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United States Department of State
and the Broadcasting Board of Governors
Office of Inspector General

Report of Inspection

Inspection of Humanitarian Mine Action Programs in Iraq

Report Number ISP-I-10-41, June 2010

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PURPOSE, SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY OF THE INSPECTION

This inspection was conducted in accordance with the Quality Standards for Inspections, as issued by the President's Council on Integrity and Efficiency, and the Inspector's Handbook, as issued by the Office of Inspector General for the U.S. Department of State (Department) and the Broadcasting Board of Governors (BBG).

PURPOSE

The Office of Inspections provides the Secretary of State, the Chairman of the BBG, and Congress with systematic and independent evaluations of the operations of the Department and the BBG. Inspections cover three broad areas, consistent with Section 209 of the Foreign Service Act of 1980:

- **Policy Implementation:** whether policy goals and objectives are being effectively achieved; whether U.S. interests are being accurately and effectively represented; and whether all elements of an office or mission are being adequately coordinated.
- **Resource Management:** whether resources are being used and managed with maximum efficiency, effectiveness, and economy and whether financial transactions and accounts are properly conducted, maintained, and reported.
- **Management Controls:** whether the administration of activities and operations meets the requirements of applicable laws and regulations; whether internal management controls have been instituted to ensure quality of performance and reduce the likelihood of mismanagement; whether instance of fraud, waste, or abuse exist; and whether adequate steps for detection, correction, and prevention have been taken.

METHODOLOGY

In conducting this inspection, the inspectors: reviewed pertinent records; conducted on-site interviews in Washington and Iraq; visited mine action sites and mine action organizations in Iraq; and reviewed the substance of the report and its findings and recommendations with offices, individuals, organizations, and activities affected by this review.



**United States Department of State
and the Broadcasting Board of Governors**

Office of Inspector General

PREFACE

This report was prepared by the Office of Inspector General (OIG) pursuant to the Inspector General Act of 1978, as amended, and Section 209 of the Foreign Service Act of 1980, as amended. It is one of a series of audit, inspection, investigative, and special reports prepared by OIG periodically as part of its responsibility to promote effective management, accountability and positive change in the Department of State and the Broadcasting Board of Governors.

This report is the result of an assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of the office, post, or function under review. It is based on interviews with employees and officials of relevant agencies and institutions, direct observation, and a review of applicable documents.

The recommendations therein have been developed on the basis of the best knowledge available to the OIG and, as appropriate, have been discussed in draft with those responsible for implementation. It is my hope that these recommendations will result in more effective, efficient, and/or economical operations.

I express my appreciation to all of those who contributed to the preparation of this report.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "H. W. Geisel".

Harold W. Geisel
Deputy Inspector General

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KEY JUDGMENTS

- Although the Department of State (Department) has spent over \$120 million since 2003 for mine action in areas controlled by the Iraqi Government in Baghdad, it has resulted in little clearance of the estimated 20 million mines or other unexploded ordnance.
- There appears to be relatively little grassroots pressure in Iraq for mine action, nor are mines reportedly seen as a major deterrence to economic development.
- Elements of the Iraqi Government and corruption have consistently created obstacles to mine action.
- Security concerns have also played a major role in limiting mine action in Iraq. Identification of mine action and conventional weapons destruction as a U.S. Government-sponsored activity hampers some mine action activities by Iraqi and foreign nongovernmental organizations (NGO).
- Although the Iraqi Government recently lifted its ban on mine action, and some activity is underway, additional time is required before it is clear if the government has a sustained commitment to the effort.
- The Bureau of Political Military Affairs, Office of Weapons Removal and Abatement (PM/WRA), has created a capable indigenous mine action NGO in Iraq.
- Department contractors and grantees are capable and have worked under very difficult circumstances to try to fulfill their missions.
- Security concerns and limited personnel resources have severely limited oversight of contractors and grantees. This is particularly serious given concerns about the appearance of “bleed-over” between contractors’ Department-funded activities and other business pursuits.

CONTEXT

The United States' humanitarian mine action program for Iraq is the Department's second largest (after Afghanistan). PM/WRA manages the program, currently funded at over \$20 million per year from the Nonproliferation, Antiterrorism, Demining, and Related Programs (NADR) account. The Department has spent over \$153 million on mine action in Iraq since 2003.

This report most often uses the term "mine action" rather than "demin- ing" in keeping with current terminology in the political-military and humani- tarian action communities. Also note that humanitarian mine action encom- passes unexploded ordnance (UXO) clearance and conventional weapons destruction (CWD). These are included because UXO, mines, and weapons stockpiles all pose similar risks and are often found in the same hazardous areas. The term mine action alone may often be used in this report for brevity but may connote CWD and explosive ordnance destruction (EOD) activities as well. Mine action also includes mine risk education and victims assistance. PM/ WRA's mine action program for Iraq includes all these activities.

The first report submitted by the Government of Iraq on July 31, 2008, to the Secretary General of the United Nations under the Ottawa Mine Ban Treaty indicated at least 20 million antitank and antipersonnel landmines em- placed in Iraq, mainly along the borders and near oil fields. This figure includes only those mines laid by the armed forces of Iraq. One Iraq landmine impact study quoted by the PM/WRA in its July 2009 periodical "To Walk the Earth in Safety" estimates 727 square kilometers of Iraq are contaminated by mines and 851 square kilometers by UXO. Additionally, there are hundreds of cached and abandoned ordnance sites around the country.

The Government of Iraq signed the Ottawa Mine Ban Treaty and pledged to work to be mine-free by 2018, but little clearance, relative to the size of the problem, has taken place in central and southern Iraq - the areas controlled by the government in Baghdad. The reasons for this include instability and lack of security, a lack of commitment on the part of the Government of Iraq, corruption, bureaucratic obstacles, sectarianism, and an apparent lack of grassroots pressure for mine action. The Iraqi Ministry of Defense (MOD)

has also greatly hindered humanitarian mine action by foreign organizations. All humanitarian mine action by foreign organizations was at a halt during the OIG visit.

PM/WRA has invested over \$120 million in mine action in central and southern Iraq. PM/WRA humanitarian mine action program officers first arrived in Iraq in 2003. PM/WRA also quickly sent in a mine action contractor, RONCO Consulting Corporation (RONCO), and emergency clearance teams from Mozambique. Mine action was to be made part of a vigorous international humanitarian development and counterinsurgency strategy. Bases were established in the International Zone in Baghdad and in Basra in southern Iraq. Clearance began, mostly, around oil fields. PM/WRA had RONCO establish and train an indigenous NGO, the Iraq Mine and Unexploded Ordnance Clearance Organization (IMCO). Clearance operations quickly became difficult as security deteriorated, especially for organizations and people affiliated with the United States. (The Danish Demining Group, a smaller operation, was able to remain in the field in the south.) Attacks were made on IMCO, and three employees were assassinated. Clearance was largely curtailed and the base in Basra was closed in mid-2007. (A base is currently being reestablished in Basra. See below.)

The Government of Iraq's lead humanitarian mine action authority is the Department of Mine Action (DMA), currently being established in the Ministry of Environment.

Meanwhile, the MOD has played the larger role in mine action. Wary of humanitarian clearance, eager to control much of mine action itself, and protective of its vast military minefields, it banned, in December 2008, all humanitarian mine action by foreign organizations.

The international community, with significant leadership from the embassy's political-military section, pressured the Government of Iraq and the MOD to lift the mine action ban. The MOD, in response, concluded an agreement on division of mine action authority with the Ministry of Environment. However, the MOD retains several key authorities that may make humanitarian mine action problematic. The MOD will apparently:

- retain ultimate control over all mine action survey and clearance organizations;
- approve requests of mine action organizations to operate in Iraq;
- retain the right to engage in mine action itself;

- take control of all cleared ordnance;
- control all importation of detonation and destruction equipment and material; and
- provide security for all mine action clearance operations.

The MOD then apparently lifted its ban, in an order dated August 31, 2009, although the mine action community in Iraq was still deciphering and clarifying the effect of the order at the time of the OIG team's departure. As of 2010, a handful of mine action organizations, including IMCO, have received the necessary clearances and accreditations and some mine action is underway. The IMCO accreditation does not include approval to destroy cleared UXO or to engage in CWD.

In January 2009, the MOD also stopped the only attempted major humanitarian destruction of small arms and light weapons (CWD) to date, by IMCO, of confiscated arms turned over by the U.S. military. Some 37,000 small arms were destroyed before the operation was stopped, but the MOD took possession of the far larger number of remaining weapons. The MOD then formally charged the IMCO director with unauthorized destruction of the weapons. The IMCO director was cleared of the charges in court, but remains at serious odds with ranking officers at the MOD, complicating IMCO's operations.

Corruption has also been a major obstacle to mine action. The first Government of Iraq mine action entity, the National Mine Action Authority, was never very functional and was rife with corruption. The National Mine Action Authority was dissolved in 2006 when its director and several other of its officials went to jail for corruption. Among their crimes were irregularities in the purchase of \$13 million worth of mechanical mine action equipment that now sits rusting. (No U.S. funding was reportedly involved.) Nepotism and bribery in almost all facets of mine action, including the commercial sector, were widely and reliably reported.

Inefficient bureaucracy is another problem for mine action. Applications for DMA accreditation to engage in mine action operations languished for years. So do applications—for over a year now—to register IMCO and RONCO vehicles. RONCO recently obtained permission to operate its security details, after a three year wait. Again, corruption and crime were also factors. Iraqi authorities stopped a RONCO-IMCO convoy at gunpoint in July 2007 and confiscated 18 of their vehicles. Fifteen vehicles were finally returned in February, 2009. A police chief kept three, and many of the returned vehicles, some with Iraqi Government license plates, were wrecked or cannibalized and no longer serviceable.

Sectarianism is also a consideration. Although IMCO has a deliberate policy of recruiting a multiethnic staff, unhindered deployment of that staff is problematic. Kurds do not allow Arabs to engage in clearance in most areas under their control. Kurds would find it difficult to obtain approval for clearance in the southern and central parts of Iraq. Sunnis will probably not feel welcome in many parts of the Shia south.

Perhaps most troubling as an obstacle to successful mine action is the apparent lack of any substantive commitment by the Government of Iraq. The government is only now reestablishing the DMA, after much prodding by the international community. The DMA has been placed in the MOE under a Kurdish minister far from her power base. The acting director of the DMA is a deputy minister for whom the mine action responsibility is only part of a busy portfolio. He was too busy, for example, to attend a major mine action coordination meeting in October 2009 in Washington that included representatives of almost all humanitarian mine action organizations active in Iraq. He was also too busy to show up at a scheduled meeting with inspectors and had not explained his absence at the time the inspectors left the country. A reading of PM/WRA's contractor and grantee reporting from 2005 to present chronicles a story of Iraqi Government disinterest and bureaucratic obstacles.

Inspectors found little evidence of grassroots pressure for mine action during their short trip to Iraq. Most embassy officers, aid officials, and Provincial Reconstruction Team members queried said they had no, or little, knowledge of mine action, either as an activity or as an issue hindering economic or agricultural development. The large minefields are reportedly well known and located along borders and in uninhabited or sparsely populated strategic and conflictive areas. Humanitarian mine action organizations clearly prioritize minefields below UXO (much of it U.S. and British cluster bombs) and stockpile clearance. A PM/WRA contract surveyor of hazardous areas, iMMAP, reported in October 2009 that of the 2,753 villages in five previously nonsurveyed provinces, only 86 continued to suffer some form of contamination, and approximately 1,020 had eliminated areas of contamination since 2003 through a combination of U.S. military, MOD, and self-help efforts.

This catalog of problems has badly hindered the U.S. mine action program. The program has only been allowed to clear, through IMCO, 13,357 mines and 119,231 pieces of UXO at a couple of dozen sites. The Danish Demining Group, commercial deminers, the Iraqi military, and Iraqi civilians have cleared thousands more, but the large majority of the estimated 20 million mines remain in place. Many minefields, kilometers wide along the borders, reportedly are viewed by the Iraqi Government as strategically useful.

In sum, given the extent of contamination, a compelling case can be made for mine action in Iraq. However, it seems at this point to be a case extrapolated, composed, and related largely by the international community, not by Iraqis. Inspection interviews were sprinkled with comments such as “we have to teach them they have a problem” and “they don’t realize they have a problem.”

Mine action has been much more successful in the northern part of Iraq in areas controlled by the Kurdistan Regional Government. The British-based NGO Mines Advisory Group (MAG) began mine action there in 1992 and Norwegian People’s Aid also later established a mine action program. PM/WRA began providing funding to MAG in 2003, and has to date provided over \$20 million. Stability, economic development, and cooperation by government authorities in the north have facilitated a successful mine action program. The Kurdistan Regional Government has also left strategic minefields in place, however.

The United Nations Development Program’s (UNDP) Iraq mine advisory office, funded largely by PM/WRA, and the UNDP-created Iraqi humanitarian mine action organization, Rafidain Demining Organization, United Nations Children's Fund, World Health Organization, and several victims assistance NGOs are also active in various mine action activities, mostly mine risk education and victims assistance programs, in different parts of Iraq.

Mine clearance generally encompasses use of a combination of machine, canine, and manual means. It is a dangerous, slow, labor-intensive process, with the surest method still individual deminers working in clearly marked lanes with handheld mine detectors and handheld probes somewhat akin to gardening tools.

The United States is not party to the Ottawa Mine Ban Treaty, which bans all use of antipersonnel mines and seeks to clear all countries to a mine-free status. U.S. policy does not seek the clearance of every mine in any country as the end state, believing such a goal is impractical and not cost-effective. Rather, the U.S. goal for mine action is to clear until an area or country is “mine impact-free,” that is, until mines and UXO present no serious threats to human life or economic or social development.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTION

BUREAU OF POLITICAL MILITARY AFFAIRS, OFFICE OF WEAPONS REMOVAL AND ABATEMENT

PM/WRA has persevered in the face of daunting challenges and put into place an infrastructure that is technically and logistically capable of all facets of mine action in central and southern Iraq. However, lack of cooperation by the Government of Iraq has kept this infrastructure from being used effectively. PM/WRA programs in northern Iraq, where the Kurdistan Regional Government has been cooperative, have been effective.

An Iraq program manager in PM/WRA is primarily responsible for crafting and managing the Department's mine action program in Iraq. He is supervised by the deputy office manager for operations and the office director. The program manager has one contract program assistant. Together the two manage mine action programs in Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, and Yemen. The PM/WRA Chief Resources Office provides budget, contracting, and grants support. Other PM/WRA specialists help, as appropriate, with public diplomacy and public outreach programs.

Department contracting is done by the Bureau of Administration's Office of Acquisition Management (A/LM/AQM). An A/LM/AQM contracting officer concluded the Department's large mine action contract and the task order with RONCO for the largest part of the Iraq program. A/LM/AQM appointed the PM/WRA chief resources officer as the contracting officer's representative (COR).

PM/WRA set to work creating a mine action infrastructure in Iraq immediately following Operation Iraqi Freedom in 2003. Iraq Reconstruction and Relief Funding (IRRF) alone for use in years 2003 to 2006 amounted to over \$95 million. Another \$72.6 million in NADR funding brings the total funding for the program to date to over \$168.1 million.

U.S. Funding for Mine Action in Iraq

Fiscal Year	NADR (millions)	Iraq Reconstruction and Relief Funding (millions)	Total(millions)
2003	2.9	12.3	15.2
2004	0	61	61.0
2005	2.8	9	11.8
2006	0	13.2	13.2
2007	12	0	12.0
2008	12.9	0	12.9
2009	22	0	22.0
2010(requested)	20	0	20.0

OIG found significant differences in the quality of the planning that was behind the use of the funds, depending in part on who controlled the money. There was no formal country plan for mine action in Iraq until 2006 even though PM/WRA standard operating procedures require a plan before obligating funds. There was one page covering the \$61 million of Iraq Reconstruction and Relief Funding for 2004, filled out by the mission in Baghdad. Part of the reason was the demand for quick action, but quick action should not preclude effective planning. The plans also lacked performance metrics.

Recommendation 1: The Bureau of Political Military Affairs should update its standard operating procedures so that in future situations that require setting up a mine action program without the time to conduct its standard country planning process, it has an alternate procedure in place to ensure that there are performance metrics to track program implementation. (Action: PM)

OIG interviews in Washington and Iraq reflected a widespread belief that PM/WRA pursued a correct policy in hiring a capable U.S. contractor (RONCO), establishing an indigenous mine action NGO (IMCO), and supporting a number of grantees for various mine action activities. Inspectors agree. Iraq, one of the most mine- and UXO-contaminated countries in the world, and a top U.S. foreign policy priority, merited a substantial mine action program.

Problems with the Iraq program arise, however, when the amount of the investment is compared with the results in the areas controlled by the Iraqi Government in Baghdad. Some \$120 million has been spent to train a

current cadre of about 250 mine action personnel in the U.S.-created Iraqi NGO IMCO. (The mine action community generally reports a journeyman deminer can be trained in under a month. Supervisors and specialists in explosive ordnance disposal require additional training.) IMCO's task list to date shows it has worked since 2003 on 29 tasks of various magnitudes, many of them rather small, and many or most in the International Zone, oil fields, in its own compounds, and in response to Iraqi army requests (which in many cases appear to have been humanitarian in nature). IMCO's sole CWD task was provided by the U.S. military and was halted by the Iraqi MOD, which confiscated the arms. U.S.-funded efforts to date in central and southern Iraq have resulted in the clearance of 13,357 mines—13,052 of these in two tasks in the Rumaila oil fields. Mines have only been lifted in 5 of IMCO's reported 29 tasks, and 119,231 pieces of unexploded ordnance have been cleared. It is difficult to compare clearance tasks, as terrain, security, and the intensity of contamination vary, but in general it is possible to compare the IMCO record to that of MAG in Kurdistan, which in approximately the same period cleared 74 hazardous areas of 780,156 items for \$20 million. Another comparison would be Afghanistan, where the investment of similar annual funding to that of the Iraq program resulted in the clearance of 82,000 antipersonnel and 90 antitank mines in one year, 2008. Most of the reasons for this lack of progress, virtually all from the Iraqi side, were cataloged above in the context section of this report.

COORDINATION AND OVERSIGHT

Inspectors found little evidence of integration or coordination of the Iraq mine action program with other U.S. assistance programs or overall strategy in any manner that might have made the program more effective. A large full-color booklet prepared by the embassy public affairs section entitled "Aiding Iraq," available for distribution at the provincial reconstruction team in Erbil, did not even mention mine action assistance. Inspectors found little knowledge of the mine action program outside the political-military section and little interest in coordinating the program with other U.S. programs.

OIG found no evidence of effective, consistent engagement on the mine action program by U.S. Ambassadors to Iraq and deputy chiefs of missions. PM/WRA personnel reportedly only sporadically briefed these officials. Talking points on the program prepared for front office use were repeatedly not selected for use. Embassy political-military section chiefs and political counselors were closer to the program. They engaged mid-level Iraqi contacts on the program as necessary but with only incrementally helpful results.

OIG did observe a good relationship between the mine action officer and various U.S. military offices. While the U.S. military does not engage in humanitarian demining, those officials the OIG inspectors met expressed concerns about the problems that the Iraqi Government was creating and said they, and their superiors, were conveying those concerns to their contacts with the MOD and Iraqi armed forces.

There was also a notable lack of coordination on Iraq mine action between U.S. Government agencies and entities in Washington. Even the Foreign Service Institute declined a PM/WRA offer to brief provincial reconstruction team officers-in-training. The Washington interagency working group on humanitarian mine action stopped meeting in 2001 and was replaced by the Policy Coordination Committee Subgroup. This subgroup was to be composed of representatives from the National Security Council, Department of Defense, Department of State, and the U.S. Agency for International Development but is also inactive. There is no longer a U.S. Ambassador for Humanitarian Mine Action either. This may be due in part to the successful launch and the accomplishments of the U.S. mine action program and the fact that mine action is now a vibrant international and UN humanitarian activity. (Note: PM/WRA began conducting monthly interagency conventional weapons reduction discussions in late 2009. Members vary but include at a minimum the Department of Defense and U.S. Agency for International Development.)

OIG found little indication in Washington outside the PM/WRA program office of the seriousness of the problems the Iraqi program was encountering. This might be in part because the program was in the hands of capable, dedicated program managers. Money was regularly allocated, contracts and grants were concluded, people were hired and trained, plans were made, and equipment was purchased. Periodic reports by contractors and grantees noted optimistically that the Government of Iraq's commitment was about to improve. The program was, as reported annually in planning documents, robust. Only the results were less than robust. OIG informally recommended that the Assistant Secretary for Political Military Affairs pay closer attention to the results of mine action programs.

Inspectors' interlocutors correctly pointed out that the Government of Iraq has been seized with trouble and crises over the past several years and not every program can be a priority. Still, an expenditure of \$120 million deserves the attention necessary to make it effective.

Recommendation 2: Embassy Baghdad should raise the mine action program with the highest levels of the Government of Iraq and seek to ascertain the level of commitment and cooperation. (Action: Embassy Baghdad)

Recommendation 3: The Bureau of Political Military Affairs should review Government of Iraq cooperation and reallocate Iraq mine action resources to programs where they are more effective, either within or outside of Iraq, if appropriate. (Action: PM)

Mine action programs would also benefit from higher level visits, which could help focus not only on program implementation, but on program results.

Recommendation 4: Embassy Baghdad, in coordination with Bureau of Political Military Affairs, should establish and implement a schedule for a ranking embassy officer to visit a mine action activity outside the embassy at least twice a year and for a Department official of at least office director rank to visit once a year. (Action: Embassy Baghdad, in coordination with PM)

There is also a need for greater coordination on mine action among allied embassies and other countries' NGOs. Security concerns and logistics make it difficult for even organizations who work closely together to meet sufficiently. The PM/WRA program officer recently addressed this problem with a well-conceived and successful Iraq mine action workshop in Washington, the first of its kind. The new embassy mine action officer also has firm plans to coordinate regular donor meetings in Baghdad. This should also prove helpful.

The Ambassador was out of the country during the inspection. Inspectors debriefed the chargé d'affaires on these findings.

PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION

ARCHIVES

The OIG Inspectors reviewed a sampling of PM/WRA Iraq mine action program files from 2004 to the present and found them to be in good order. The review included contractor and grantee reports, the RONCO contract and task orders, change orders, grants, statements of work, and country plans. The documents are all well-maintained and archived, and seemingly complete. Contractor and grantee reports since 2007 are particularly easy to access on the SharePoint system.

FISCAL MANAGEMENT

PM/WRA's chief resource office appeared, with a couple of exceptions, to have Iraqi program accounts in good order and enjoy the confidence of the contracting officer and staff in A/LM/AQM. However, the resource office failed, in one instance, to process a contract change order requested by the Iraq program manager when RONCO ceased to have responsibilities for assisting the National Mine Action Authority, which had ceased to exist after many of its officers were jailed for corruption. This appeared to be a single oversight, however, among innumerable responsibilities for a myriad of large programs. The resource office clearly understood and agreed with OIG's counseling to be particularly careful to process change orders.

PROGRAM OVERSIGHT

The chief resource officer, who serves as the A/LM/AQM COR, also failed to keep the contracting officer informed (as required by the COR letter of appointment) of some widespread and serious concerns over the appearance of possible improprieties by contractor RONCO.

The highly regarded on-site manager of RONCO's Department mine action contract contingent in Iraq resigned in summer 2009,

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ACCOUNTING

Financial allocation, approval, and disbursement procedures appeared to function normally, although some interlocutors lamented that the Director U.S. Foreign Assistance (F) process for approval of the funding for mine action initiatives took longer than when the process was handled by the Bureau of Resource Management. They believed the current process is unwieldy, with a \$20 million allocation package requiring as many as 40 clearances, 8 from F alone. It can thus take months to obtain allocation approval, even with contracts in place. A recent example was emergency mine action aid for Sri Lanka in which an urgent “blue tag” request took 57 days. The delay in the approval process has reportedly gratuitously caused hardship and extra work, including the need to halt programs and lay off program personnel until funding is approved.

Some interlocutors perceived little added value in the F process. No policy decisions are reportedly made, and there has not been a disapproval or change made to a request in recent memory. Requests bounce slowly from clearance to clearance, with frequent personnel turnover in F requiring an inordinate amount of briefing for inexperienced officials.

Some PM/WRA officials also believe the F budget building process is overcomplicated, with notional numbers and lengthy and elaborate F “Operational Plans” and “Performance Reports” that contain nothing beyond generalities, but require diversion of staff resources for preparation. Finally, the process has become so heavily riddled with automation and jargon that it is difficult to understand and explain to busy senior managers who have little time to sift through the dozens of pages of guidance and hundreds of pages of text. While the OIG heard these complaints from individuals in both PM/WRA and Embassy Baghdad, it did not pursue it with other bureaus. However, it is a subject that merits additional OIG attention in the near term.

A change in accounting methods favored by PM/WRA might enhance efficiency and accuracy. Formerly mines, UXO, and CWD (also known as small arms/light weapons—SA/LW—destruction) programs were located in separate offices within the Department, each with its own programs and separate NADR budget subaccount. The programs were consolidated into one office, PM/WRA, in 2003. However, the budget subaccounts remain separate, and PM/WRA feels, gratuitously unwieldy, leading too often to artificial and inaccurate accounting.

PM/WRA believes consolidating the three separate subaccounts into one NADR subaccount (to be called Conventional Weapons Destruction) would mean considerably less work in the field, PM and F. Under the current trifurcated subaccount structure, every activity related to budget planning, resource allocation, and the obligation mechanisms must be tracked and executed separately and then aggregated when total expenditure figures or analysis is required. These duplicative processes, if effectively merged, could greatly reduce the workload for all. This could be particularly useful if, as expected, programs and funding increase while staff increases lag.

PM/WRA has long desired a consolidation of accounts, but this would entail a lengthy and difficult process culminating in approval by Congress. This is no reason not to do the right thing, however. OIG made an informal recommendation that F and the Bureau of Resource Management carefully review the issue and advise, in writing, whether an attempt to gain Congressional approval is practical and advisable.

PROPERTY MANAGEMENT

The PM/WRA COR and the program manager have implemented and assured reasonable property controls over Contractor Acquired Property. Staffing and security considerations make field oversight difficult in Iraq, but the COR regularly visits the contractor's (RONCO) Washington headquarters to review invoices and property documentation. The COR was up-to-date on RONCO's recent revision of its "elaborate" property standard operating procedures. The COR maintains a copy of the current RONCO property inventory, which RONCO also provided to inspectors. PM/WRA has never found any reason to believe there are any problems with the RONCO property management system.

The PM/WRA program manager has conducted inventory spot checks during his visits to Iraq, which included a lengthy 3-month temporary duty assignment earlier this year. He is satisfied that RONCO has property management in hand, especially as RONCO had been sensitized during a property turnover to another contractor in another country when several vehicles were found to be missing. Time and security considerations prevented inspectors from doing an inventory spot check, but a review of the RONCO inventory list and observations during visits to two RONCO compounds in Iraq led inspectors to believe RONCO's property management controls likely meet reasonable standards in the current situation.

RE-COMPETITION OF MINE ACTION CONTRACT

OIG found reason for concern over the scheduled re-competition of the Department's large contract for mine action services originally scheduled for the spring of 2010. PM/WRA interlocutors expressed concern whether A/LM/AQM has the staff and resources to compete the contract in a timely manner. Additionally, inspectors found A/LM/AQM operating under the belief that the contract would not be re-competed. Finally, the last transition to a new contract in 2005 did not go smoothly. Contractors lamented the lack of transition time, and in at least one instance (Afghanistan) the rushed transition between contractors became rancorous. Inadequate property management controls in the same instance resulted in the inability to account for 27 vehicles that were never recovered. Regretfully, PM/WRA did not prepare a lessons learned document from the transition experience. Many key Department officials during the last transition have either transferred from the involved

organizations or retired. PM/WRA will have to take care that problems do not again arise in any future transitions. OIG recommended in its November 2009 report on the Afghan mine action program that the Bureau of Political Military Affairs, in coordination with and the Bureau of Administration, prepare and agree on a plan for bidding, awarding, and implementing the new mine action contract in 2010.

The Bureaus of Political Military Affairs and Administration advised that the current Department mine action contract (which encompasses RONCO in the case of Iraq) will be extended for 6 months. The OIG-recommended plan is largely completed, and the extra months should allow for its effective implementation.

STAFFING

A large number of knowledgeable interlocutors told the OIG inspectors they believe PM/WRA is understaffed for the large number and scope of its programs, and OIG agrees. The program officer for Iraq and one contract assistant also manage programs in Jordan, Lebanon, and Yemen. This does not allow for sufficient travel, planning, and oversight. The COR and the resources office also manage far too many programs to allow for effective oversight.

PM/WRA has hired some contract personnel and is correctly planning to increase the size of its resource and planning staff with additional Civil Service positions. This should help alleviate the staffing problems.

PM/WRA has managed its staffing shortfalls by relying on an experienced, dedicated, and able staff, which has made the now traditional attempts to work harder and more effectively. However, in January 2010, PM/ WRA lost its experienced and able chief resources officer and a similarly able program manager. Again, the Assistant Secretary will have to watch PM/WRA carefully to assure effective oversight of its programs.

EMBASSY MINE ACTION OFFICER

The Department and the embassy have wisely established a mine action officer position in the political-military section of the embassy. The position has been filled since May 2009 by a Foreign Service officer. Previously, the port-

folio had been managed intermittently by a series of employees on temporary duty, often assisted by a military warrant officer. The temporary duty personnel were in every case effective mine action experts and able program administrators. They worked through some difficult times and challenges and merit appreciation. The new permanent position in the embassy is beginning to provide the program the additional profile and attention it needs. As of April 2010, post reporting indicates that with the support of the embassy front office, the new mine action officer has opened communication with the U.S. Agency for International Development, public affairs section, office of provincial affairs, economic section, and office of assistance transition.

The current mine action officer, who acted as control officer for the inspectors, is forming a solid understanding of the program and its problems. The officer is beginning to travel as security and circumstance allow, and has laid down a well-reasoned base of reporting. This reporting should also help the program receive more attention.

The mine action officer, however, has received little in the way of clear written guidance on the job responsibilities, especially in the administrative area. These responsibilities were previously laid out in the Humanitarian Demining Programs Policy and Procedures Manual. However, this manual has not been updated since at least 2003, and is no longer used. PM/WRA reports that mine action officers are expected to carry out some administrative responsibilities. These are not laid out in writing or reflected in mine action officers' work requirements statements.

Recommendation 5: The Bureau of Political Military Affairs should provide written guidance on the job responsibilities, especially administrative, and best practices for mine action officers. (Action: PM)

The mine action officer noted correctly at an October 2009 mine action workshop in Washington that the mine action portfolio could be located in any of a number of embassy sections. It need not necessarily be in the political-military section. He went no further, but he made a good point. As a humanitarian assistance program largely geared to relieving suffering and enabling economic development, mine action should be integrated into assistance activities. This would help promote coordination with other assistance programs. This is ultimately the embassy's decision; the mine action position can work well in the political-military section, and it works well in the political-military section

at Embassy Kabul, PM/WRA's other large mine action program. Inspectors, however, made an informal recommendation that the embassy increase coordination between the mine action officer and the embassy coordinator for cooperation transition.

SECURITY

Security concerns seriously hamper not only program operations, but program oversight. Travel outside the International Zone is logistically difficult and cumbersome, and therefore limited. Visits to RONCO and IMCO offices 10 minutes outside the International Zone required a large advance security detail and over a dozen accompanying American guards for an inspectors' party of three. Plans for such movements must be made with considerable advance notice. Persons availing themselves of such security must stick to schedules. Travel outside Baghdad is of course similarly restricted, and generally requires air assets. Even travel outside U.S. compounds in northern Iraq remains similarly restricted and resource-intensive.

Such logistics had made it difficult for the new mine action officer and previous temporary duty personnel to visit or oversee mine action contractors, grantees, and programs. The new mine action officer had never visited the new IMCO or RONCO compounds in Baghdad, the reopened IMCO base in Basra, nor any of the mine action operations in the northern, Kurdish-controlled, part of Iraq. As an entry-level officer, he was understandably reluctant to request the considerable resources required for travel. Inspectors were impressed, however, upon visits to the regional security offices in Baghdad and Erbil, to find these offices well-staffed and equipped, and allegedly able and ready to support all necessary tasks. Ultimately, though, as of January 2010, the resource-intensive nature of travel outside the International Zone continues to severely restrict the mine action officer's ability to adequately oversee programs. The officer has still not been able to visit Basra, or even the Department of Mine Action in Baghdad. As detailed above, this oversight is necessary.

Recommendation 6: Embassy Baghdad, in coordination with the Bureau of Political Military Affairs, should develop and implement an annual plan for the project manager and embassy mine action officer to conduct site visits. (Action: Embassy Baghdad, in coordination with PM)

PROGRAM MANAGEMENT

HUMANITARIAN MINE ACTION CONTRACTORS AND GRANTEES

RONCO

The OIG team found that RONCO had fulfilled the terms of the contract task order it won for the Iraq mine action program in 2005. The contract runs for 5 years, until May 2010, and cost about \$90 million over that period. Some of this funding was passed through to IMCO.

RONCO is tasked with providing:

- technical assistance, oversight, and mentoring to the Iraq mine action NGO;
- technical assistance and mentoring to the Iraqi mine action authority; and
- Two fully equipped protective security details for program security.

Note that RONCO does not do clearance operations itself under the Department contract.

RONCO employs approximately 16 expatriates and 244 Iraqis to carry out its responsibilities. The expatriates include a project manager, several EOD technical advisors and trainers. Five of the expatriates belong to the security detail and are recruited from Jordan. Iraqis serve as guards, cooks, translators, and administrators.

Inspectors questioned the need for such a high number of expatriates relative to RONCO responsibilities and the number of already trained IMCO employees, especially when there were no ongoing clearance operations. Presumably, however, IMCO will now receive clearance taskings and staffing and workload will have to be reassessed.

Recommendation 7: The Bureau of Political Military Affairs should develop and implement a more specific model for determining the ratio of expatriate contractor staff to national staff at humanitarian mine action organizations, including a baseline assessment of the capacity of the local nongovernmental organizations and of the National Mine Authority to provide a realistic way to assess proposals for the need of training/support personnel. (Action: PM)

RONCO runs a successful security program for itself and IMCO, and assists other mine action personnel and visitors as needed. It utilizes Iraqi guards under the supervision of third-country nationals.

U.S. Government mine action officials utilize contractor security in some countries in order to more easily visit projects in the field. RONCO cannot provide the sole security for the embassy mine action officer and visiting PM/WRA officials, U.S. Government employees in Iraq must now use embassy security details accompanied by RSO personnel.

Inspectors paid a quick visit to the RONCO armory. The weapons appeared properly inventoried and stored. RONCO expatriate personnel, the majority of whom are former military personnel, regularly practice with the weapons.

All expatriate employees interviewed expressed satisfaction and confidence in their guard program.

Iraq Mine and UXO Clearance Organization

IMCO was established in September 2003 and was the first indigenous NGO in Iraq dedicated to mine clearance. It currently has approximately 250 employees of which 180 are trained in clearance operations. It has utilized dogs and manual deminers in its clearance operations, and in October 2009 took possession of its first mechanical demining equipment. In addition to clearance operations IMCO has done mine risk education, operational surveying and provided training to other clearance organizations and to the Iraqi security services on both EOD and mine clearance techniques. As noted in Context, however, IMCO has run into problems with the Iraqi MOD, and its clearance operations have been severely limited. The November 5, 2009, decision by the Iraqi Directorate of Mine Action to accredit IMCO signals new opportunities for U.S.-funded mine action.

From 2003 until the summer of 2009 IMCO's offices were located in the International Zone, complicating relationships with many Iraqi Government offices and exposing IMCO staff to additional security threats while transiting to and from work. The new headquarters is located next to the RONCO site near the Swedish Embassy, located approximately 10 minutes outside of the International Zone. However the bulk of the operational staff has moved from the Baghdad area to the operational base at Az Zubayr near Basra.

Mines Advisory Group

The Department has productively funded MAG, which is a Nobel Laureate with worldwide experience in all facets of mine action. It is a nonpolitical, secular NGO, registered in Britain and the United States as a charity. It has operated successfully in the Kurdish areas of northern Iraq since 1992. MAG currently employs 500 Kurdish deminers and staff, utilizing the full tool box of mine action capabilities. Its records show it has cleared over 59 million square meters of hazardous area since 1992 and destroyed almost 1.8 million mines and pieces of UXO. It also has a conventional weapons destruction capability. Seven expatriates manage MAG's operations.

PM/WRA began funding MAG in 2003 and has provided over \$20 million, which now accounts for over 40 percent of MAG's clearance totals.

MAG receives funding from Germany, Japan, Belgium, Ireland and Sweden but the worldwide economic crisis has led to a decline in support. MAG therefore recently closed one of its bases, near Erbil, and laid off about 160 employees. U.S. support is also scheduled to decline, even though there is plenty of work yet to be done.

OIG believes MAG merits continued healthy funding, and made an informal recommendation that PM/WRA reconsider its funding level for FY2010.

United Nations Development Program

The UNDP mine action program, almost totally funded by PM/WRA (\$684,299 in 2009), has been useful in spearheading the international community's drive to promote mine action in Iraq. The UN's chief mine action officer has many years of experience in Iraq. While resident in Jordan, the chief mine action officer spends about half his time in Iraq. The UN officer is ably assisted by UN mine action technical assistants resident in the country.

Several interlocutors told inspectors that the U.S. imprimatur on mine action can be counterproductive, making it appear as an American program with counterinsurgency, para-military overtones. The OIG team found that the UNDP plays a helpful role as the visible lead in the international community's mine action efforts. OIG found, for the same reasons, that UNDP should take the lead in mentoring and supporting the new Iraqi DMA, which is the approach supported by PM/WRA.

iMMAP(Information Management & Mine Action Program)

A \$1.3 million grant to iMMAP for FY 2008 continued to fund the completion of the valuable survey of hazardous areas in the south and central part of Iraq. It also provided crucial training for mine action authorities on a mine data base, and for a victims assistance program in the north. iMMAP has been working on mine action in Iraq since 2004, coordinating the Landmine Impact Survey and training Iraqis on database management.

Marshall Legacy Institute

The Marshall Legacy Institute, through a \$1 million grant from PM/WRA, has allowed the MAG mine action program in the north of Iraq to successfully integrate mine dog detection teams into their already highly effective manual and mechanical clearance operations.

In FY 2009, the Marshall Legacy Institute provided three Bosnian Mine Dog Detection teams to work with MAG in northern Iraq, and six dogs and associated training for the development of integrated mine dog detection teams with Kurdish handlers. The success of this program has countered a bias against the use of dogs in the north stemming from a poorly planned and executed program managed by the United Nations in the early part of the last decade. Marshall's 5-year objective is to create a mine dog NGO in northern Iraq that would be able to supply trained dog teams to operate anywhere within Iraq or the immediate region.

Victims Assistance

Victims assistance is only a small part of the overall PM/WRA Iraq mine action budget, but a worthy one. PM/WRA has provided grants to a U.S. Rotary club to help establish an orthopedics care unit in the south of Iraq. It has

also funded the iMMAP program in the north which also includes an orthopedics component. IMCO has expressed a desire to establish a victims assistance program, but this may be reconsidered if IMCO is now able to undertake mine clearance.

PUBLIC DIPLOMACY

The public diplomacy aspects of U.S. support for mine action in Iraq is more complicated than in many other countries. While there is little widespread public opposition to the elimination of minefields or the clearance of unexploded ordnance, there remains significant suspicion of programs and organizations supported by the United States, especially in the southern and central regions. As mentioned earlier, IMCO staff has been targeted because the NGO is seen as a U.S. creation. While IMCO sometimes receives requests from village/provincial leaders to undertake clearance operations, those leaders have been unable to consistently promise a secure environment for IMCO employees. Developing U.S. public diplomacy programs that highlight the success of IMCO adds to that potential risk.

In the north, the situation is far different. Public support for mine action programs is more widespread and PM/WRA's contractor, MAG, is well known and respected throughout the region. MAG staff was supportive of greater public diplomacy programming, including high-level participation in turnover ceremonies. Even with this interest there has been virtually no public diplomacy programming undertaken to highlight U.S. support for mine action. No member of the Regional Reconstruction Team based in Erbil had visited a clearance site in at least the past 2 years, nor had any member of the Baghdad team, even though the security situation in the region is much safer than in the south and central region.

A public diplomacy employee now working with the embassy mine action officer in Baghdad impressed the OIG team with the detailed support program he was developing for a mine risk education campaign with IMCO. However, the program has yet to be implemented.

Recommendation 8: The Bureau of Political Military Affairs, in coordination with Embassy Baghdad, should produce a semiannual fact sheet detailing the outcomes of the mine action program in Iraq and provide the fact sheet to Embassy Baghdad's public diplomacy section for placement with the Iraqi press and use on the embassy's external Web site. (Action: PM, in coordination with Embassy Baghdad)

Recommendation 9: Embassy Baghdad should implement a plan to have the embassy mine action officer, public diplomacy office, and the executive office develop at least two press events per year involving the turning over of cleared land to Iraqi communities. (Action: Embassy Baghdad)

Recommendation 10: Embassy Baghdad should implement a plan to have the embassy mine action officer work with the public diplomacy office and the executive office to develop at least one press event per year centered on mine risk education and a similar event involving the victim's assistance grant recipients. (Action: Embassy Baghdad)

FORMAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1: The Bureau of Political Military Affairs should update its standard operating procedures so that in future situations that require setting up a mine action program without the time to conduct its standard country planning process, it has an alternate procedure in place to ensure that there are performance metrics to track program implementation. (Action: PM)

Recommendation 2: Embassy Baghdad should raise the mine action program with the highest levels of the Government of Iraq and seek to ascertain the level of commitment and cooperation. (Action: Embassy Baghdad)

Recommendation 3: The Bureau of Political Military Affairs should review Government of Iraq cooperation and reallocate Iraq mine action resources to programs where they are more effective, either within or outside of Iraq, if appropriate. (Action: PM)

Recommendation 4: Embassy Baghdad, in coordination with Bureau of Political Military Affairs, should establish and implement a schedule for a ranking embassy officer to visit a mine action activity outside the embassy at least twice a year and for a Department official of at least office director rank to visit once a year. (Action: Embassy Baghdad, in coordination with PM)

Recommendation 5: The Bureau of Political Military Affairs should provide written guidance on the job responsibilities, especially administrative, and best practices for mine action officers. (Action: PM)

Recommendation 6: Embassy Baghdad, in coordination with the Bureau of Political Military Affairs, should develop and implement an annual plan for the project manager and embassy mine action officer to conduct site visits. (Action: Embassy Baghdad, in coordination with PM)

Recommendation 7: The Bureau of Political Military Affairs should develop and implement a more specific model for determining the ratio of expatriate contractor staff to national staff at humanitarian mine action organizations, including a baseline assessment of the capacity of the local nongovernmental organizations and of the National Mine Authority to provide a realistic way to assess proposals for the need of training/support personnel. (Action: PM)

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INFORMAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Informal recommendations cover operational matters not requiring action by organizations outside the inspected unit and/or the parent regional bureau. Informal recommendations will not be subject to the OIG compliance process. However, any subsequent OIG inspection or on-site compliance review will assess the mission's progress in implementing the informal recommendations.

OIG found little indication in Washington outside the PM/WRA program office of the seriousness of the problems the Iraqi program was encountering. This might be in part because the program was in the hands of capable, dedicated program managers. Money was regularly allocated, contracts and grants were concluded, people were hired, people were trained, plans were made, and equipment was purchased. Periodic reports by contractors and grantees noted optimistically that the Government of Iraq's commitment was about to improve. The program was, as reported annually in planning documents, robust. Only the results were less than robust.

Informal Recommendation 1: The Bureau of Political Military Affairs should design and implement procedures to provide Assistant Secretary and deputy assistant secretary focus on the results of the mine action programs in Iraq.

PM/WRA believes consolidating the three separate subaccounts into one NADR subaccount (to be called Conventional Weapons Destruction) would mean considerably less work in the field, in PM, and in F. Under the current trifurcated subaccount structure, every activity related to budget planning, resource allocation, and the obligation mechanisms must be tracked and executed separately and then aggregated when total expenditure figures or analysis is required. These duplicative processes, if effectively merged, could greatly reduce the workload for all. This could be particularly useful if, as expected, programs and funding increase while staff increases lag.

Informal Recommendation 2: The Bureau of Political Military Affairs should again request consolidation of mine, unexploded ordnance, and conventional weapons destruction accounts into a single Nonproliferation, Antiterrorism, Demining, and Related Programs account to reflect the bureau's 2003 reorganization.

Informal Recommendation 3: The Bureau of Political Military Affairs should request the Director of Foreign Assistance and the Bureau of Resource Management to review the request and advise in writing whether an attempt to gain Congressional approval for the change is practical and advisable.

As a humanitarian assistance program largely geared to relieving suffering and enabling economic development, mine action should be integrated into assistance activities. This would help promote coordination with other assistance programs. This is ultimately the embassy's decision; the mine action position can work well in the political military section, and it works well in the political military section at Embassy Kabul, PM/WRA's other large mine action program.

Informal Recommendation 4: The Bureau Political Military Affairs should develop and implement a plan for Embassy Baghdad to increase coordination between the mine action officer and the embassy coordinator for cooperation transition.

The Mines Advisory Group's successful work in northern Iraq receives funding from Germany, Japan, Belgium, Ireland, and Sweden but the worldwide economic crisis has led to a decline in support. MAG therefore recently closed one of its bases, near Erbil, and laid off about 160 employees. U.S. support is also scheduled to decline, even though there is plenty of work yet to be done.

Informal Recommendation 5: The Bureau of Political Military Affairs should continue funding the Mines Advisory Group at the FY 2009 level through FY 2011, contingent on the availability of funds, to allow for the fuller use of the recently introduced mine dog detection team capability.

PRINCIPAL OFFICIALS

Embassy Baghdad	Name	Arrival Date
Ambassador	Christopher Hill	05/09
Deputy Chief of Mission	Robert Ford	07/08
Assistant Chief of Mission	Patricia Haslach	06/09

Chiefs of Sections:

Political Military	Cameron Munter	05/09
Political Military Mine Action Officer	Benjamin Reames	05/09
Provincial Affairs	Greta Holtz	07/09
Public Affairs Section	Thomas Dougherty	05/09

Other Agencies:

Department of Defense		
U.S. Forces	BG John McMahon	03/09
CSTC	Major Mike Schnoover	07/08

Bureau of Political Military Affairs/Office of Weapons Reduction and Abatement

Office Director	James Lawrence
Deputy Office Director	Col. Yori Escalante
Iraq Program Manager	Dennis Hadrick
Director, Resources	Timothy Groen
Public Diplomacy/Partnerships	Stacy Davis

ABBREVIATIONS

A/LM/AQM	Bureau of Administration's Office of Acquisition Management
CWD	Conventional weapons destruction
COR	Contracting officer's representative
Department	Department of State
DMA	Director of Mine Action
DOD	Department of Defense
EOD	Explosive ordnance disposal
F	Director U.S. Foreign Assistance
IMCO	Iraq Mine and Unexploded Ordnance Clearance Organization
MAG	Mines Advisory Group
MOD	Iraqi Ministry of Defense
NADR	Nonproliferation, Antiterrorism, Demining, and Related Programs
NGO	Nongovernmental organization
OIG	Office of Inspector General
PM	Political Military
PM/WRA	Bureau of Political Military Affairs/Office of Weapons Removal and Abatement
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UXO	Unexploded ordnance

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