

ONE HUNDRED TENTH CONGRESS
Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM
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March 29, 2007

The Honorable Robert M. Gates
Secretary of Defense
U.S. Department of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301-1000

Dear Mr. Secretary:

We were disappointed the Department of Defense declined our invitation to send a witness to testify at our hearing on March 22, 2007, entitled, "Iraq: IEDs and Munitions, Are They Secured?"

When asked about our hearing at a press conference, you responded, "... in terms of the unexploded munitions, it's a huge, huge problem." Your recognition of the gravity of the problem underscores the unacceptability of the Department of Defense's decision not to provide a representative to explain what actions are being taken to protect our military men and women. We hope that this incident is not part of a broader pattern of unresponsiveness going forward by your department.

The Government Accountability Office (GAO), in a report released in conjunction with our hearing, raised very serious concerns about whether the Department of Defense has taken appropriate actions to secure munitions sites in Iraq, both in the past, but even more troubling, today.

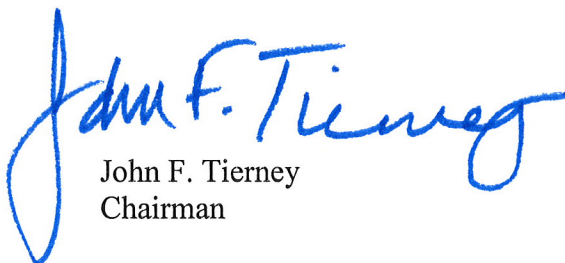
We request a full response to the GAO report in writing by the appropriate person in your department. We also request answers to the following specific questions:

- What plans have been considered to survey or otherwise determine the actual number of unsecured conventional munitions sites in Iraq, including methods utilizing military personnel and other alternative resources and techniques?
- What specific plans have been instituted to secure and destroy all Iraqi munitions sites?

Depending on the clarity and fullness of the Department's written response, we reserve the right to follow-up with the relevant point person in a meeting or at a future hearing. Our troops, their families, and the American people have a right to a full accounting from the Department of Defense on this issue.

Our point of contact is the Subcommittee's Staff Director, Mr. David Turk. He can be reached at 202-225-4766. We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,



John F. Tierney
Chairman



Christopher Shays
Ranking Member