

U.S. soldiers seen in Iraq until '09

by UPI

BAGHDAD -- The U.S. top command in Baghdad foresees a significant American military role in Iraq for at least the next two years, it was reported Tuesday. The plan calls for restoring security in Baghdad and other local areas by the summer of 2008 with "sustainable security" nationwide by the summer of 2009, The New York Times reported. The detailed Joint Campaign Plan elaborated on the new strategy U.S. President George Bush signaled in January when he decided to send five more U.S. combat brigades to Iraq. The plan, which doesn't explicitly address troop levels, assumed continued U.S. involvement to train soldiers, act as partners with Iraqi forces and fight terrorist cells in Iraq, the Times said. The goals appear ambitious, given the immensity of the challenges presented in Iraq and the debate in Congress to bring troops home, the Times said. The plan was developed by U.S. Army Gen. David H. Petraeus, the senior American commander in Iraq, and Ryan C. Crocker, the U.S. ambassador to Baghdad.

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