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WEDNESDAY, JULY 20, 2005

**Iraqi News: Bad To Worse**by Michael in New York on [7/20/2005 10:06:00 PM](#)

Now the **Sunnis are withdrawing from the panel working on the Constitution**; they say they aren't being protected enough. That ain't good.

Without inclusive participation in the entire process, the civil conflict could worsen, with frustrated Sunnis, who make up a fifth of the population, continuing to take up arms against the Shiites, Kurds and Americans. A suicide bomber detonated an explosive belt this morning at an Iraqi army recruiting center in Baghdad, killing at least 6 men and injuring at least 29 other people, hospital officials. During the war, more than 100 men, mostly potential recruits, have been killed in frequent suicide bombings at the center, located at the defunct Muthana military airport.

The sheik of a mosque in southern Baghdad, Muhammad Ali, was gunned down after morning prayers. Far to the south, in the conservative Shiite city of Basra, the deputy head of the provincial council, Hussein al-Daraji, was shot dead, said Abdul Zahra Sameer, another council member. Mr. Daraji belonged to the Fadilah Party, founded by a radical Shiite cleric.

And as we've mentioned, the **Iraqi death toll is conservatively measured at 25,000 and counting**. Hmm, Bush hates facts, but let's see. About 1,900 US casualties plus oh 10,000 wounded. (He really doesn't like our mentioning the wounded.) Plus our allies, throw in another 2000 dead and wounded. Plus 25,000 dead Iraqis and presumably many more wounded. At the very least, we're looking at 50,000 to 60,000 dead and wounded people. How many would have died if Hussein had remained in power? My question right now is how many would have died if the post-invasion hadn't been bungled so completely?

Finally, the Pentagon tersely admits that **Iraqi units are woefully unprepared to fight the insurgency on their own**. In direct response to Congressional demands for some actual FACTS, the Pentagon released a seven sentence statement to Congress that was leaked (did I say "leaked?" Who does that remind me of?) to the NYT.

About half of Iraq's new police units are still in training and cannot conduct operations, while the other half of the police units and two-thirds of the new army battalions are only "partially capable" of carrying out counterinsurgency missions, and only with American help, according to a newly declassified Pentagon assessment.

Only "a small number" of Iraqi security forces are capable of fighting the insurgency without American assistance, while about one-third of the army is capable of "planning, executing and sustaining counterinsurgency operations" with allied support, the analysis said.

In fact, according to the information that Sen. Joe Biden said he got from the military, of the roughly 150,000 Iraqi units, only about 2000 can fight on their own and maybe 10,000 can fight at all -- even with our help. That means more than 90% of the soldiers they claim are in training can't even fight with our help. And even the ones who can fight are poorly equipped thanks to rampant corruption.

Bad news? Quick, someone tell the Pentagon so they can revise their report.

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