

Baghdad merchants scoff at McCain's report

by UPI

BAGHDAD - Merchants at Baghdad's oldest market say reports by U.S. Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., that security has improved were fallacies and unrealistic. McCain led a congressional delegation through the market on Sunday and afterwards at a news conference told reporters they were able to mingle freely and chat with merchants. "Things are better and there are encouraging signs," McCain said. However, a New York Times correspondent said that before the visit about 100 U.S. soldiers restricted entry to the market, redirected traffic away from it and snipers were posted on rooftops while attack helicopters hovered overhead. Ali Jassim Faiyad, the owner of an electrical appliances shop in the market, was shocked Monday to hear of McCain's comments. "They paralyzed the market when they came," Faiyad said. "This was only for the media. This will not change anything." On Feb. 12, 61 people were killed and scores wounded in a three-pronged attack at the market which involved two vehicle bombs and a roadside bomb, the Times said.

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