

Petraeus says progress in Iraq not enough

by UPI

BAGHDAD -- Iraqi leaders haven't taken advantage of a reduction in violence to progress in resolving political differences, U.S. Army Gen. David Petraeus said. The top U.S. commander in Iraq said in a *The Washington Post* interview that "no one" in the Iraqi or U.S. governments "feels that there has been sufficient progress by any means in the area of national reconciliation," or in providing basic public service. Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki's government passed laws on the budget, provincial elections and amnesty for certain detainees but deferred action on some of its most important legislative goals. Petraeus, testifying before Congress in April, said Iraqi leaders have an opportunity to act. "We're going to fight like the dickens" to maintain gains in security and "where we can, to try and build on it," he said. Several factors may account for recent violence in Iraq, Petraeus said, including increased U.S. and Iraqi operations against insurgents in Mosul and insurgents' trying to restore some havens in Baghdad. Petraeus returned to Iraq in 2007 to implement a counterinsurgency strategy, which included a surge of 30,000 U.S. troops, intended to reduce violence so Iraqi leaders could pass laws and actions to ease sectarian and political differences.

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