

Expert: Iraq, Afghan base wiring dangerous

by UPI

WASHINGTON -- Shoddy wiring throughout U.S. bases in Iraq and Afghanistan pose great risks for American troops, a top U.S. Army inspector says.

Jim Childs, a master electrician and the top civilian expert in an Army safety survey, called the wiring he inspected "some of the worst electrical work I've ever seen." More than half the 30,000 buildings his group checked "failed miserably," he said.

"With the buildings the way they are, we're playing Russian roulette," Childs told CNN in Washington after returning from Iraq.

Taking part in a yearlong review aimed at correcting electrical hazards on U.S. bases, Childs said problems are "everywhere" with thousands of buildings in Iraq and Afghanistan so badly wired they pose the serious risk of death or injury, CNN said.

Eighteen U.S. troops have died by electrocution of various sources since 2003.

Childs said the "large majority" of the buildings examined in Iraq had been wired by KBR, a U.S. company that he said he expected would follow American standards. But the results, he told CNN, were "just horrible."

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