

ONE HUNDRED ELEVENTH CONGRESS  
**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM  
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WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6143

Majority (202) 225-5051  
Minority (202) 225-5074

January 22, 2009

The Honorable Robert M. Gates  
Secretary  
United States Department of Defense  
1000 Defense Pentagon  
Washington, DC 20301

Dear Mr. Secretary:

Today, with our colleagues in the Senate, we are releasing the most recent Government Accountability Office (GAO) listing of the federal government's high risk areas. GAO has issued this product at the start of every new Congress since 1990. As has been the case in many past editions, the Department of Defense (DOD) is, unfortunately, well represented.

This year's report describes eight areas in DOD operations that are at high risk of fraud, waste, abuse, and mismanagement and seven others for which DOD shares responsibility. More than half of the areas GAO has identified involve DOD. Many of these areas have been on the list for almost two decades.

With the country facing its most serious financial and economic problems in decades and fighting two wars overseas, we cannot afford for the Department to get less than the maximum value from the resources the Congress and the American taxpayer provide it. The risks DOD faces cut across most areas of its operations and include DOD's longstanding inability to deliver its major weapon system acquisitions on time and at promised costs and capabilities, modernize its business systems, protect critical technologies, and manage its contracts, its supply chain, its property and its people, among others.

The Oversight and Government Reform Committee intends to make DOD's high risk areas a significant focus of its oversight agenda. Accordingly, we request that you meet with us at your earliest possible convenience to discuss why the Department has not been able to resolve these serious and costly problems, and to discuss a concrete plan with specific time frames to implement GAO's recommendations. Waste and mismanagement in the Department reduce the

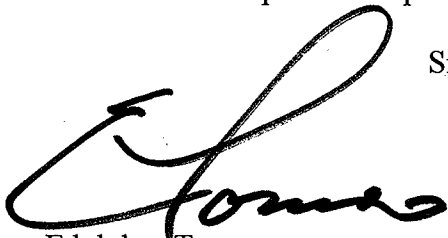
The Honorable Robert Gates

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much needed support our military needs to effectively carry out its mission. We look forward to the discussion with the spirit of cooperation that will be needed to achieve lasting improvements.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Edolphus Towns". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "E" and "T".

Edolphus Towns  
Chairman

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Darrell E. Issa". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "D" and "I".

Darrell E. Issa  
Ranking Member