

Report: Surge 'far short' of initial goal

by UPI

BAGHDAD -- Troops sent to Baghdad this year as part of a new security plan are far short of accomplishing the plan's initial goal, The New York Times reported Sunday.

Citing military commanders and an internal military assessment, the newspaper reported that American and Iraqi forces were able "to protect the population" and "maintain physical influence over" just 146 of Baghdad's 457 neighborhoods -- three months after the new security plan was launched with the deployment of thousands of U.S. and Iraqi troops to the capital.

The assessment, a one-page report, is a summary of reports from brigade and battalion commanders in Baghdad.

Violence has somewhat subsided in many areas, but it is especially persistent in western Baghdad neighborhoods where Shiite and Sunni Muslims live, senior officers told the newspaper.

Brig. Gen. Vincent K. Brooks, the deputy commander of the First Cavalry Division, which has responsibility for Baghdad, told the Times the operation "is at a difficult point right now, to be sure."

He said progress has been hampered in part because Iraqi police and army units have not provided all the forces they had promised, and in some cases had been performing poorly.

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