

U.S. prods Iraqi lawmakers to act

by UPI

BAGHDAD -- Iraqi parliamentarians were urged by a senior U.S. official visiting Baghdad to take advantage of declining violence to get major bills passed. Deputy Secretary of State John Negroponte, a former ambassador to Iraq, said at a news conference political bickering must be reined in for reconstruction progress to continue, the New York Times reported. "It's one thing to have brought the violence under some semblance of control, but it's another matter now to follow up with the necessary reconstruction and stabilization projects that will safeguard regions and protect them from this type of violence," Negroponte said. Among the measures Negroponte said the United States considers crucial is an oil revenue-sharing law, and a second bill that would allow more former members of Saddam Hussein's Baath Party to acquire government jobs, the Times said. Negroponte made the remarks after spending a week meeting with Iraqi provincial leaders, the newspaper said.

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