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United States Government Accountability Office
Washington, DC 20548

April 22, 2010

Congressional Committees

Subject: *Securing and Stabilizing Iraq: An Assessment of the U.S. Joint Campaign Plan for Iraq*

In the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for fiscal year 2010, GAO is required to assess the extent to which the campaign plan for Iraq and supporting documents adhere to military doctrine, including the extent to which they (1) identify and prioritize the conditions that must be achieved in each phase of the campaign plan, (2) report the number of combat brigade teams and other forces required for each campaign phase, and (3) estimate the time needed to reach the desired end state and complete the military portion of the campaign.¹ This report must be provided to Congress no later than 180 days after the enactment of the NDAA, or by April 26, 2010. The NDAA also states that GAO should notify Congress in writing if a previously submitted report meets the requirements to report on the campaign plan for Iraq. Further, the act requires that GAO submit an updated report when the campaign plan is substantially updated or altered, with the requirement ending on December 31, 2011.

We are writing to inform you that our September 2009 classified report—*Securing and Stabilizing Iraq: U.S. Drawdown Plans Should Include Contingency Plans for Use If Key Assumptions about Security Conditions and Iraqi Capabilities Prove Wrong*—meets the NDAA requirement.² We note that the Commanding General of U.S. Forces-Iraq (USF-I) recently reported that he had developed contingency plans for use if the security situation deteriorates during the drawdown of U.S. troops.^{3, 4}

In addition, to assist in congressional oversight, we attempted to provide an unclassified summary of the September 2009 classified report as an attachment to this letter. Specifically, we asked the Office of the Director of National Intelligence (ODNI) to declassify portions of the September 2009 report, including the results in brief section. ODNI would not declassify

¹Pub. L. No. 111-84, Section 1226, Oct. 28, 2009. Since 2006, the various U.S. campaign plans for Iraq have been referred to as Joint Campaign Plans and signed by the U.S. Ambassador to Iraq and the Commanding General of U.S. forces in Iraq.

²GAO-09-939C. On October 2, 2009, we provided copies of this classified report to the Senate Appropriations Committee, Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs and Subcommittee on Defense; the Senate Armed Services Committee; the Senate Foreign Relations Committee; the House Armed Services Committee; and the House Foreign Affairs Committee. The House Appropriations Committee, Subcommittee on Defense, did not request a copy of the classified report.

³*Defense.gov News Transcript: DOD News Briefing with Gen. Odierno from the Pentagon.* (Feb. 22, 2010).

⁴After reviewing this letter, DOD told us that Secretary Gates and General Odierno have said we are on track to end our combat mission and reach 50,000 troops by August 31, 2010.

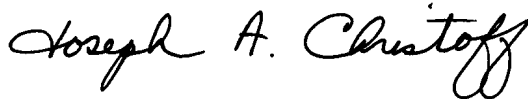
the information because we relied on the classified March 2009 National Intelligence Estimate for Iraq in reaching our conclusions.

The latest update—the 2010 Joint Campaign Plan for Iraq—was signed by the U.S. Ambassador to Iraq and the USF-I Commanding General on November 23, 2009, and came into effect in January 2010.⁵ We are currently assessing this update to the Joint Campaign Plan and will issue a classified report comparing this plan with joint planning doctrine, in accordance with the mandate's requirement to submit a report when the campaign plan is substantially updated or altered.

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We are sending copies of this letter to the congressional committees listed below, and to the Departments of State and Defense and the Office of the Director of National Intelligence.

If you or your staffs have any questions about this letter, please contact me at (202) 512-8979 or christoffj@gao.gov. Contact points for our Offices of Congressional Relations and Public Affairs may be found on the last page of this letter. In addition, this letter is available at no charge on the GAO Web Site at <http://www.gao.gov>.



Joseph A. Christoff
Director, International Affairs and Trade

⁵USF-I was then known as Multinational Force-Iraq (MNF-I). MNF-I became USF-I on January 1, 2010.

List of Congressional Committees

The Honorable Carl Levin
Chairman
The Honorable John McCain
Ranking Member
Committee on Armed Services
United States Senate

The Honorable Daniel K. Inouye
Chairman
The Honorable Thad Cochran
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Defense
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate

The Honorable Ike Skelton
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The Honorable Howard P. McKeon
Ranking Member
Committee on Armed Services
House of Representatives

The Honorable Norman D. Dicks
Chairman
The Honorable C.W. Bill Young
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Defense
Committee on Appropriations
House of Representatives

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