



A Framework for Assessing Key Issues of Operation Iraqi Freedom and its Aftermath

Operation Iraqi Freedom was the largest and most significant use of U.S. military forces since the Persian Gulf War in 1991. All the military services – Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marines – played significant roles, and many of their newest innovations in equipment, doctrine, and techniques were involved. U.S. forces worked side by side with members of coalition countries in carrying out a complex operation plan that by most accounts was an enormous military success. The coalition and international community are now confronted with the critical job of rebuilding Iraq and fostering the country's political and economic transformation.

As with any undertaking of this magnitude, military forces learn a lot about what worked well and what did not work as expected. Congress is already starting to ask questions about the most significant lessons learned from this operation and what changes might be needed. GAO expects to be called on to perform a large body of analyses on various aspects of Operation Iraqi Freedom, including the build-up, execution, and aftermath of the conflict. After the Persian Gulf War, GAO published about 75 reports on such disparate subjects as the cost of war, logistics, personnel issues, Gulf War Syndrome, and international relations. With Operation Iraqi Freedom, these issues will again be of interest.

Moreover, rebuilding Iraq poses an entirely new situation not confronted after the 1991 Persian Gulf War. Food aid and humanitarian relief must be provided, the Iraqi infrastructure rebuilt, a democratic government established, and a modern market economy built. These efforts will proceed within the framework of an overall peace and stability operation led by the United States. GAO has issued many reports on similar programs and operations in locations such as Bosnia and Kosovo, which cost the United States billions of dollars.

Congress has already passed a \$79 billion supplemental appropriation to fund these military, humanitarian, and reconstruction activities in Iraq. To provide a framework for assessing issues Congress may ask GAO to study, GAO has prepared this compilation of potential issues and key questions. It is intended to provide a way for congressional committees and staff to think about the wide range of issues stemming from this conflict and help prioritize the Congress' information needs. The key questions listed on the back of this page are examples of the types of issues we anticipate studying if requested by the Congress. For more information on any of these issues GAO anticipates concerns related to Iraq, contact the focal points listed under each major issue. All GAO's work in these areas will be aimed at assisting decision-makers in the Congress and the Executive Branch as events unfold in this volatile region of the world.

Cost and Contracting Issues

Cost and sources of funding

- What is DOD's cost of the operation to date and continuing operations?
- What is the cost to State, AID, and other U.S. agencies for reconstruction and humanitarian relief?

Oversight and accountability

- How good is U.S. oversight of this spending, including control over cash?

Contracting Oversight

- How well is the U.S. overseeing the extent and variety of contractors involved in Iraq military operations and reconstruction?

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Military Issues

Lessons learned

- What lessons are emerging concerning weapons, force structure, treaties, and doctrine?

Logistics

- How well were logistics operations managed and what problems arose?
- What repair and reconstitution of military equipment will be required?

Interoperability

- What progress has been made in addressing interoperability problems (including friendly fire incidents)?

Facilities and Overseas Basing

- How will the war in Iraq affect the future basing of U.S. forces?

Health and Force protection Issues

- How is the U.S. responding to immediate and long-term medical/health issues?
- How effective are force protection measures for U.S. forces in Iraq?

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Nation-building Issues

Humanitarian and Food Aid

- How effective is provision of humanitarian and food aid to Iraq?

Reconstruction

- How are U.S. agencies and international organizations coordinating reconstruction efforts?

Economic Transformation

- What strategy is being used to develop a sustainable market economy in Iraq?
- How are issues such as Iraqi debt and the future of Iraq's oil industry being resolved?

Governance and Democracy-building

- What is the scope and effectiveness of democracy-building efforts in Iraq?
- What steps are being taken to transform Iraq's legal system and prosecute war crimes?

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U.S. Foreign Policy Issues

Peace Operations

- How is the overall peace operation structured in Iraq?
- What is the role of the U.S. military vs. other U.S. and international entities?

Weapons of Mass Destruction

- How effective is the effort to find and secure Iraq's WMD?
- What role is being played by international organizations?

Support to Coalition Partners

- What is the U.S. providing to allied nations who supported the operation with basing or access arrangements?

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