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Slaughter Condemns Military Equipment Shortages as Waste Persists

New Pentagon Audit Confirms Troops Sent into Iraq and Afghanistan Without Adequate Equipment, Armored Vehicles, while Reconstruction Funds Squandered by Perpetual Waste, Fraud, and Abuse

Washington, DC - Rep. Louise M. Slaughter (D-NY-28), Chairwoman of the House Rules Committee, today responded to a newly released Inspector General audit detailing equipment shortages for the American troops sent into Iraq and Afghanistan that forced many to fight without the benefit of adequate body armor or armored vehicles.

"The recently released findings of the Inspector General confirm our greatest fears: that brave young men and women were routinely sent into battle without the equipment they needed to protect themselves," Rep. Slaughter said. **"And yet, despite the equipment shortages that already exist, the President is increasing the number of troops in Iraq. Why should we expect that they will be given what they need for success?"**

"The failure to protect our troops must be viewed against the backdrop of questionable contracts and perpetual fraud, waste, and abuse that have plagued this war effort from day one," Rep. Slaughter continued. **"Stuart Bowen has revealed billions of dollars that have been misspent or lost during the past four years. Money was disappearing at the same time that our troops were in harms way, struggling to protect themselves from bullets and bombs without proper vehicles and equipment. It is simply unconscionable."**□

A public executive summary of the recently released Inspector General audit reports that:

"... Based on responses from approximately 1,100 Service members, they experienced shortages of force-protection equipment, such as up-armored vehicles, electronic countermeasure devices, crew-served weapons, and communications equipment. As a result, Service members were not always equipped to effectively complete their missions....

The Request for Forces process did not always ensure that Service members who performed missions that they do not traditionally perform - such as training, provincial reconstruction, detainee operations, and explosive ordinance disposal - received the equipment necessary to perform their wartime mission. As a result, Service members performed missions without the proper equipment, used informal procedures to obtain equipment and sustainment support, and canceled or postponed missions while waiting to receive equipment....

The U.S. Central Command's and the Army's internal controls were not adequate...."

A link to the complete text of the executive summary can be found below, or by [clicking here](#) .

Stuart Bowen, the Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction, has issued numerous reports exposing fraud and abuse in the reconstruction effort. Today, an Associated Press article cited one of the most recent of those reports (separate from that cited above). As the article detailed, "The U.S. government wasted tens of millions of dollars in Iraq reconstruction aid, including scores of unaccounted-for weapons and a never-used camp for housing police trainers with an Olympic-size swimming pool, investigators say." [[Link](#)]

Background

Rep. Slaughter has actively pursued explanations for why equipment shortages have dogged American forces in Iraq. Following a letter Rep. Slaughter sent to the Department of Defense in April of 2006 (cited below), the Inspector General's office reported of two ongoing audits into the procurement of armored vehicles and body armor for American soldiers. The results of those studies will be available in July and October of 2007, respectively.

The following is a brief timeline of Rep. Slaughter's ongoing efforts to seek explanations concerning ongoing equipment shortages facing American soldiers abroad:

January 2006 - Reports emerge of American troops continued fighting in Iraq without sufficient body armor, armored vehicles. A Pentagon report concludes that, for the first two years of the war, American troops were issued only enough body armor to cover part of their chests and backs. This study suggests that as many as 80 percent of those Marines who had been killed in Iraq from wounds to the upper body could have survived if the government had provided sufficient body armor. Another report indicates that the deployment of armored vehicles, including upgraded Humvees, has been delayed due to turf battles, bureaucratic bungling, and incompetence. In a particularly egregious example, the contractor hired to produce one such vehicle had no previous experience in the mass-production of armored vehicles. [Michael Moss, "Pentagon Study Links Fatalities to Body Armor," New York Times, 1/7/07]

April 19, 2006 - Rep. Slaughter sends letter to Inspector General of the Department of Defense regarding troops fighting without body armor.□

On April 19, 2006, Rep. Slaughter sent a letter to Thomas Gimble, the acting Inspector General of the Department of Defense. In the letter, she requested that he "examine DoD's procurement history for body armor and armored vehicles, and determine whether or not proper policies were followed." Slaughter further requested information about specific DoD body armor contracts as well as a policy analysis of the Army's decision to ban the use of privately-purchased body armor.

- Rep. Slaughter's Letter to the Inspector General Dated April 19, 2006, [link](#)

May 17, 2006 - In response to Rep. Slaughter's query, DoD reports of ongoing audit concerning equipment shortages in Iraq. The Inspector General's office reported to Rep. Slaughter that its ongoing audit "will specifically determine whether units were provided the required items of equipment and whether equipment modifications satisfied mission requirements," and that the audit would address Rep. Slaughter's concerns related to body armor.

- Inspector General's Letter to Rep. Slaughter, received on May 17, 2006, [link](#)

September 20, 2006 - Rep. Slaughter meets with IG Gimble. Department of Defense Inspector General Gimble and Rep. Slaughter meet to discuss the status of internal audits of the lack of sufficient body armor and armored vehicles in Iraq and Afghanistan.

November 9, 2006 - In response to Rep. Slaughter's query, the Inspector General reports of an audit concerning armored vehicles. The IG reported to Rep. Slaughter that its office had "initiated an audit on procurement policy for armored vehicles."

- Inspector General's letter to Rep. Slaughter, received on November 22, 2006, [link](#)

January 30, 2007 - Inspector General issues a report confirming that soldiers in Iraq face equipment shortages. The Inspector General's office provides Rep. Slaughter with a report on their audit entitled "Equipment Status of Deployed Forces Within the US Central Command." The investigation of troop equipment levels, including availability of armored vehicles, confirmed that "service members were not always equipped to effectively complete their missions." The IG's office also notified Rep. Slaughter that, pursuant to her requests, the final reports on armored vehicles and body armor will be available in July and October of 2007 respectively.

- Letter from Inspector General to Rep Slaughter, with attached executive summary, received January 30, 2007, [link](#)

- Executive Summary of the DoD audit "Equipment Status of Deployed Forces Within the US Central Command", [link](#)

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