



Highlights of [GAO-05-431T](#), a testimony before the Committee on Government Reform; Subcommittee on National Security, Emerging Threats, and International Relations; House of Representatives

## Why GAO Did This Study

Since the fall of the former Iraq regime in April 2003, the multinational force has been working to develop Iraqi military and police forces capable of maintaining security. To support this effort, the United States provided about \$5.8 billion in 2003-04 to develop Iraq's security capability. In February 2005, the president requested a supplemental appropriation with an additional \$5.7 billion to accelerate the development of Iraqi military and police forces.

GAO provides preliminary observations on (1) the strategy for transferring security responsibilities to Iraqi military and police forces; (2) the data on the status of forces, and (3) challenges that the Multi-National Force in Iraq faces in transferring security missions to these forces.

To prepare this statement, GAO used unclassified reports, status updates, security plans, and other documents from the Departments of Defense and State. GAO also used testimonies and other statements for the record from officials such as the Secretary of Defense. In addition, GAO visited the Iraqi police training facility in Jordan.

[www.gao.gov/cgi-bin/getrpt?GAO-05-431T](http://www.gao.gov/cgi-bin/getrpt?GAO-05-431T).

To view the full product, including the scope and methodology, click on the link above. For more information, contact Joseph Christoff at (202) 512-8979 or [christoffj@gao.gov](mailto:christoffj@gao.gov).

## REBUILDING IRAQ

# Preliminary Observations on Challenges in Transferring Security Responsibilities to Iraqi Military and Police

## What GAO Found

The Multinational Force in Iraq has developed and begun to implement a strategy to transfer security responsibilities to the Iraqi military and police forces. This strategy would allow a gradual drawdown of its forces based on the multinational force neutralizing the insurgency and developing Iraqi military and police services that can independently maintain security.

U.S. government agencies do not report reliable data on the extent to which Iraqi security forces are trained and equipped. As of late February 2005, the State Department reported that about 82,000 police forces under the Iraqi Ministry of Interior and almost 60,000 military forces under the Iraqi Ministry of Defense have been trained and equipped. However, the reported number of Iraqi police is unreliable because the Ministry of Interior does not receive consistent and accurate reporting from the police forces around the country. The data does not exclude police absent from duty. Further, the departments of State and Defense no longer report on the extent to which Iraqi security forces are equipped with their required weapons, vehicles, communications equipment, and body armor.

The insurgency in Iraq has intensified since June 2003, making it difficult to transfer security responsibilities to Iraqi forces. From that time through January 2005, insurgent attacks grew in number, complexity, and intensity. At the same time, the multinational force has faced four key challenges in increasing the capability of Iraqi forces: (1) training, equipping, and sustaining a changing force structure; (2) developing a system for measuring the readiness and capability of Iraqi forces; (3) building loyalty and leadership throughout the Iraqi chain of command; and (4) developing a police force that upholds the rule of law in a hostile environment.

The multinational force is taking steps to address these challenges, such as developing a system to assess unit readiness and embedding US forces within Iraqi units. However, without reliable reporting data, a more capable Iraqi force, and stronger Iraqi leadership, the Department of Defense faces difficulties in implementing its strategy to draw down U.S. forces from Iraq.