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WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 03, 2005

Iraqi Defense Nowhere NEAR Ready

by Michael in New York on [8/03/2005 01:07:00 AM](#)

Bush has been playing numbers with the Iraqi trained troops for years. The MSM should be pounding away at this every day. Bush claims anywhere from 140,000 to 170,000 Iraqi troops, but then adds *sotto voce* that they fall into "three groups" -- as in 2000 trained and capable of fighting on their own, 9000 capable of fighting if we help them, and about 150,000 who are no more prepared to secure peace in Iraq any more than you or I. And even if they were fully trained (which they're not), there's a growing mountain of evidence that the Iraqis can't even come close to properly equipping those numbers of soldiers anyway. Can't do much good if you don't have a gun.

So the insurgency is stronger than ever and Bush has all but announced "Mission (Re)Accomplished!" and told everyone we'll be pulling out in the spring as long as things don't get worse. (Things could get worse??!!)

But here's a quiet little story saying the Iraqi Defense Ministry may not quite be up to the task of securing the peace just yet.

The shortcomings of the ministry, which was overhauled under the American occupation authorities last year, are a growing concern to the American commanders. Hoping to withdraw large numbers of the 135,000 American combat troops in the next year, these commanders say their plans hinge on a functioning ministry. If American troops leave without one in place, they say, the Iraqi Army could quickly collapse.

How's this for a money quote?

"What are lacking are the systems that pay people, that supply people, that recruit people, that replace the wounded and AWOL, and systems that promote people and provide spare parts," said a top American commander in Iraq, who asked not to be identified because his assessment of Iraqi abilities went beyond the military's public descriptions.

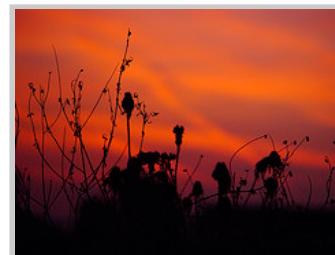
But we've got a plan:

So concerned are military planners that, **in the event that American combat troops do indeed leave over the next year, they are preparing to keep large numbers of support troops and supplies in Iraq or in nearby countries,** ready to assist Iraqi units fighting insurgents, the American commander said.

And here's an AP story in the Toronto Star about **Iraqi investigations into hundreds of millions of dollars that have been wasted or gone missing.** (Thanks to threader aCanadianreader for pointing us to this.)Oy vey.



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