

Report suggests scrapping Iraqi police

by UPI

WASHINGTON - A U.S. congressional commission will recommend purging Iraq's police force of corrupt officers and Shiite militants suspected in sectarian killings. The independent commission, headed by Gen. James L. Jones, the former top U.S. commander in Europe, suggests the force's units "be scrapped" and reshaped into a smaller, elite organization, a senior official familiar with the findings told The New York Times. The commission's report is likely to garner attention since it focuses directly on the merits of Iraq's army and police force. The Times said the report could bolster the position of Democrats in Congress and other critics of the Bush administration's Iraq strategy who say a fundamental shift in U.S. policy is required. However, an attempt to disband an Iraqi force could be risky, given the violence that followed the U.S. decision to dissolve the Iraqi army shortly after the invasion of 2003. Geoff Morrell, a spokesman for Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates, said a U.S. effort to retrain the Iraqi police forces is under way, noting Pentagon officials believed such an effort could succeed in removing sectarianism from the ranks without requiring a complete overhaul of the force.

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