civilians have suffered.

I have consistently argued that our efforts in Iraq are noble, but I have also been an outspoken critic of the serious errors which have occurred throughout the course of the war.

During my 15 trips to Iraq, I have seen firsthand unbelievable failures and notable successes. What I have experienced has been both sobering and inspiring.

As the Government Accountability Office report being released today concludes, Defense leaders "planned for and successfully executed a rapid march in Baghdad that relied on surprise and speed rather than massive troop buildup." The GAO believes that "another critical planning priority was finding and securing the regime's stockpiles of WMD that the administration believed were a threat to Coalition forces and other countries in the region."

The GAO also reported that conventional arms stores were not secured because, as one planner recounted, "ground commanders had to prioritize limited resources against the volume of tasks contained in the war plan." But to their discredit, the Pentagon, our intelligence community, and other agencies failed to anticipate the social and economic disorder which followed the implementation of the successful attack. Those components of the Iraqi army which were not destroyed by the Coalition were allowed to dissolve. Saddam's soldiers left their units and returned home for good.

In addition, the Coalition Provisional Authority [CPA], disbanded the Iraqi police and border patrol. These forces were never reconstituted as they had existed. This meant there was no Iraqi security, no Iraqi police, no Iraqi border patrol, no Iraqi army. We didn't stand them up. We made a conscious decision to eliminate their army, police, and border patrol at the same time we concluded that these weapon caches would be guarded by Iraqis. Without any Iraqi forces and not enough American forces, it was impossible to adequately locate and secure the multitude of munitions sites. These sites were left prey for insurgents, and our troops and the Iraqi people paid the price.

The amount and size of arms stockpiles and the types of weapons they contain tell us much about the nature and intentions of Saddam's regime. As General Abasay told a Senate committee 3 years ago, "There is more ammunition in Iraq than any place I have ever been in my life."

What did we do about it? Nothing. Intelligence estimates of Saddam's conventional arsenal varied greatly before the war. We were wrong not only about weapons of mass destruction, but also about the size and number of stockpiles of conventional arms. The

Department of Defense was slow to comprehend the scope of the problem posed by the weapon caches; nonetheless, since July 2003, more than $1 billion has been allocated to destroy or secure more than 400,000 tons of munitions.

As significant as this number may be, it is too little too late. A number of elected officials—and I am one—believed that Secretary Donald Rumsfeld needed to step down and that we needed a new strategy in Iraq. The day after this past election, the President announced the resignation of Donald Rumsfeld and the appointment of Robert Gates as Secretary of Defense.

Secretary Gates selected a highly competent and experienced general, David Petraeus, to develop a new strategy to turn things around in Iraq. General Petraeus is clearly in charge, and we hope and pray for his success.

As a senior Member of Congress, I intend to do everything I can to help him. In my judgment, he is clearly the best choice the President and Secretary could have made to lead our troops. From his very first assignment in Iraq, he was one of the few military leaders who recognized success would have to include diplomatic, military, and economic components.

Our Soldiers, Marines, Airmen, Sailors, Coast Guard, and Coalition allies respond every day to attacks in Iraq. They don't care about the source of the munitions used against them; they only seek to stop the violence and help the Iraqis stand on their own so they can come home to their families knowing they left Iraq better than they found it.

Unfortunately, our failure to secure the plethora of munitions sites and our failure to stem the violence have put the Coalition forces and the Iraqi government in a very defensive position. It is clear, even if every Iraqi cache were now secured, sophisticated weapons such as explosive foreign penetrators [EFPs], are finding their way across Iraq's unsecured borders.

In closing, Mr. Chairman, I want to note my deep disappointment, as you do, that representatives of the Department of Defense declined to appear today. As chairman of the National Secretary and Foreign Relations Subcommittee, you have every right—in fact, you have a responsibility—to look at this issue and to expect complete cooperation from the Department of Defense. I will do everything I can to make sure you get that cooperation.

We went into Iraq on a bipartisan basis with two-thirds of the House and three-fourths of the Senate authorizing the President's use of force. Just as we went into Iraq on a bipartisan basis, we need to leave Iraq the same way, with Republicans and Democrats working together.

I appreciate the punishment of our distinguished witnesses today, and I look forward to hearing their testimony.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

[The prepared statement of Hon. Christopher Shays follows:]

HENRY A. WAXMAN, CALIFORNIA
CHAIRMAN

TOM DAVIS, VIRGINIA
RANKING MINORITY MEMBER

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OPENING STATEMENT OF
RANKING MEMBER CHRISTOPHER SHAYS
"Iraq: IEDs and Munitions, Are They Secured?"
Thursday, March 22, 2007

Mr. Chairman, thank you for holding this hearing. National security and foreign affairs whenever possible should be conducted on a bipartisan basis. You and your staff have demonstrated that you are willing to do just that.

It is essential even now that weapon stockpiles from Saddam Hussein's regime be properly secured. These munitions have killed and maimed our brave men and women and wrought havoc throughout Iraq. So many civilians have suffered.

I have consistently argued that our efforts in Iraq are noble. But, I have also been an outspoken critic of the serious errors which have occurred throughout the course of the war. During my 15 oversight trips to Iraq, I have seen first-hand unbelievable failures and notable successes. What I have experienced has been both sobering and inspiring.

As the Government Accountability Office report being released today concludes, defense leaders "planned for and successfully executed a rapid march on Baghdad that relied on surprise and speed rather than massive troop buildup . . . ." The GAO believes that "another critical planning priority was finding and securing the regime's stockpiles of WMD [Weapons of Mass Destruction] that the administration believed were a threat to coalition forces and other countries in the region."

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Saddam's soldiers left their units and returned home for good. In addition, the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) disbanded the Iraqi police and border patrol. These forces were never reconstituted as they had existed. This meant there was no Iraqi security. No Iraqi police. No Iraqi border patrol. No Iraqi army.

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And . . . what did we do about it? Nothing.

Intelligence estimates of Saddam's conventional arsenal varied greatly before the war. We were wrong, not only about Weapons of Mass Destruction, but also about the size and number of stockpiles of conventional arms.

The Department of Defense was slow to comprehend the scope of the problem posed by the weapons caches. Nonetheless, since July 2003, more than $1 billion has been allocated to destroy or secure more than 400,000 tons of munitions. As significant as this number may be, it is too little, too late.

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In closing, Mr. Chairman, I want to note my deep disappointment that representatives of the Department of Defense declined to appear today. As Chairman of the National Security and Foreign Relations Subcommittee, you have every right, in fact, you have a responsibility to look at this issue and to expect complete cooperation from the Department of Defense.

We went into Iraq on a bipartisan basis, with two-thirds of the House and the three-fourths of the Senate authorizing the President's use of force. Just as we went into Iraq on a bipartisan basis, we need to leave Iraq the same way: with Republicans and Democrats working together.

I appreciate the participation of our distinguished witnesses today, and I look forward to hearing their testimony.

Mr. TIERNEY. I thank the gentleman.

Ms. McCollum.

Ms. MCCOLLUM. Mr. Chair, thank you very much for holding this hearing today.

I would also like to add my voice to the extreme displeasure of the Department of Defense refusing to provide someone to testify at this important hearing. I am very disappointed that the Department of Defense does not have someone here to testify. I often hear these days, in other hearings, the Bush administration talking about lessons learned. Mr. Chairman, you offered an opportunity today to share lessons learned to make sure that we are moving forward in a fashion which we do not have these ammunition dumps unsecured, and I think we are going to hear some troubling testimony as you move forward.

I, too, have had the opportunity to travel to Iraq. The first opportunity I had was to visit with General Petraeus in Mosul, as we flew over ammunitionsites in helicopters he expressed extreme concern that he did not have the troops and that there was not an Iraqi security plan put in place to secure all the ammo dumps, miles and miles and miles of ammo dumps, which he knew was going to present a clear and present danger to the military moving forward.

So, Mr. Chairman, thank you very much for having this hearing.

I would like to state—and this is in the GAO report—several critical planning assumptions. The Iraqi army would capitulate and provide security was one of the assumptions of our Department of Defense. The Iraqi resistance would be unlikely was one of the presumptions of our Department of Defense. Post-war Iraq would not be a U.S. military responsibility was also another supposed planning assumption of the Department of Defense. So maybe, based on those three statements which I have just made, it isn't surprising that they are not here. It would be very difficult to defend their choices.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. TIERNEY. I thank the gentlewoman.

Mr. Yarmuth.

Mr. YARMUTH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I would like to submit a statement for the record, but I would also like to associate myself with all of the prior remarks that this seems to be another example of the administration basically thumbing its nose at Congress, and I am so proud to be a part of an institution that is reasserting our constitutional responsibilities, both in this committee and elsewhere in the Congress. We do have an important role to play to make sure that Government does its job. I congratulate the chairman and am glad to be a part of this hearing.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Hon. John A. Yarmuth follows:]

Opening Statement – John Yarmuth

I want to thank Chairman Tierney for holding this hearing and express gratitude to Ms. D'Agostino and Lieutenant General Newbold for coming to testify today.

Following on the heels of the revelations about Walter Reed, this seems to be yet another chapter in, what is shaping up to be, a disturbing trend of the Department of Defense simply not taking the necessary steps to care for our soldiers. In light of this pattern, it is disappointing, to say the least, that the DoD did not see fit to send a representative here today to discuss correcting the situation.

According to the GAO, Iraqi insurgents are taking munitions from under our watch and using them in IED's against American soldiers. This means that by failing to secure these munitions caches, we are actually arming the very people we are trying to defeat and enabling them to attack our brave soldiers and allies. What's even more troubling is that while the DoD agreed with the GAO

assessment that a survey of the munitions site is "imperative," they are not taking the initiative to do so, claiming that the effort to keep our weapons out of insurgent hands would undermine our efforts in Iraq. Certainly, there are compromises that must be made as we struggle to take control of the chaos, but emboldening our enemies and endangering our troops is of gravest concern, and protecting Americans cannot be among the priorities sacrificed.

We went into Iraq with the understanding that Saddam Hussein had stockpiles of weapons, and as it turned out actually overestimated those stockpiles. So, I am intrigued to discover why four years later, the[redacted] are so many [redacted] still readily available to insurgents.

I am hopeful that we will get some answers today, to find the disconnect, so that we can immediately begin taking the steps necessary to protect our [redacted] men and women in uniform.

Mr. TIERNEY. I thank the gentleman.

Now we are going to receive testimony from the witnesses before us today.

I want to begin by introducing the witnesses on the first panel, the only panel. We have Ms. Davi D'Agostino, Director of Defense Capabilities and Management, U.S. Government Accountability Office; and we have Lieutenant General Gregory S. Newbold, U.S. Marine Corps, retired, the former Director of Operations for the Joint Chiefs of Staff and currently with the Torch Hill Partners Group.

I want to welcome both of you, as I said before, and thank you for being here today and for your respective roles.

I also want to make it clear that General Newbold is testifying as a private citizen and his views are his own and in no way represent the official views of the Department of Defense.

It is the policy of this subcommittee to swear in the witnesses before they testify, so I ask that you please rise and raise your right hands.

[Witnesses sworn.]

Mr. TIERNEY. The record will reflect that both witnesses answered in the affirmative.

Now I would ask that each of the witnesses give a brief summary of their testimony. Your full statements, of course, will be placed in the hearing record if you wish.

Perhaps, General, we might start with you.

STATEMENTS OF LIEUTENANT GENERAL GREGORY S. NEWBOLD, U.S. MARINE CORPS, RETIRED; AND DAVI D'AGOSTINO, DIRECTOR, DEFENSE CAPABILITIES AND MANAGEMENT, GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICE

STATEMENT OF LIEUTENANT GENERAL GREGORY S. NEWBOLD

General NEWBOLD. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to thank all of the Members for convening this hearing, because it is a critically important subject and the information in the GAO report needs a broader distribution and it needs broader addressing and it needs some solutions.

I want to take just a second to compliment both the chairman and the ranking member for their statements, because I agreed with all of the elements of them.

I also agree with the GAO report, their analysis, their detailed research, their findings. I find absolutely nothing in their report that I disagree with. I will make different recommendations, and I will explain why I come to different recommendations as I go through a brief statement.

Before I do that, though, I agree with all the statements, as well—disappointment and troubled by the absence of a Department of Defense.

My views are these: GAO correctly identified a very serious problem that is contributing or is the prime source of the casualties we are suffering in Iraq right now. They have identified, as well, the two primary causes for the failure to secure the store and munitions storage sites in Iraq, those being the unsatisfactory planning

and the inadequate troop levels for the invasion and subsequent occupation.

The first point I would like to emphasize is to really address this problem we have to address the root causes of the problem, and the root causes were not the maneuver forces on the ground in Iraq during the march to Baghdad. They were, in fact, the victims or the recipients of the inadequate force levels. The root causes are as stated: the unsatisfactory planning.

I will give a little bit of my own background and knowledge of how this came to be.

As the chairman said, I was Director of Operations for the Joint Chiefs of Staff. I was there from essentially August 2000 until November 2002, witnessed all the planning events up to 3 months before the war.

Prior to 2002, the plan for a potential invasion of Iraq was well thought out, well rehearsed through exercises, given a lot of deliberation, and was broadly open to contribution to others. It called for a force of around 500,000 troops if an invasion was necessary.

In early 2002, the Secretary of Defense restricted the number of troops that could be used in a new plan for the invasion of Iraq and it capped it at 125,000. This was a fundamental mistake, and the consequences are part of the cause for this hearing.

Subsequently, that plan was expanded, and the ultimate invasion force in the region, not in the maneuver force, grew to about 225,000, but at every step of the way the attempts to increase that force were inhibited and restricted. So when we crossed the line of departure with the two maneuver elements, although they did an astoundingly, even a historically good job, the forces were so thin that they could not accomplish all of the tasks at hand.

I have spoken within the past couple of days to very prominent commanders as they moved forth, and they agree with my description, in fact with the GAO. They were aware of ammunition storage areas that they uncovered in the march to Baghdad. They were deeply troubled by them. On some occasions they attempted to destroy them. On some occasions the munitions areas were so large that to destroy them quickly would have resulted in enormous collateral damage to surrounding civilian population.

They had an alternative to guard those storage sites, but in doing so they would have dissipated their already-thin forces to the degree that they would have had to halt the march forward.

Additional time in taking Baghdad would have resulted in significantly more casualties, would have given more time for the fifth column, the insurgents, to develop, would have given more time for the Iraqi forces to prepare for a more robust defense, so speed was essential in the march to Baghdad, and of all the things they could accomplish, the forces driving north made a troubling decision, but the only decision they could make, and that was to leave some of these uncovered.

The GAO report is exactly right. A key assumption in the planning for Iraq was that the population would be friendly, we would be greeted as liberators, that the Iraqi army would remain intact, Iraqi police force, and that they would be used for internal security.

None of those assumptions and more proved to be true.

To emphasize what we now call phase four planning—I want to take another element of that, because it is key to my recommendations, and that is that the interagency defaulted for the planning of Iraq to the Department of Defense, and that was terribly unfortunate. The Department of Defense is not experienced or skilled or doesn't have the depth of cultural awareness to govern a country and to reconstruct it.

The interagency was not robust in their planning and they weren't robust in their actions. That largely is considered as continued to today.

The consequence of that is that not only did you have uncovered ammunitionsites, but that we now had people that had a reason to raid and loot those storage sites, because with 40 percent unemployment, with an economy in disarray, with what they viewed as an occupying force in the country, and with factions at odds with each other, it was inevitable that there would be an insurgency.

The combination of the vacuum left by planning and inadequate forces fostered the insurgency, combined with the unguarded munitions storage sites, and you have the ingredients that now put us where we are today.

I can go into much more detail planning or analysis and personal anecdotes about what contributed to the poor planning and what contributed to the poor decisions and, in fact, to the inadequate troop levels, but I will leave that to questions.

I would like to take a minute to talk about my personal recommendations.

First of all, if we agree that the forces over there then and there now are too thin, too inadequate to do the job, then my personal recommendation is that we not add to their task at hand by burdening them with doing a report and a survey. I appreciate why that would need to be done, but my views are that we have a bloated bureaucracy in Iraq right now, and the more paperwork we levy on them the more reason they will have to grow, fewer trigger pullers, to greater people in the bureaucracy.

But something must be done about this, and what would that be? I am troubled enough by the absence of the Department of Defense that I think there must be some accounting by them in writing for what they would intend to do. But my broader recommendation is this: that the interagency process of our Government, the national security apparatus is fundamentally flawed. I would go back in time to a small episode in U.S. history of relatively minor consequence called Grenada that uncovered deep flaws in the jointness of our armed forces. The consequence of that was the robust, even courageous action by the Congress in 1987 in what is now called Goldwater-Nichols, and the improvements to our armed forces as a result of that legislation have been significant and they have saved lives, in fact.

The Iraq crisis has resulted in 3,200 dead and over 20,000 wounded, and Grenada pales in comparison. Equally, the interagency flaws or the flaws of our military before Grenada pale in comparison to the interagency weaknesses of today. If you want to avoid the planning mistakes that occurred for Iraq, you have to strengthen the interagency, communication, coordination, and ability to respond to crisis. You have to go right into the departments

and agencies and insist that they have resources and the staffing and the culture to support these kinds of operations.

The Center for Strategic and International Study did a review called Beyond Goldwater-Nichols II. It may not be perfect, but it makes an excellent start in addressing the interagency problems through Goldwater-Nichols type legislation.

I would encourage the committee to be aggressive, both in contribution by the Department of Defense to analyzing this critical problem, and by the broader Congress and our Government in fixing the interagency problems and restoring some semblance of correct planning to our process, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. TIERNEY. Thank you very much, General. That is valuable testimony. I know Mr. Shays and I both have an interest in following up on your latter recommendations on that.

Ms. D'Agostino, please.

STATEMENT OF DAVI D'AGOSTINO

Ms. D'AGOSTINO. Good morning, Mr. Chairman. I am pleased to be here before you today to discuss GAO's report on the problems posed by the former Iraqi regime's conventional munitions storage sites during Operation Iraqi Freedom [OIF].

This work was done under the Comptroller General's authority, although it was prompted by a request from Representative Maloney of this subcommittee, concerning the Alcaca facility which had been extensively looted during major combat operations.

Our work and results are based on an analysis of OIF war plans, field unit reporting, finished intelligence assessments, joint doctrine and policy, Department of Defense [DOD] lessons learned studies, and interviews of senior level DOD officials.

I would also caution that this report is an unclassified version of a classified report, and therefore in some cases my remarks and later answers to your questions may be limited due to classification.

Specifically, our testimony and report we are releasing at your hearing today are focused on two key questions: first, how did the Department of Defense and U.S. forces handle the security of Iraqi conventional munitions storage sites; and, second, what actions has DOD taken to deal with the risk posed by an adversarious conventional munitions storage sites for future planning of operations; and, third, I will summarize the report's recommendations and DOD's response.

First, the overwhelming size and number of conventional munitions storage sites in Iraq, combined with certain pre-war planning priorities and assumptions that proved to be invalid, resulted in U.S. forces not adequately securing these sites and widespread looting. Pre-OIF estimates of Iraq's conventional munitions varied significantly, with the higher estimate being five times greater than the lower estimate. Conventional munitions storage sites were looted during and after major combat operations, and an unknown number of sites remained vulnerable as of October 2006, which was the time we finished our review.

Our report details a number of assessments done during that period of certain groups of munitions storage sites that showed a lack of security and systematic looting, as well as an estimate that the

unsecured and looted sites will likely continue to supply terrorist activities in the region.

Lessons learned reports and DOD officials state that the widespread looting occurred because DOD had insufficient troop levels to secure conventional munitions storage sites due to the OIF planning priorities and assumptions that proved to be invalid.

Key planning assumptions that contributed to the insufficient force levels were: that Iraqi army units would capitulate and provide internal security; Iraqi resistance was unlikely; and post-war Iraq would not be a U.S. military responsibility.

According to DOD lessons learned, these assumptions were central to an OIF force structure plan that was insufficient to prevent the breakdown of civil order in Iraq or perform several missions requiring troops, including securing enemy conventional munitions storage sites.

A U.S. Central Command planner also told us that there were no branch or backup plans to mitigate the risks if the planning assumptions were proven wrong. This is a requirement in joint doctrine.

War plan priorities were to take Baghdad quickly and by surprise, with a smaller force package than was used in the prior Gulf war, and to search for and find weapons of mass destruction. Also, DOD did not set up a centralized program to manage and destroy the Iraqi munitions until August 2003, months after the March 2003, invasion and the May 2003, declared end of major combat operations.

The Coalition munitions clearance program administered by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers had either destroyed or secured, along with U.S. military disposal operations, more than 417,000 tons of munitions at the time we completed our work, leaving an unknown quantity of munitions in the hands of resistance groups or still unsecured. These munitions, looted from unsecured conventional munitions storage sites, have been the source of explosives for the majority of IED attacks, which have been very costly, as you all have pointed out in your opening statements.

In addition to the loss of life and maiming many U.S. troops and Iraqi citizens, the IEDs have also effectively frustrated the achievement of OIF's strategic goal of establishing a stable Iraqi nation.

Also, DOD spent about $4.9 billion from fiscal years 2004 to 2007 on countering an IED campaign that continually evolves, making DOD's countermeasures less effective over time.

The amount of conventional munitions unaccounted-for could range significantly from thousands to millions of tons.

As our report discusses, the unsecured munitions from the former Iraq regime continue to pose a risk to U.S. forces and others, and, despite the strategic value to the enemy of escalating IED attacks, DOD has not yet done a theater-wide survey and risk assessment. Such an assessment, as stated in joint doctrine, would assist DOD in conserving lives and resources and avoiding or mitigating unnecessary risk. In other words, DOD has not identified the remaining unsecured munitions storage sites, assessed the risk they pose, identified possible courses of action, and then taken steps to reduce the risk.

Turning to the second question, our review showed that DOD had not taken action through changes in its doctrine, policies, or procedures to ensure that securing an enemy's or adversary's conventional munitions storage sites is handled as a strategic planning priority in future operations. Rather, DOD's focus and changes to doctrine and other military policy and guidance has largely been on countering IEDs and disposing of explosive hazards, understandable and also important in light of ongoing operations.

Now I will turn to our recommendations and DOD's response.

We recommended that DOD: one, conduct a theater-wide survey and risk assessment on unsecured conventional munitions storage sites in Iraq; two, report the related risk mitigation strategies and results to the Congress; and, three, include conventional munitions storage site security as a strategic planning factor into all levels of planning, policy, and guidance.

DOD partially agreed with our recommendations.

That concludes my summary remarks. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Ms. D'Agostino follows:]

United States Government Accountability Office

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Testimony

Before the Subcommittee on National Security and Foreign Affairs, Committee on Oversight and Government Reform House of Representatives

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OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM

DOD Should Apply Lessons Learned Concerning the Need for Security over Conventional Munitions Storage Sites to Future Operations Planning

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

GAO-07-639T

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Highlights

Highlights of GAO-07-639T, a testimony before the Subcommittee on National Security and Foreign Affairs, Committee on Oversight and Government Reform

Why GAO Did This Study

GAO is releasing a report today on lessons learned concerning the need for security over conventional munitions storage sites which provides the basis for this testimony. Following the invasion of Iraq in March 2003—known as Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF)—concerns were raised about how the Department of Defense (DOD) secured Iraqi conventional munitions storage sites during and after major combat operations. This testimony addresses (1) the security provided by U.S. forces over Iraqi conventional munitions storage sites and (2) DOD actions to mitigate risks associated with an adversary's conventional munitions storage sites for future operations on the basis of OIF lessons learned. To address these objectives, GAO reviewed OIF war plans, joint doctrine and policy, intelligence reports, and interviewed senior-level DOD officials.

What GAO Recommends

The report GAO is releasing today recommends that the Secretary of Defense direct the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff to (1) conduct a theaterwide survey and risk assessment on unsecured conventional munitions in Iraq, (2) report related risk mitigation strategies and results to Congress, and (3) incorporate conventional munitions storage site security as a strategic planning factor into all levels of planning policy and guidance. DOD partially concurred with our recommendations.

www.gao.gov/cgi-bin/getrpt?GAO-07-639T.

To view the full product, including the scope and methodology, click on the link above. For more information, contact Davi M. D'Agostino at (202) 512-5431 or dagostinod@gao.gov.

March 22, 2007

OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM

DOD Should Apply Lessons Learned Concerning the Need for Security over Conventional Munitions Storage Sites to Future Operations Planning

What GAO Found

The overwhelming size and number of conventional munitions storage sites in Iraq combined with certain prewar planning assumptions that proved to be invalid, resulted in U.S. forces not adequately securing these sites and widespread looting, according to field unit, lessons learned, and intelligence reports. Pre-OIF estimates of Iraq's conventional munitions varied significantly, with the higher estimate being 5 times greater than the lower estimate. Conventional munitions storage sites were looted after major combat operations and some remained vulnerable as of October 2006. According to lessons learned reports and senior-level DOD officials, the widespread looting occurred because DOD had insufficient troop levels to secure conventional munitions storage sites due to several OIF planning priorities and assumptions. DOD's OIF planning priorities included quickly taking Baghdad on a surprise basis rather than using an overwhelming force. The plan also assumed that the regular Iraqi army units would "capitulate and provide internal security." According to an Army lessons learned study, this assumption was central to the decision to limit the amount of combat power deployed to Iraq. GAO analysis showed that the war plan did not document risk mitigation strategies in case assumptions were proven wrong. Furthermore, DOD did not have a centrally managed program for the disposition of enemy munitions until August 2003, after widespread looting had already occurred. According to officials from Multi-National Coalition-Iraq, unsecured conventional munitions continue to pose a threat to U.S. forces and others. Not securing these conventional munitions storage sites has been costly, as government reports indicated that looted munitions are being used to make improvised explosive devices (IED) that have killed or maimed many people, and will likely continue to support terrorist attacks in the region. As of October 2006, the Multi-National Coalition-Iraq stated that some remote sites have not been revisited to verify if they pose any residual risk nor have they been physically secured.

DOD has taken many actions in response to OIF lessons learned, however, DOD has given little focus to mitigating the risks to U.S. forces posed by an adversary's conventional munitions storage sites in future operations planning. DOD's actions generally have emphasized countering the use of IEDs by resistance groups during post-hostility operations. GAO concludes that U.S. forces will face increased risk from this emerging asymmetric threat when an adversary uses unconventional means to counter U.S. military strengths. For example, potential adversaries are estimated to have a significant amount of munitions that would require significant manpower to secure or destroy. GAO concludes that this situation shows both that Iraqi stockpiles of munitions may not be an anomaly and that information on the amount and location of an adversary's munitions can represent a strategic planning consideration for future operations. However, without joint guidance, DOD cannot ensure that OIF lessons learned about the security of an adversary's conventional munitions storage sites will be integrated into future operations planning and execution.

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee:

I am pleased to be here this morning to discuss GAO's report being released today on the Department of Defense's (DOD) efforts to plan for the security of former Iraqi conventional weapons sites and the lessons learned for planning future operations. In March 2003, citing the failure of Iraq to cooperate with weapons inspectors and other concerns, the United States and its coalition allies invaded Iraq in an operation known as Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF). The Commander of the U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) was primarily responsible for developing and executing the war plan for OIF.[1] The war plan's military priorities included overthrowing the Iraqi regime by rapidly capturing Baghdad and disarming Iraq of its weapons of mass destruction (WMD). Although WMD stockpiles were not found, Iraq had hundreds of thousands of tons of conventional munitions throughout the country at various storage sites.[2] The widespread looting of some Iraqi conventional munitions storage sites during OIF has been the subject of media reports. We previously reported on the looting and dispersal of radiological sources from a number of sites in Iraq after the invasion and DOD's efforts to collect and secure those sources.[3] My statement today addresses (1) the security provided by U.S. forces over conventional munitions storage sites in Iraq, and (2) DOD actions to mitigate risks associated with an adversary's conventional munitions storage sites for future operations on the basis of OIF lessons learned.

The observations I will discuss today are based on the unclassified version of our classified report on this topic.[4] To examine the security over Iraqi conventional munitions storage sites provided by U.S. forces, we reviewed field unit reporting and intelligence products and interviewed DOD

[1]CENTCOM is one of five geographic combatant commands. A combatant command is a unified command established by the President of the United States with a broad continuing mission under a single commander.

[2]Conventional munitions are complete devices charged with explosives, propellants, pyrotechnics, or initiating composition that are not nuclear, biological, or chemical for use in military operations.

[3]GAO, *Radiological Sources in Iraq: DOD Should Evaluate Its Source Recovery Effort and Apply Lessons Learned to Further Recovery Missions*, GAO-05-672 (Washington, D.C.: Sept. 7, 2005).

[4] GAO, *Operation Iraqi Freedom, DOD Should Apply Lessons Learned Concerning the Need for Security over Conventional Munitions Storage Sites to Future Operations Planning*, GAO-7-444 (Washington, D.C.: March 22, 2007).

officials. We also collected and analyzed the various iterations of OIF plans, doctrine, and concepts of operations for coverage of the security of conventional munitions storage sites. To examine DOD's actions to learn from its experience with securing conventional munitions storage sites in Iraq and apply these lessons learned to mitigate risks during future operations, we interviewed DOD officials about their efforts to identify and document lessons learned and examined documents on operations in Iraq. We performed our work from November 2005 through October 2006 in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards.

Summary

The overwhelming size and number of conventional munitions storage sites in Iraq, combined with prewar planning priorities and certain prewar planning assumptions that proved to be invalid, resulted in U.S. forces not adequately securing these sites and widespread looting, according to DOD sources. Pre-OIF estimates of Iraq's conventional munitions varied significantly, with the higher estimate being five times greater than the lower estimate. Although the amount of looted munitions is unknown, field unit reports, numerous intelligence assessments, and imagery products showed that many conventional munitions storage sites were looted after major combat operations and some may remain vulnerable. In October 2006, we could not verify that all sites had been physically secured. According to lessons learned reports and knowledgeable senior-level DOD officials, including field commanders, the widespread looting occurred because DOD had insufficient troop levels to secure conventional munitions storage sites due to several OIF planning priorities and assumptions that proved to be invalid. For example, the OIF war plan assumed that the regular Iraqi army units would "capitulate and provide internal security" and resistance was unlikely. Knowledgeable senior-level DOD officials stated that these Iraqi army units would have been used to secure conventional munitions storage sites. Our analysis of the various iterations of the war plan found that the OIF war plan did not examine the consequences of these and other important planning assumptions being proven wrong. Furthermore, DOD did not have a centrally managed program for the disposition of enemy munitions until August 2003, after widespread looting had already occurred. While DOD had destroyed, disposed of or secured 417,000 tons of munitions, Multi-National Coalition-Iraq officials told us unsecured munitions continued to pose a threat. Not securing these conventional munitions storage sites has been costly. For example, looted munitions are being used to construct improvised explosive devices (IED) that have killed or maimed many people and maintain the level of violence against U.S. and coalition forces and their Iraqi partners, which has hampered the achievement of the strategic goal

of stability in Iraq. Moreover, estimates indicate that the looted munitions will likely continue to support terrorist attacks throughout the region.

While DOD has taken many actions in response to OIF lessons learned, because of DOD's understandable focus on current operations, DOD has given little focus to mitigating the risk to U.S. forces posed by an adversary's conventional munitions storage sites in future operations planning. Instead, the department's actions in response to OIF lessons learned generally have emphasized countering the use of IEDs by an insurgency or terrorists during post-hostility operations. Although these actions are good first steps, our review of DOD publications—such as doctrine, policy, guidance, and procedures issued by the joint staff—used to guide operational planning and execution found little evidence of guidance concerning the security of conventional munitions storage sites. Without appropriate joint doctrine, policy, guidance, and procedures, DOD cannot ensure that OIF lessons learned regarding the security of an adversary's conventional munitions storage sites will be a strategic planning and priority-setting consideration that is integrated into future operations planning and execution, so that these munitions do not become the source of materials for making IEDs.

Our report recommends that the Secretary of Defense direct the Chairman of the Joint Chief of Staff to (1) conduct a theaterwide survey and risk assessment regarding unsecured conventional munitions in Iraq; (2) report ensuing risk mitigation strategies and results to Congress; and (3) incorporate consideration of conventional munitions storage sites security into all levels of planning policy and guidance, including joint doctrine, instructions, manuals, and other directives. DOD partially concurred with our recommendations.

Background

When the United States and its coalition allies invaded Iraq on March 17, 2003, and the Iraqi government no longer functioned, many areas experienced widespread looting and the breakdown of public services, such as electricity and water in the cities. U.S. and coalition forces were then confronted with the challenges of restoring public order and infrastructure even before combat operations ceased. Given the extensive looting, as we reported in 2005, DOD could not assume that facilities and items within the facilities would remain intact or in place for later collection without being secured.[5] Many facilities, such as abandoned

[5]GAO-05-672.

government research facilities and industrial complexes, were no longer under the control of the former regime and had been looted. For example, hundreds of tons of explosive materials that had been documented by the International Atomic Energy Agency prior to March 2003 at the Al Qa Qaa explosives and munitions facility in Iraq were lost after April 9, 2003, through the theft and looting of the unsecured installations. We also reported that regarding radiological sources in Iraq, DOD was not ready to collect and secure radiological sources when the war began in March 2003 and for about 6 months thereafter.[6]

U.S. and Coalition Forces Were Unable to Adequately Secure Conventional Munitions Storage Sites, Resulting in Widespread Looting

According to knowledgeable DOD officials, field unit reports, lessons learned reports, and intelligence information, U.S. and coalition forces were unable to adequately secure conventional munitions storage sites in Iraq, resulting in widespread looting of munitions. These sources indicated that U.S. and coalition forces were overwhelmed by the number and size of conventional munitions storage sites, and DOD had insufficient troop levels to secure these sites because of prewar planning priorities and certain assumptions that proved to be invalid. Despite war plan and intelligence estimates of large quantities of munitions in Iraq, knowledgeable DOD officials reported that DOD did not plan for or set up a program to centrally manage and destroy enemy munitions until August 2003, well after the completion of major combat operations in May 2003. The costs of not securing these conventional munitions storage sites have been high, as looted explosives and ammunition from these sites have been used to construct IEDs that have killed and maimed people. Furthermore, estimates indicate such munitions are likely to continue to support terrorist attacks in the region.

U.S. Forces Were Overwhelmed by the Number and Size of Conventional Munitions Storage Sites, Leaving Those Sites Vulnerable to Looting

U.S. forces were overwhelmed by the number and size of conventional munitions storage sites in Iraq and they did not adequately secure these sites during and immediately after the conclusion of major combat operations, according to senior-level military officials, field unit reports, lessons learned reports, and intelligence reports. Pre-OIF estimates of Iraq's conventional munitions varied significantly with the higher estimate being five times greater than the lower estimate. The commander of CENTCOM testified before the U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations

[6]GAO-05-672.

on September 24, 2003, that "there is more ammunition in Iraq than any place I've ever been in my life, and it is all not securable."[7]

Furthermore, the sites remained vulnerable from April 2003 through the time of our review. For example, an assessment conducted from April 2003 through June 2003 indicated that most military garrisons associated with Iraq's former republican guard had been extensively looted and vandalized after the military campaign phase of OIF ended. It concluded that the most prized areas for looting were the depots or storage areas. The assessment further concluded that the thorough nature of the looting and the seemingly targeted concentration on storage areas suggested that much of the looting in the areas assessed was conducted by organized elements that were likely aided or spearheaded by Iraqi military personnel.

Moreover, in early 2004, 401 Iraqi sites—including fixed garrisons, field sites, and ammunition production facilities—were reviewed to assess their vulnerability and the likelihood that anticoalition forces were obtaining munitions from those sites. Of the 401 sites, a small number of sites were considered highly vulnerable because of the large quantity of munitions, inadequate security, and a high level of looting. The majority of the sites were assessed as having low vulnerability—not because they had been secured, but because they had been abandoned or totally looted. The review considered virtually all the sites to be partially secured at best and concluded that U.S. and coalition troops were able to guard only a very small percentage of the sites.

U.S. Forces Had Insufficient Troop Levels to Provide Adequate Security Because of OIF Planning Priorities and Assumptions

DOD senior-level officials and lessons learned reports stated that U.S. forces did not have sufficient troop levels to provide adequate security for conventional munitions storage sites in Iraq because of OIF planning priorities and certain assumptions that proved to be invalid. According to DOD officials, ground commanders had two top priorities during major combat operations that were set forth in the February 2003 OIF war plan. First, to overthrow the regime, DOD planned for and successfully executed a rapid march on Baghdad that relied on surprise and speed rather than massive troop buildup, such as was used in 1991 during the first Gulf War. This rapid march to Baghdad successfully resulted in the

[7]Fiscal Year 2004 Supplemental Request for Reconstruction of Iraq and Afghanistan: Hearings Before the Committee on Appropriations, United States Senate, 108th Cong. 133 (2003).

removal of the regime. Another critical planning priority was finding and securing the regime's stockpiles of WMD, which the administration believed were a threat to coalition forces and other countries in the region. The OIF war plan assumed that there was a high probability that the regime would use WMD against U.S. and coalition forces in a final effort to survive when those forces reached Baghdad. As a result, a CENTCOM planner for OIF stated that ground commanders had to prioritize limited available resources against the volume of tasks, both stated and implied, contained in the war plan.

Several critical planning assumptions upon which the February 2003 OIF war plan was based also contributed to the number of U.S. troops being insufficient for the mission of securing conventional munitions storage sites, including the following:

- **The Iraqi regular army would "capitulate and provide security."** The OIF war plan assumed that large numbers of Iraqi military and security forces would opt for unit capitulation over individual surrender or desertion. As stated in the OIF war plan, the U.S. Commander, CENTCOM, intended to preserve, as much as possible, the Iraqi military to maintain internal security and protect Iraq's borders during and after major combat operations. According to a study prepared by the Center for Army Lessons Learned, this assumption was central to the decision to limit the amount of combat power deployed to Iraq.[8] On May 23, 2003, the Coalition Provisional Authority dissolved the Iraqi Army, which the CENTCOM commander assumed would provide internal security.

- **Iraqi resistance was unlikely.** Although the OIF war plan laid out the probability of several courses of action that the regime might take in response to an invasion, the plan did not consider the possibility of protracted, organized Iraqi resistance to U.S. and coalition forces after the conclusion of major combat operations. As a result, DOD officials stated that the regime's conventional munitions storage sites were not considered a significant risk.

- **Postwar Iraq would not be a U.S. military responsibility.** The OIF war planning, according to a Joint Forces Command lessons learned report, was based on the assumption that the bulk of the Iraqi

[8]Office of the Chief of Staff, U.S. Army, *On Point: U.S. Army in Operation Iraqi Freedom* (Washington, D.C.: 2004).

government would remain in place after major combat operations and therefore civil functions, including rebuilding and humanitarian assistance, could be shifted from military forces to U.S. and international organizations and, ultimately, the Iraqis, within about 18 months after the end of major combat operations.[9] Therefore, DOD initially did not plan for an extended occupation of the country or the level of troops that would be needed to secure conventional munitions storage sites in particular or the country in general.

Joint assessments further showed that OIF planning assumptions contributed to security challenges in Iraq. According to a 2006 report by the Joint Center for Operational Analysis, OIF planning did not examine the consequences of those assumptions proving wrong, further contributing to insufficient force levels to prevent the breakdown of civil order in Iraq.[10] The Joint Staff strategic-level lessons learned report also discussed the effect inaccurate planning assumptions had on force levels. According to this report, overemphasis on planning assumptions that could not be validated prior to critical decision points resulted in a force structure plan that did not consider several missions requiring troops, such as providing security for enemy conventional munitions storage sites.

DOD Did Not Set Up a Program to Centrally Manage and Destroy Iraqi Munitions until after the Completion of Major Combat Operations

Despite prewar intelligence assessments of large amounts of conventional munitions, knowledgeable DOD officials stated that DOD did not set up a central office until July 2003 or set up a program to centrally manage and destroy Iraqi munitions until after August 2003. These steps were taken well after major combat operations were completed in May 2003, because the department did not perceive conventional munitions storage sites as a threat. The central office was initially set up to address operational problems found during an assessment of nine Iraqi sites. This assessment found that DOD lacked priorities for securing the sites and uniform procedures and practices for securing and disposing of munitions. It also uncovered serious safety problems in the handling, transportation, storage, and disposal of munitions.

[9]U.S. Joint Forces Command, Joint Center for Operational Analysis, *Operation Iraqi Freedom May 2003 to June 2004: Stabilization, Security, Transition, and Reconstruction in a Counterinsurgency (Part One)* (Norfolk, Va.: January 2006).

[10]U.S. Joint Forces Command, Joint Center for Operational Analysis, *Operation Iraqi Freedom May 2003 to June 2004: Stabilization, Security, Transition, and Reconstruction in a Counterinsurgency (Part Two).*

In August 2003, the Engineering and Support Center awarded contracts for the Coalition Munitions Clearance Program, and the first demolition of munitions under the program was conducted in September 2003. The program's initial goals were to destroy the stockpiles at six depots and to have all enemy ammunition outside the depots destroyed or transported to the depots. The program also was tasked with assisting in the establishment, management, and transfer of depots to the new Iraqi army. According to the Engineering and Support Center, the program has received more than $1 billion and has destroyed or secured more than 324,000 tons of munitions. This number, combined with military disposal operations, has accounted for more than 417,000 tons of munitions, leaving an unknown amount of conventional munitions in the hands of resistance groups or unsecured. This unknown amount could range significantly, from thousands to millions of tons of unaccounted conventional munitions.

According to Multi-National Coalition-Iraq officials, unsecured conventional munitions from the former regime continue to pose a risk to U.S. forces and others. For example, some conventional munitions storage sites in remote locations have not been assessed recently to verify whether they pose any residual risk. These officials also stated that smaller caches of weapons, munitions, and equipment as well as remaining unexploded ordnance, scattered across Iraq, represent a more pressing and continuing risk. These officials said that the coalition is working to reduce this risk by searching for and finding a growing number of caches, but it will be some time before it can clean up all the munitions in Iraq. The extent of the threat from smaller caches, however, is difficult to quantify because the location or amount of munitions hidden or scattered around the country is unknown.

Costs of Not Securing Conventional Munitions Storage Sites Have Been High

As reported by DOD and key government agencies, the human, strategic, and financial costs of not securing conventional munitions storage sites have been high. Estimates indicate that the weapons and explosives looted from unsecured conventional munitions storage sites will likely continue to support terrorist attacks throughout the region. Government agencies also have assessed that looted munitions are being used in the construction of IEDs. IEDs have proven to be an effective tactic because they are inexpensive, relatively simple to employ, deadly, anonymous, and

have great strategic value.[11] To illustrate, the Congressional Research Service reported in 2005 that IEDs caused about half of all U.S. combat fatalities and casualties in Iraq and are killing hundreds of Iraqis. Moreover, Multinational Forces in Iraq reported that the attacks against the coalition and its Iraqi partners continued to increase through July 2006, representing at least 40 percent of all attacks on coalition forces.

DOD's Actions in Response to OIF Lessons Learned Have Not Focused on Securing Conventional Munitions Storage Sites during Future Operations

While DOD has taken many actions in response to OIF lessons learned, we found that to date DOD has not taken action to incorporate the security of an adversary's conventional munitions storage sites as a strategic planning and priority-setting consideration during planning for future operations. A critical OIF lesson learned is that unsecured conventional munitions storage sites can be an asymmetric threat to U.S. forces, as illustrated by intelligence assessments that show one potential adversary, for example, also has considerable munitions stockpiles that would require a sizable occupying force to secure or destroy. Despite the strategic implications regarding unsecured conventional munitions storage sites, our analysis shows that securing those sites generally is not explicitly addressed in military policy and guidance, particularly at the joint level. We reviewed 17 DOD publications—which Joint Staff officials told us were relevant to our review—to determine the extent to which each of those publications contained guidance on the security of conventional munitions storage sites. A list of these publications can be found in our March 2007 report.[12] In reviewing these documents, we found little evidence of guidance regarding conventional munitions storage site security. Although several publications addressed defeating IEDs during an insurgency after major combat operations have ended or provided tactical-level guidance on how to dispose of explosive hazards, including munitions, or make those hazards safe, none explicitly addressed the security of conventional munitions storage sites during or after major combat operations as a tactical, operational, or strategic risk.

Because of DOD's understandable focus on current operations, the department's actions in response to OIF lessons learned generally have

[11] Congressional Research Service, *Improvised Explosive Devices in Iraq: Effects and Countermeasures*, RS22330 (Washington, D.C.: Nov. 23, 2005).

[12] GAO, *Operation Iraqi Freedom, DOD Should Apply Lessons Learned Concerning the Need for Security over Conventional Munitions Storage Sites to Future Operations Planning*, GAO-7-444 (Washington, D.C.: March 22, 2007).

emphasized countering the use of IEDs by an insurgency or terrorists during posthostility operations. The specific actions DOD has taken are discussed in our report. These actions are good first steps toward broadening DOD's focus beyond the ongoing tactical and operational counter-IED efforts used against Saddam loyalists, rejectionists, or external terrorist groups in Iraq to planning and executing strategic counter-IED campaigns for future operations. However, the actions do not directly address the strategic importance of securing conventional munitions storage sites during major combat operations so that they do not become the source of materials for making IEDs during an occupation or become used for other forms of armed resistance.

Based on our work, a critical OIF lesson learned is that unsecured conventional munitions storage sites can represent an asymmetric threat to U.S. forces during future operations. Furthermore, other potential adversaries are also learning lessons from the United States' experiences in Iraq and will likely use asymmetric warfare against U.S. invading forces. We believe these potential adversaries will likely develop military doctrine to avoid direct military confrontation with the United States if possible and try to undermine the United States' political commitment with unconventional warfare. Therefore, the number, size, and geographic separation of an adversary's munitions storage sites could pose a significant security challenge during an occupying force's follow-on operations. A large amount of munitions in such an adversary's country could require an occupying force to dedicate significant manpower to secure or destroy the contents of the major munitions storage sites. Furthermore, the remnants of an adversary's forces, insurgents, or terrorists could draw from any large conventional munitions storage network left unsecured by an occupying force.

Conclusions and Recommendations

In our report, we concluded that a fundamental gap existed between the OIF war plan assumptions and the experiences of U.S. and coalition forces in Iraq, contributing to insufficient troops being on the ground to prevent widespread looting of conventional munitions storage sites and resulting in looted munitions being a continuing asymmetric threat to U.S. and coalition forces. The human, strategic, and financial costs of this failure to provide sufficient troops have been high, with IEDs made with looted munitions causing about half of all U.S. combat fatalities and casualties in Iraq and killing hundreds of Iraqis and contributing to increasing instability, challenging U.S. strategic goals in Iraq. Further, DOD does not appear to have conducted a theaterwide survey and assessed the risk associated with unsecured conventional munitions storage sites to U.S.

forces and others. Such a survey and assessment combined with associated risk mitigation strategies—such as providing more troops or other security measures—could assist DOD in conserving lives and in meeting its strategic goal to leave a stable nation behind when U.S. forces ultimately leave Iraq. We recommended that the Joint Chief of Staff conduct a theaterwide survey and risk assessment regarding unsecured conventional munitions in Iraq and report ensuing risk mitigation strategies and the results of those strategies to Congress.

We also concluded that in preparing for future operations DOD's actions in response to OIF lessons learned primarily have focused on countering IEDs and not on the security of conventional munitions storage sites as a strategic planning and priority-setting consideration for future operations. Although good first steps, these actions do not address what we believe is a critical OIF lesson learned, the strategic importance of securing conventional munitions storage sites during and after major combat operations. Unsecured conventional munitions storage sites can represent an asymmetric threat to U.S. forces that would require significant manpower or other resources during and after major combat operations to secure. Therefore, since joint doctrine is to present fundamental principles as well as contemporary lessons that guide the employment of forces, we believe that it is important that DOD clearly and explicitly address the security of conventional munitions storage sites in revisions to joint doctrine. Therefore we recommended that the Joint Chiefs of Staff incorporate conventional munitions storage site security as a strategic planning factor into all levels of planning policy and guidance, including joint doctrine, instructions, manuals, and other directives.

Agency Comments and Our Evaluation

DOD partially concurred with our first recommendation that the department conduct a theaterwide survey and risk assessment regarding unsecured conventional munitions in Iraq. DOD stated that while it is imperative that a complete and thorough assessment of conventional munitions storage sites be conducted, military commanders in theater are aware of the significant risk posed by the sites, and similar studies and assessments have been conducted over the past 3 years. DOD also stated that from a manpower perspective, an in-depth, theaterwide survey is not feasible without significantly degrading ongoing efforts in Iraq and the region. As the evidence in our report clearly supports, we made this recommendation because we did not see any evidence of a strategic-level survey or an effective, theaterwide risk mitigation strategy to address the commanders' awareness of this significant risk or the findings of the studies and assessments regarding security of conventional munitions

storage sites. Accordingly, the intent behind our recommendation is to have DOD assess the risks associated with unsecured conventional munitions sites on a strategic, theaterwide basis to develop an effective risk mitigation strategy.

DOD partially concurred with our second recommendation that the department report ensuing risk mitigation strategies and the results of those strategies to Congress. In commenting on this recommendation, DOD stated that risk mitigation is doctrinally sound; however, the department and Joint Staff recommend that these briefings to Congress remain at the strategic level. In making this recommendation, it was not our intention to detract tactical units from the current warfighting mission or to suggest congressional oversight is needed for each tactical unit. Instead, we are recommending that DOD alert Congress of its assessment and the actions being taken to mitigate the strategic risk associated with unsecured conventional munitions in Iraq.

DOD partially concurred with our third recommendation that the department incorporate the security of conventional munitions storage sites as a strategic planning factor into all levels of planning policy and guidance and stated that the Joint Staff will incorporate the appropriate language in joint doctrine, manuals, and instructions. DOD stated that (1) Iraq is a separate case and should not be considered the standard for all future operations and (2) war plans must reflect proper prioritization based on desired operational effects and resources available as it may not always be possible or desirable in a resource- and time-constrained environment to secure all sites or destroy all munitions. We agree with these statements. The purpose of this report was not to suggest that Iraq be the standard for all future conflicts or to restrict commanders' planning prerogatives. Instead, the report suggests that as DOD incorporates OIF lessons learned into joint doctrine, it includes what is a key OIF lesson learned—an adversary's stockpile of conventional munitions can be an asymmetric threat to U.S. forces.

Mr. Chairman and members of the subcommittee, this concludes my prepared remarks. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

Contacts and Acknowledgements

For questions about this statement, please contact Davi D'Agostino at (202) 512-5431. Other individuals making key contributions to this statement include: Mike Kennedy, Assistant Director, Renee Brown, Donna Byers, John Van Schiak, and Nicole Volchko.

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Mr. TIERNEY. Thank you, Ms. D'Agostino.

Let me start by saying that I intend to work with the minority here. The majority and minority will work on some rather pointed questions for the Department of Defense to respond to on this, and they will have the opportunity to respond in writing or by subpoena, if necessary, to come in here and tell us what their reaction is, but I think this hearing has raised some valuable questions.

I want to ask you, Ms. D'Agostino, on page 11 of your report you said that the Department of Defense has destroyed or secured 417,000 tons of munitions as of October 2006, the end of your report. Now, General Sanchez back in October 2003 was reported to say there was 650,000 tons of munitions, and senior military officials were reported by the New York Times back in September of that year to say there were between 650,000 and a million tons. When we are talking in the unclassified part of your report you say that they are between X and five times of the tons that are on the report. Would 650,000 be a good substitute for X, as we are looking at a potential upside here of some really significant numbers?

Ms. D'AGOSTINO. The numbers that we obtained were from classified sources, so I can't confirm that this is a correct number; however, if you used General Sanchez' number as a reference point, the 650,000 tons, as the low estimate and then did the five times greater as the high estimate that we saw, that would put the high estimate from General Sanchez' number at 3.25 million tons. But, again, I can't confirm those.

Mr. TIERNEY. I hear what you are saying. That is a disturbingly large tonnage——

Ms. D'AGOSTINO. Yes.

Mr. TIERNEY [continuing]. Potentially still out there. I think that is the really disturbing part.

General, I understand from what you are saying that, with the rather thin numbers of troops that are over there right now, you see some difficulty tactically using the resources and the manpower that we have to actually go out and identify these sites and then secure them. Am I correctly stating your position or your assessment?

General NEWBOLD. Mr. Chairman, I think they have made a very high priority to identify the sites and to try to secure them or try to destroy them. I think the difficulty lies both in providing the troops to focus on this task in a country of that size, and then to prepare the reports for dissemination in Washington.

My feedback from the commanders over there is that it is already the top priority. One of the commanders has been in five different IED ambushes, himself, and has lost a number of people in those ambushes. So he makes it a priority. It is an enormously complex and difficult problem, as you just described.

Mr. TIERNEY. The GAO report says that the Operation Iraqi Freedom War Plan did not examine the consequences of these and other important planning assumptions being proven wrong. That is to say, no Plan B, no alternative. Would that comport with your assessment of the situation going into this?

General NEWBOLD. I want to make sure I have answered your point, Mr. Chairman. I fundamentally believe that planning assumptions were one of the major factors in the failings that

brought us to where we are today, and then there were additional poor decisions made at the time, like disbanding the Iraqi army, and the combination of those and the low force levels have caused the situation, but I don't think that——

Mr. TIERNEY. I think it gets at what I was talking about. You mentioned, I think, some very interesting aspects in your testimony, not the least of which is the interagency situation. So if I were to ask you, I think it is inappropriate to blame the people that are on the ground over there. I think that we probably all agree with that. But what went wrong in Washington and in Florida, CENTCOM, and what three things might we look at as a legislative body here to identify what went wrong and then try to figure out for ourselves what we could do to be helpful going forward. This is not, as Ms. D'Agostino puts in her report, this is not the last time we may see this situation.

General NEWBOLD. Mr. Chairman, my view from where I sat was that there were some impossibly naive assumptions about how easy the victory would be in Iraq, the subsequent occupation, and what level of commitment would be required by the U.S. Government. The U.S. Government actions were really mostly restricted to the Department of Defense. The Department of Defense leadership had such strongly held views that they neither solicited nor much tolerated dissenting views that might have reflected on long years of experience. And, frankly, I think a number of the senior military officers were not vocal enough when they saw the situation that was going awry. That is a matter of grave disappointment.

Mr. TIERNEY. Two out of three of those things basically are leadership issues, and I'm not sure we can always legislate leadership and personalities. Believe me, a lot of us wish we could on this situation.

But the other part that I think we can probably do something about is that interagency, do something to make sure that if we ever get in the situation that there is interagency planning and that they do fully participate, and I think maybe some future hearings on that would be worthwhile.

Let me finish my questioning for now, at least, Ms. D'Agostino.

Having the knowledge of what we have for troops on the ground over there now and the situation, do you or does GAO see or believe that there is a potential that a survey could still be done and should be done and that is a reasonable thing to expect, given the current situation, and that would help, in fact, lower the number of people being injured by IEDs, in all probability?

Ms. D'AGOSTINO. Yes, we do. I think there is more than one way of conducting the survey and maybe using more than one set of resources to do that. Again, we are not in the business of micro-managing the Department and telling them how to go about doing their business. We suggest what business needs to be maybe done. But, again, it is not clear to us that the only option is to use our troops, our thin troops—and I agree with the General here—on the ground for this purpose. But I think other assets could be used, as well, to do the survey.

Mr. TIERNEY. Thank you very much.

Mr. Burton, 5 minutes, please.

Mr. BURTON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am glad you are holding this hearing. It is very informative.

General, when the discussion was taking place on the troop level that should be utilized to go into Iraq, how many people were involved in that? I know you were the lead man, but how many other guys were involved?

General NEWBOLD. Sir, there was a specific meeting, a briefing, actually, that resulted on the cap on the forces that could be used over there, and it was a small group of people in the room, probably no more than seven or eight.

Mr. BURTON. Including the Secretary of Defense?

General NEWBOLD. Including the Secretary, sir.

Mr. BURTON. And did anybody else express the same view that you did, that we should have 500,000 go in?

General NEWBOLD. Sir, I want to clarify that. It is a matter of some personal shame to me that I didn't interrupt the meeting and stand up and express my complete objection to the fact that the number was being reduced like that. There were two other senior military leaders in the room, senior to me. Neither one of them expressed objections.

Mr. BURTON. Did they share your view?

General NEWBOLD. I can't say that they did.

Mr. BURTON. Let me interrupt and just say this. You know, this is a very, very important hearing. I think it is more important than most people realize. You know, there is a lot of politics played in this House and in the Senate, and I presume there's a lot of politics that's played in the Pentagon. Were there people, in your opinion, that didn't express their views because they wanted to maintain their position, or maybe rise to a higher level? I mean, was politics a part of the reticence on members' part to say we need more troops going in?

General NEWBOLD. I honestly don't think so, sir. The people I was talking to had risen to the highest rank they could be.

Mr. BURTON. OK. Well, that's my point. If there was no politics involved and it was no risk to people's careers, why didn't somebody just stand up and say, Hey, Mr. Secretary, this isn't right, we need to go in with overwhelming force, we need 500,000. I mean, I can't understand why you and others—I'm not criticizing, I just can't understand why you wouldn't say, listen, this is crazy. We have to go in and protect these munitions sites. We have to make absolutely sure that all these weapons are controlled, and we want to make sure we control the population. So why didn't somebody just jump up and say, hey, this isn't right?

General NEWBOLD. Sir, I think part of it is a culture of obedience, which is nice to have among the national military, but obedience in my view does not limit ability to speak up and to speak out.

Mr. BURTON. Pardon me for interrupting, General, but, General, when you talk about going to war, General Dwight Eisenhower in World War II, he had a whole cadre of people before the Invasion of Normandy that came in. He listened to them. They made decisions. He made the decision, but he listened to everybody.

It really troubles me, and I am not angry about it with you, it troubles me that there were people with your knowledge and your experience sitting in that room and the Secretary of Defense said,

we are going to go with 120,000, and you are sitting there and the others are sitting there saying, hey, we really need a lot more than that to make sure that we don't have a problem down the road.

I just can't understand why there wasn't more discussion. It is not a question of disobedience; it is a question of giving advice to somebody who really didn't have a lot of combat experience.

General NEWBOLD. I think you are exactly right, Congressman, exactly right. I do get angry about it. I resigned over it—retired, more accurately.

Mr. BURTON. Let me just say—and I hope that the Members of Congress will listen to this, because I think it is important—we need to tell the Pentagon and the other agencies that are in the decisionmaking process, send the message over to the Pentagon and the National Security Agency, send the message over there that if a general or top generals disagree with a war strategy, they express themselves. It really bothers me that you probably were right. We didn't know anything about it. We have lost a lot of people, and they are doing a great job, but had we done what you thought about and had the other generals expressed their position, a lot of these lives might not have been lost. I know that troubles you, but we have to express ourselves that the people with knowledge and combat experience have to stand up and be counted, even if the Secretary of Defense may disagree with them. Following orders is one thing; giving advice is another. And I think it is extremely important that the people with the combat experience from now on say, "Hey, I don't think this is right, Mr. Secretary, and here is why," and force the issue if you have to.

I am not criticizing in retrospect what happened. I am just saying this is something that must be done in the future, because this isn't the end of wars. There's going to be more.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. TIERNEY. I thank the gentleman.

Ms. McCollum.

Ms. MCCOLLUM. Thank you.

Maybe you could help me, sir. It was my understanding that there was a general who did speak out. General Zinzecki did speak out about the number of troops being deployed, did he not?

General NEWBOLD. In testimony on the Hill he testified——

Ms. MCCOLLUM. In Congress. I am not talking about the meeting you were at, but the general did speak out. And what was the administration's reaction to the general speaking out, sir?

General NEWBOLD. General Zinzecki was not in the meeting I was referring to, so——

Ms. MCCOLLUM. But when he did speak out publicly about how we didn't have enough troops moving forward, what was the Pentagon's reaction to his speaking out?

General NEWBOLD. Both the Secretary of Defense and the Deputy Secretary of Defense were extremely critical of his assessment. I think they were disparaging of it. The Secretary of Defense, as you know, announced a year before General Zinzecki's official retirement date that there would be a replacement, and who it was. I think those were strong signals about dissent among the ranks.

Ms. MCCOLLUM. I would agree with you. I know military men and women do not lightly go into openly making suggestions that

perhaps another approach should be taken than one that senior leadership and the administration would be moving forward with, but this gentleman, the general's reputation was soundly trounced and very effectively destroyed for a while. I believe he has been vindicated.

I was looking at the response, the only response we have in front of us today from the Department of Defense. It is from the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense. It is dated September 1, 2006. It is in response to some of the GAO recommendations.

Ms. D'AGOSTINO. Yes.

Ms. MCCOLLUM. One of the things that you point out in the GAO report is that the focus in looking so much for weapons of mass destruction—in other words, the administration had gone to war on misinformation given to the public to gather support that there were these massive weapons of mass destruction. Former General Colin Powell, Secretary of State at the time, has said that he was given misinformation and that he regrets what he said and that there were no weapons of mass destruction as presented to be imminent danger to the people of the United States or people in the region.

There was so much focus on trying to find these weapons of mass destruction to prove their case for war that it appears to me that when the military identified some of these ammo dumps and saw them as problems they said, "No, keep moving, we have to find the weapons of mass destruction." So I would like to go back to the response that the Assistant Secretary of Defense gave you about doing the risk assessment, your first recommendation.

The Pentagon's response was, "Well, it is imperative that a complete and thorough assessment of ammo sites be conducted." These findings are not new and military commanders in theater are aware of this issue.

So my first question would be then what directive did the Department show you that they are actually going to clean up these sites?

The other troubling part I find is on the second page of the letter, in which a third recommendation is addressed in which you ask the Joint Chiefs of Staff to incorporate conventional munitions storage site security as part of their strategic planning.

The response back from the DOD—and I will read their last paragraph—"One should not dictate that intelligence resources must be dictated to monitoring one target versus the other, which restrains commanders' prerogatives and stifles planning operations. These plans must also reflect proper pre-authorization based on a desired operational effect and resources available, as it may not always be possible or desirable in a resource and time-constraint environment to secure all sites or destroy all munitions."

That to me sounds like, "If we want to look for something else, weapons of mass destruction, and in the future we keep going by all these sites, don't tell us we have to secure the sites. We are going to decide what we are going to do."

I would like your reaction to the response you got back from the Department of Defense on this, because our men and women are in harm's way dying and being severely injured by this, and Iraqi children and civilians are being injured by this, and so I want to

know your reaction to the Department of Defense. Why can't they walk and chew gum at the same time? They should be able to do both.

Ms. D'AGOSTINO. Well, you have given me a lot to respond to here.

Let me work back. On the third recommendation, we tried to followup with DOD before the hearing to find out, you know, where they stood on implementing the recommendations. We understand that the JCS is working on incorporating the elements we asked for in our third recommendation into all levels of doctrine on planning and the JOBE system, and so we understand that they are putting in the words into the doctrine and the guidance, as we suggested.

I think that the DOD comment indicates that they retain the right to have the flexibility of setting whatever priorities they want when they undertake an operation, and, of course, they do have that right and they did before our recommendation, and, as our report discusses and the lessons learned show, we see how that played out.

We do acknowledge the resource constraints, as also General Newbold has pointed out.

On the comment to the first recommendation, it was confusing to us that, on the one hand, DOD acknowledged that it was imperative to do a survey, a thorough and comprehensive survey, and at the same time they said that the commanders are aware. We know that the commanders of the units in country are aware.

One thing I want to just make clear and restate is that this priority of finding the WMD—and I think we do have this in our unclassified report—given the thin troop levels that the general mentioned and the numbers that we had and the priorities that were set for them, and also there was no guidance out to the troops on what to do if you encounter one of these conventional munitions storage sites—that you open the door, you don't see a WMD, and what do you do next. There was no guidance to them about what to do next. They did close the door and then move on, looking for more WMD, based on the field unit reporting and the like that we saw. But those were the priority tasks and missions they were given, and, given the resource levels they had, this is exactly what they were doing, what they were told to do.

Again, in the absence of any further guidance to the troops or even the unit commanders, they didn't have the people to do the other missions that they might have done had there been higher troop levels.

We heard this from a former CENTCOM commander, as well, that the rapid march to Baghdad with a very small force package left white space behind us, and his plan had called for between 385,000 and 500,000 troops to secure rear areas.

Mr. TIERNEY. Thank you, Ms. D'Agostino.

Mr. Duncan.

Mr. DUNCAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

General Newbold, in this column you wrote for Time Magazine almost a year ago—I think it was April 2006—you have words in there like "the zealots' rationale for war made no sense," and you "saw intelligence distorted to justify the war." Now, almost a year

later, I'm sure you have thought about this many times. Why do you think they wanted to go to war so badly? Do you think the so-called neocons, who to me are totally opposite from what traditional conservatives have been—and I have been a conservative since I was a teenager—do you think, as some people have said, that they wanted to go to war long before 9/11 and they were just going to almost use any excuse possible to do that in Iraq? Or why do you think they were so eager to go to war?

General NEWBOLD. Sir, first of all, I believe that they had Iraq in their sites long before the administration came into power. I think some of them were well intended. My personal belief is that the Deputy Secretary of Defense, Paul Wolfowitz, for example, fervently believed that in planting democracy in an unstable region would metastasize and grow throughout the region and be a wonderful thing for the world. I think that was naive, and I think that has been proven out, but I do think it was well intended.

I am less gracious about some of the others who I described as zealots in that article who were indeterrable about Iraq, and my personal experience, days after 9/11 when the Nation was in shock about a nearly Pearl-Harbor-like attack on us—in this case on civilians, though—they immediately focused on Iraq instead of Al Qaeda and the Taliban. That shift in priorities is unexplainable to me, and some of it continues to this day.

But the motivation, sir, I find it troubling, but I don't know the answer.

Mr. DUNCAN. Here is another of the many things that has always been so frustrating to me over this whole situation, and that is, you know, I am not as much into the social issues. For me the big thing has always been fiscal conservativism and fighting waste, fraud, and abuse, things of that nature, and I was always proud that the Republican party, my party, seemed to be by far the most fiscally conservative party, but ever since we went into Iraq, I mean, I hear all these things. A year-and-a-half or 2 years ago we had David Walker, who is now the head of the GAO who then was the Inspector General for the Defense Department, he came in here to this very subcommittee—actually, I think it was in another room, but I'm pretty sure it was this same subcommittee—and he said that we had lost $35 billion in Iraq due to waste, fraud, and abuse, and another $9 billion that just couldn't be accounted for at all.

Then a Foreign Service officer a year or so later told me that he had been over there for a year and he had seen SUVs stuffed so filled with cash that there was barely room for the driver. You hear all these stories.

Then what becomes so frustrating, in addition to all this waste, I read a column by a conservative columnist, Walter Williams, and he quoted some general or some Defense expert saying Al Qaeda was now down to less than 3,000 people, they had no money, the average Al Qaeda member was, he said, a high school dropout who lived at home. We are up against Al Qaeda and insurgents that have very little money. We are going to spend $624 billion, I think the last figure I saw that we are giving to the Defense Department, counting the supplemental and all these other appropriations, we have 160,000 troops over there, or something. Why do we have so much trouble, when we have all the money in the world and we

are spending more on Defense than all the other nations of the world combined, when you add in all these extra bills that we have passed? I just have a real difficult time understanding this.

General NEWBOLD. I'm not sure I can help. I am in agreement. We have spent not only the capital resources of this country, but young lives, and our——

Mr. DUNCAN. Yes. That's the worst thing of all. I will definitely agree with you there. I don't want anybody to think that I'm overlooking that.

I'm sorry to interrupt you. Go ahead.

General NEWBOLD. All those assets and more, the prestige of the country, they will have consequences in the future. We will continue to pay this price for flawed judgments made several years ago.

Mr. TIERNEY. I thank the gentleman.

Mr. DUNCAN. Thank you.

Mr. TIERNEY. Mr. Yarmuth.

Mr. YARMUTH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

General Newbold, I am curious as to what role intelligence might have played in this situation. In the sense that, if we had known or the Pentagon had known that there were some 18,000 sites where conventional munitions were stored, that they may have wanted—they may have said, well, wait a minute, now, we do need additional troops to do this. Did they have the intelligence as to how much conventional arms were stored around the country? Did they not ask that question, or did they get an answer that was not anywhere near accurate, if you know?

General NEWBOLD. Sir, the intelligence on Iraq on their forces was actually quite good, and in that regard they knew ammunition storage sites, the major ammunition storage sites, but they didn't know what was in there. I think the GAO report has laid that out in very good detail.

The planning as a result of that intel, though, had to adjust to two things. One we have already talked about was the very low number of troops, and the other one was that the planners at the various elements were instructed to follow the assumptions that GAO has also pointed out, and that is that the Iraqi army would guard the civilian infrastructure, they'd guard their own bases, none of which happened.

I would also point out that, frankly, the country is awash with munitions and that we will never know about. An anecdote from a good friend of mine, a general responsible for much of the operations in the western part of the country detailed a story about Marines uncovering an ammunition dump in Awadi full of World War I ammunition, Turkish stocks, hundreds stocked high. So I am not even sure the Iraqis ever knew how much ammunition they had. That is not an excuse, by the way. That is merely a recitation of the factors that went into it.

Mr. YARMUTH. Ms. D'Agostino, you mentioned that you are not sure that the Pentagon or the Department of Defense would be the right people to do the survey that you are talking about. Who else might be available to do this? Is this another Halliburton deal?

Ms. D'AGOSTINO. No, I was not suggesting a contractor, necessarily. I need to clarify. I was just saying that it is not clear that

the combat troops who are now very busy with their ongoing operations and missions are necessarily the only folks who could do this survey. And it is not clear that other assets couldn't be used to do the job.

Mr. YARMUTH. Who might those be?

Ms. D'AGOSTINO. Well, I think there may be ISR assets to do some of the legwork on the survey.

Mr. TIERNEY. If I might interject, you might want to use the words, as opposed to the acronym.

Ms. D'AGOSTINO. I'm sorry. Intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance assets, which is one possibility, combined with the folks who are on the ground.

Again, it is DOD's job to figure out how to do their own survey and their risk assessment, and I think we have pointed out in our report that the Joint Staff should be responsible for such an assessment.

Mr. YARMUTH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I yield back.

Mr. TIERNEY. I thank the gentleman.

Mr. Shays.

Mr. SHAYS. Thank you. I appreciate both of you being here. Mr. Chairman, again, I appreciate this hearing a lot.

I really don't have a lot of questions for GAO. I concur with the findings, particularly as General Newbold has concurred with them. He questioned some of your recommendations, so I don't really have questions for you.

General, I could keep you here for a long time. I really appreciate your being here, and I don't think it is ever easy to come, even if you are retired, to a hearing and talk about your family and talk about where things didn't go right and where you wish you had done something different.

I feel very strongly that my vote to get Saddam out of Kuwait was the right one, and I wrestled with that for a long time. We know that Saddam went into Kuwait because he believed we didn't have the fortitude to get him out because of Vietnam, and he misjudged us. I regret voting to go in to remove Saddam from power based on weapons of mass destruction, since we were dead wrong, and in theory I would have been willing to go into Iraq for other reasons if I knew that we would have fought the war differently. But, knowing now how I know we have ended up fighting this war, I wouldn't have even voted to go in for that reason.

I wish I had voted no so that now I would have credibility when I say we can't leave, and my understanding is you advised against this operation, but you also have a concern that we not leave, I believe, until we stand up their army, their police, and their border patrol and allow them to defend themselves. Is that a correct appraisal of your position?

General NEWBOLD. That's correct. I have made very public my opposition to the war, to the invasion, but if we think strategically for the good of our country I think we have to be aware of the enormous consequences of withdrawal short of some modicum of stability in that country. We are not going to make the democracy a model like Iowa. We are not going to restore an economy fully. That will take generations. But we must maintain some level of stability in the country.

The consequences for the United States in encouraging those who would wish us ill, that would like to see us lose our power is a matter of grave concern strategically to us, I think.

Simply put, I think once the United States is into a fight, they have to win it.

Mr. SHAYS. The Ambassadors surrounding Iraq, a number of them—Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Turkey, Kuwait, Egypt—Egypt obviously being a little farther away—all said, we wish you hadn't gone in, but, having gone in, you can't leave until there is some stability. I happen to believe, though, that that stability won't really take place until Shias and Sunis work out their differences, so I am one who believes there needs to be some kind of deadline, but a realistic deadline so they know we are not there indefinitely.

What I would really like to talk to you about, in addition to what I just have mentioned, is yesterday—now this is an anecdote—yesterday we had a senior member from the Coast Guard come in to testify behind closed doors about a report that we had that talks about the vulnerabilities of our ports and the fact that we don't have, in some of our ports, the security we need because we don't have the people. It was a report. I said to him, the thing that bothers me is that when we have people testify they don't tell us the truth. I realize you have a command requirement, but it seems to me when you are before Congress you have a moral obligation and a legal obligation—I am saying to anyone in command—to respond to our answers honestly.

I made my point and then we went public, and another Member asked this general, "Do you have everything you need, sir, to do your job," and he said, "Sir, we have everything we need to do our job." It was right after we had this conversation.

So I interrupted the questioner, but I just would love you if you could somehow tell me how you in the military are wrestling with this reality. The Secretary of Defense has the responsibility. You are military, answerable to civilians, but in hindsight if there is an after-action review of this how do you deal with a Secretary who says you only have 125,000 when you think you need 500,000? I think it was pushed up to 250,000. But how do we deal with this in the future? I'm really gun-shy to believe anything I hear from this administration, candidly, because I think loyalty trumps honesty. But I think this is inherent in the military, in particular.

General NEWBOLD. Sir, we do have a problem in the military of people that are willing to speak up and to speak out frankly, regardless of consequences. I will say very strongly that I do believe their responsibility is to do it in private while they are on active duty, other than their oath, which I believe holds them responsible to speak frankly to Congress when they are asked questions.

Mr. SHAYS. So should Congress literally have a requirement that if we get information that is testified before us, particularly under oath, that if it is not accurate should there be some penalty to that individual if they don't? I mean, what do we do to incentivize?

General NEWBOLD. I am not sure that disincentive is the way to do it. That has been my experience. It may be the only recourse you have now, but my experience is that there ought to be another and a better way.

Mr. SHAYS. Let me ask you this, and it is not something I want to ask you, but is it because Republicans and my own party should have perhaps met privately and then found a way to have certain things come out publicly? I mean, in other words, is part of it a problem that it was a Republican Congress with a Republican President, and is that the problem you have with the Democratic President and a Democratic Congress?

General NEWBOLD. I should say that the problems I have described in the interagency applied equally to the previous administration, and I could go through countless anecdotes, and I would say that the senior military, likewise, was not vocal when they knew things were amiss.

The best forum I think is in private. As soon as I retired, I spoke to several Members of the House and of the Senate privately, and there are no views that I have expressed today that I didn't express then. I think that in inviting over senior members of the military in private, they will always get a more informed view than in public.

Mr. SHAYS. Well, you know what? It strikes me that you need a Secretary of Defense who makes it clear that when people testify in front of Congress they have obligations to tell the truth. I am struck by the fact that the head of the Joint Chiefs of Staff has to say to his men and women, you have a moral obligation to speak the truth when you are asked, particularly in Congress, either speak the truth ever or don't say it, but when you are asked a question, and if you are not going to speak the truth then you just don't answer it. Maybe that is where the moral obligation begins.

Mr. TIERNEY. I thank the gentleman.

The gentleman from Massachusetts, Mr. Lynch.

Mr. LYNCH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to thank our ranking member for his work on this, and I want to thank the panelists for helping the committee with its work.

General, I have done a lot of work on the IED issue in Iraq. In April I will be going for my sixth visit over there, but a lot of that time has been spent on the IED issue and the availability of automatic weapons to the Iraqi population, generally. I agree with your assessment, very much so, that the inability to secure these facilities, whether you call them weapons caches or munitions depots, it is all a terrible problem.

I actually spent a little time in Fallujah and also in Tikrit where General Adierno at that time had been uncovering—he is a battle-hardened warrior, and he was very, very much surprised at the level of munitions that were available. It was his estimation at the time that Saddam Hussein had spent the better part of the last 20 years burying these caches of weapons all over the country for the future.

The ironic part is that Saddam Hussein actually heavily regulated the availability of those weapons. He shipped them in. He bought them from the Russians, but he had a very strict gun control law because he was a paranoid psychopath and he wanted to make sure his guys had all the weapons. But since the bombing of the Mosque in Samarra, weapons have become a necessary appliance in every Iraqi home. That's simply the fact of life.

I met with the Iraqi Parliament and talked to all their folks, and they agree that the problem has grown much, much worse.

The root of the problem—well, not the root, but certainly something that helped the problem along was the fact that L. Paul Bremmer, the former Coalition leader for us, Jerry Bremmer, actually one of his first acts as administrator there approved CPA law No. 3. Actually, I think he called it declaration No. 3, which shifted. Under Saddam you weren't allowed to have an automatic weapon. Under Jerry Bremmer, under us, he put in a law, CPA declaration No. 3, that every Iraqi home would be limited to one weapon.

Now, the problem is everybody stocked up. The availability of the weapons was plentiful, and unfortunately for us the weapon of choice there, from Iraqis that I have talked to and from my time in country, is the AK–47. They choose that because it is a compact weapon, rounds per minute, they have a 30-round clip, and 600 rounds per minute. When you are protecting your home, firepower is what it is all about.

You know, I also talked with some folks that are dealing with the weapons dealers on the street. From my understanding, the gun dealers are doing better than the oil industry in terms of their production.

I have some quotes from a couple of the dealers here. His only complaint from the dealer was that, because the weapons are so plentiful and easily obtained because of the Iraqi military situation and there is no security, he said because they are so plentiful it is difficult to find someone to buy my guns because everyone already has one or two in his house. As I said, since the death squads have been out there, each weapon has become a necessary appliance in every Iraqi home.

Given the widespread prevalence of weapons and munitions, I was out on the Syrian border. There are so many weapons there, they are actually triple stacking now. The insurgents are triple stacking anti-tank mines. They have enough to put three on top of each other to take out some of our striker vehicles and humvees.

Given the level of all of this, what is the hope of us adopting a program at this point—and many of my visits were 3 years ago, when we knew this was a problem.

The other problem now is the Iraqis are in charge. The Iraqis control a lot of these facilities now. They have been hard pressed to get the water running and get the electricity running. I just don't see a competent government there that is willing to deal with this problem.

I just wanted to know, I know you know what the problem is, but what about the solution and our chances of success?

I will yield back at this time. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

General NEWBOLD. Sir, we are addressing the problem of IEDs by trying to add armor, and that helps. That has saved a number of lives, and it is a good thing. But the fundamental issue on IEDs is not only the prevalence of the munitions that compose them, but the eagerness on the part of a large part of the population to use them against us.

With the best armor, the new MRAD vehicle and the Grizzly, etc., unless you get to the core of the problem we will always have an IED issue as long as there are troops in Iraq. If there is 40 per-

cent unemployment, if there is little economic potential among the country, if the country is divided and factionalized, and we are viewed as occupiers, then if they don't have IEDs they will use AK–47s. If they don't have those, they will use sticks.

The military is trying very hard to solve a problem that, in its nature, is not military. They can contribute, but I addressed before this has to be a strategy. A four-star general I talked to yesterday about coming before you today said we would appreciate more than anything a cohesive strategy. If there is one, and if it is robustly applied, then the likelihood of Iraqis using IEDs will go down, even as we take whatever measures to protect our troops.

That is a bit difficult to implement, but it truly is my most fervent belief.

Mr. LYNCH. Thank you.

Mr. TIERNEY. I thank the gentleman.

Mr. Platts, 5 minutes.

Mr. PLATTS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I appreciate both witnesses for your testimony and, Mr. Chairman, for your holding this important hearing. Having traveled four times to Iraq, twice with the gentleman from Massachusetts, we appreciate the challenges, but the importance of addressing many issues, including this one, and the threat it poses to our troops.

I also want to add, General, to your service in uniform a special thanks for your dedicated and patriotic service to our Nation.

I apologize for coming in from another hearing late.

One issue that I wanted to followup on is in the DOD's response letter to the theater-wide survey and risk assessment, it is my understanding in the response they stated, "An in-depth theater-wide survey to identify unsecured conventional munitions in Iraq is not feasible without significantly degrading ongoing intelligence efforts in Iraq or in the region."

Is it a fair assumption—and maybe this was addressed—that what is being referenced there by DOD is if we devote enough resources to this issue we are going to diminish our resources in other areas of going after the enemy? Is that how you take that statement from DOD?

General NEWBOLD. Of course I am speculating on what motivated their response, but my own testimony and my notes indicate my belief that for headquarters already enormously burdened and too thin to begin with, that a review and analysis of this, while necessary, is probably not the most productive thing for the committee to address. There are other fixes that resonate more with me and are more fundamental to the problems.

I can understand and I think that the committee has to do something to get a robust response out of the Department of Defense, but I would hate to see the—I have been there—I would hate to see the staffs in Baghdad with just another, as we say, rock in the roadside.

Mr. PLATTS. Maybe one followup, then I want to yield to the gentleman from Connecticut for additional time. In understanding that our guys have a lot that they are carrying right now, are we aware of efforts or requests or ongoing efforts by the Iraqis, themselves, to step up in this specific area so we don't further burden our troops? And are they engaged in doing that? I am one who believes

in the heroic and amazing service in liberating Iraq, but ultimately the Iraqis need to step up and secure Iraq, including these munitions that maybe are still out there and accessible.

Are either of you aware of specific efforts to have the Iraqis take the lead, with guidance or assistance from us in the intelligence area, but to actually take the lead on this issue?

General NEWBOLD. I have some comments, but do you——

Mr. PLATTS. Ms. D'Agostino.

Ms. D'AGOSTINO. We don't have anything unclassified that we can discuss about that, but we could brief you separately on what information we do have about use of Iraqi contractors, etc.

Mr. PLATTS. OK.

General NEWBOLD. In a general sense, as the Iraqi army grows in size and in competence, they will have a better ability to station forces to guard ammunition storage sites and to search for weapons in hidden storage sites held by the insurgents. As you know, there are some examples of where Iraqis guarding storage sites have turned over the sites to the locals, to looters, or to insurgents. I hope that period is behind us.

I would make a comment, and this may be superficial, but as best I can recall the Iraqi nation has had conscription since the early 1930's. They felt it was important at the time to have national service and/or military service for the members of their population from 1932, roughly, until 2003. They do not have it now, despite rampant unemployment. You can't guard the pipelines, you can't guard munitions, you can't search out the bad guys or secure the cities to the degree you can, but this is the only period in their history when they have not had national subscription.

I don't care whether it would be in the military or Civilian Conservation Corps or Peace Corps or whatever it was, it seems to me that getting 20 year olds off the street is not a bad idea right now.

Mr. PLATTS. I share that opinion and the importance of them stepping up.

I want to yield what is left——

Mr. TIERNEY. There is no time left.

Mr. PLATTS. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. TIERNEY. Thank you, Mr. Platts.

What I think we might do here, because we are going to have some votes in about 15 minutes, is other members of the panel remain here, might each have another question or two that they want to ask.

Mr. Shays, why don't you ask yours first.

Mr. SHAYS. Thank you.

A very fine article in Time Magazine written in July of last year—correct, it was written then? Did anyone in the administration—I don't need to know who or what, but did anyone read this article and say, "you know, this is a three-star general. He was involved in the planning of Iraq. Why don't we sit down and talk with him?" I mean, by then people knew things weren't going well. Did anyone say I want to sit down and talk with you in the administration of a person of some rank and authority? Did you get any response at all?

General NEWBOLD. No, sir. Now, within the military any number of people, close friends.

Mr. SHAYS. But nobody in the authority to make a change or act? I'm just reminded that President Roosevelt would sometimes frustrate his Secretaries of whatever Cabinet, he would call a junior officer up and just ask to speak to someone and say what the hell is going on there, and this junior officer would be speaking to the President of the United States. But, you know, it was a struggle for a President to be informed.

I think it is maybe a good lesson for any future Presidents to say when you have someone of some distinction as you, a three-star in the planning process, the war didn't go well, or whatever, anything, to say, you know, I have to find a way to communicate with people who ended up not going the right way.

Just this last point. IBM had a way of tracking people who made decisions, and then 5 and 10 years later going back and saying, did this decision turn out right? They even take someone who is retired, who 10 years ago made a decision, and reward him financially, because they wanted to start to know who is making the right decision and who isn't, to make sure those are the people that are going up and not going out.

General NEWBOLD. Sir, I get no Christmas cards from the administration.

Mr. TIERNEY. Thank you very much.

Let me ask a question, if I may, a couple of questions.

Ms. D'Agostino, I am a little concerned, and I don't entirely agree with the General on this, though I totally respect your expertise in this area. I have to be convinced that there is another way to skin the cat of finding out what is out there in terms of these. I mean, they are the materials that are going to IEDs that, in turn, are wounding our men and women that, in turn, we are seeing at Walter Reed and in our Veterans Administration hospitals. Has the Department of Defense in any of their responses talked about satellite imagery, talked at intelligence coordination, talked about field reports, talked about any other source that they could use to get a better grip on how much of these munitions are out there, where they are, and how they might go about securing them better than they are doing now so that we could lower the number of people that we see coming back in these horrendous conditions at Walter Reed?

Ms. D'AGOSTINO. Mr. Chairman, the Department's response stands, I think, as it was provided to us for our report.

Mr. TIERNEY. Which is a monument of non-responsiveness in a large extent.

Ms. D'AGOSTINO. We understand that Secretary Gates apparently testified a few days ago before a Senate committee. I can get you some more information on it. And he was asked about what they are going to do about a survey and risk assessment on this matter, and I believe his response involved continuing to consult with his advisors about whether or not they should do that.

Mr. TIERNEY. Thank you.

Ms. D'AGOSTINO. So that is the latest information we have.

Mr. TIERNEY. General, let me ask you one last question here. Those comments made earlier about the bloated bureaucracy of our military in Iraq, would you just speak to that for a second of what are the consequences? What is the extent of that, and what are the

consequences in how it is that we are prosecuting that situation when that occurs?

General NEWBOLD. Mr. Chairman, it is something that I can't speak to with a lot of depth, so I have to qualify that, but I will say that my years of service gives me personal observation of how we have responded to crises, and often, and I believe is now the case, we create the headquarters almost before we create the maneuvering units, and we create infrastructure and size and scale that has almost a cultural side effect, and that is that people in contonments, with comforts, and with bureaucratic duties take on bureaucratic mind sets. The lean expeditionary forces which are integrated into the population and active in their missions and are contributing in a way that I think leads to better efficiency, better effectiveness, and a completely different mind set.

One comment. General Petraeus I believe has made a very good move by putting the maneuver forces out into the population. You can see evidence of that now. I think it will show effect. And, as you know, it is already happening out in the western part of the country.

Mr. TIERNEY. Thank you very much, General.

Are there other members of the panel that want to ask another question before we end?

[No response.]

Mr. TIERNEY. Let me just close then by thanking again both of our witnesses, Ms. D'Agostino for an excellent report that has, I think, created some discussion and followup that will be important to the country and hopefully to some of those young men and women coming back.

General, thank you for coming in today. I know you did it with some trepidation. It is not easy to come back and testify, but we honor you for your service and your commitment to the country, as well as for your testimony.

I thank the members of the panel for their participation.

With that, this concludes the hearing.

[Whereupon, at 11:40 a.m., the subcommittee was adjourned.]

[The prepared statement of Hon. Bruce L. Braley follows:]

Opening Statement of Congressman Bruce Braley
Committee on Oversight and Government Reform
Subcommittee on National Security and Foreign Affairs
"Iraq: IEDs and Munitions, Are They Secured?"
March 22, 2007

I would like to thank the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform Chairman Waxman and Ranking Member Davis, as well as the National Security Subcommittee Chairman Tierney and Ranking Member Shays, for holding this important hearing today on the security of munitions sites in Iraq, and how the security – or insecurity, as the case seems to be – of these sites is affecting the safety of our troops in Iraq.

Like many Americans, I was shocked and disturbed to learn in October of 2004 that almost 400 tons of high explosives had been stolen from an Iraqi weapons storage facility near Baghdad. The initial alarm over this massive looting stemmed from the fear that these stolen weapons, which were supposed to be secure, would be used against our troops. Four years into this misguided war, with attacks against Americans through the use of improvised explosive devices (IEDs) increasingly becoming more numerous and more deadly, we know that these fears have come true.

Reports indicate that many of the munitions used by insurgents to construct IEDs and other conventional weapons that have been used against U.S. troops and Iraqi civilians have likely come from large Iraqi military ordnance depots that have not been properly secured and have been looted by insurgents. According to the non-partisan Congressional Research Service (CRS), IEDs, including roadside bombs and suicide car bombs, have been responsible for many of the more than 3,200 deaths of American troops in Iraq. CRS also estimates that improvised explosive devices have caused about

half of all the American combat casualties in Iraq, including both soldiers killed and wounded. Defense Secretary Robert Gates puts this number even higher, estimating that 70 percent of U.S. casualties in Iraq are caused by IEDs.

Given the mismanagement of this war from the very beginning, it is not surprising that the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) has found major deficiencies in pre-war planning that led to the failure to secure weapons and explosives stockpiles within Iraq. The architects of this war have consistently made underestimations that have had disastrous consequences for American troops: they underestimated how many troops would be needed to secure the country; they underestimated the strength of the insurgency; and, according to the GAO, they underestimated the total number of unsecured munitions in Iraq, and the devastating impact that these munitions would have on our troops and our mission there.

Given the pervasive and ongoing threat that IEDS pose to our troops, and the role of unsecured munitions in the manufacturing of these deadly IEDs, it is *shocking*, however, that the Department of Defense is still not willing to provide an honest assessment of munitions sites in Iraq that may still be insecure. It is equally disturbing that the Department is resisting the GAO's recommendations for surveying and securing these sites.

I look forward to the testimony of the witnesses today and hope that this hearing will ultimately contribute to increased security of munitions sites in Iraq, and increased security for the people of Iraq and our brave men and women who are serving there.

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