



Highlights of [GAO-10-376](#), a report to congressional committees

OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM

Actions Needed to Facilitate the Efficient Drawdown of U.S. Forces and Equipment from Iraq

Why GAO Did This Study

The drawdown from Iraq is a complex operation of significant magnitude. Established drawdown timelines dictate a reduction in forces to 50,000 troops by August 31, 2010, and a complete withdrawal of U.S. forces from Iraq by December 31, 2011. While DOD has made progress toward meeting these goals, a large amount of equipment, personnel, and bases remain to be drawn down. Moreover, escalating U.S. involvement in Afghanistan may increase the pressure on DOD to efficiently execute the drawdown.

Due to broad congressional interest in drawdown issues, GAO performed this work under the Comptroller General's Authority. GAO examined (1) the extent to which DOD has planned for the drawdown from Iraq in accordance with set timelines, and (2) factors that may impact the efficient execution of the drawdown. To evaluate these efforts GAO reviewed documents and interviewed officials from over 20 DOD organizations in the U.S., Kuwait, and Iraq.

What GAO Recommends

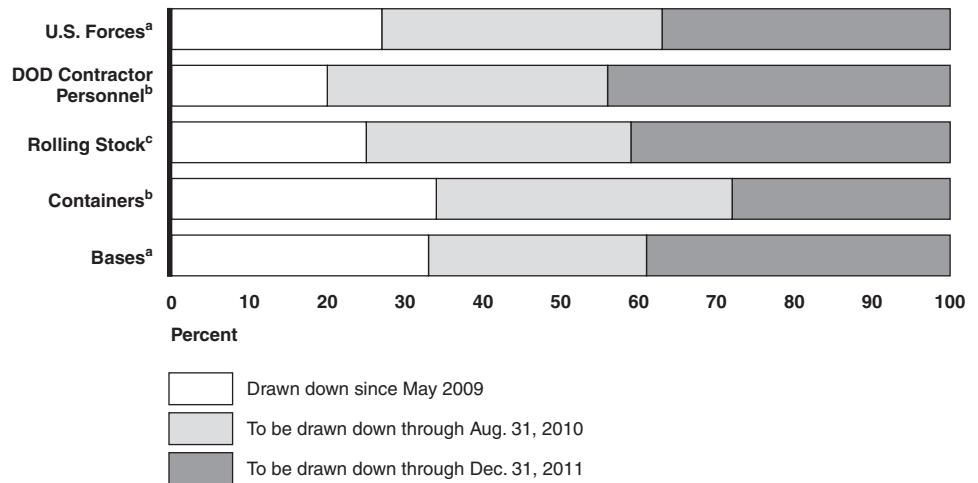
GAO makes several recommendations to the Secretary of Defense regarding operational planning, the management and transition of contracts, the cost and benefits of transitioning contracts, contract oversight, and DOD's plans for the disposition of equipment. DOD concurred with all but one of GAO's recommendations. GAO revised the last recommendation accordingly.

[View GAO-10-376 or key components.](#)
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What GAO Found

Several DOD organizations have issued coordinated plans for the execution of the drawdown and created new organizations to oversee, synchronize, and ensure unity of effort during the drawdown. To date, DOD reports that its drawdown efforts have exceeded its goals. For example, in January 2010, DOD reported that it had exceeded its target figure for withdrawing wheeled and tracked combat vehicles in Iraq, among other items, by over 2,600 pieces, yet a large amount of personnel, equipment, and bases remain to be drawn down. However, DOD has not (1) fully included contracted support in its operational planning for the drawdown, (2) allowed sufficient time in its guidance to ensure that all contracted services can be put on contract in a responsible manner, or (3) clearly defined the roles and responsibilities of various contract validation review boards.

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



Source: GAO analysis based on DOD data.

^aData current as of February 2010.

^bData current as of December 2009.

^cData current as of January 2010.

Several other issues may impede the efficient execution of the drawdown from Iraq. First, challenges associated with the planned simultaneous transition of several major contracts may lead to the interruption of vital services. Second, DOD has not determined whether the benefits of transitioning its major base and life support contract in Iraq outweigh the costs and risks of doing so. Third, shortages of contract oversight personnel may increase the risk of fraud, waste, and abuse. Fourth, key decisions concerning equipment that will be retrograded from Iraq have yet to be made. And finally, DOD lacks precise visibility over its inventory of equipment and shipping containers. While DOD has begun to address some of these issues, GAO has not fully assessed DOD's actions.