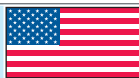


# Plans to slash Iraq troop numbers

London and Washington are considering plans to reduce troop strengths in Iraq next year following Iraqi elections due in December. Basic policy remains that troops will remain "as long as is needed", but it is expected that fewer will be required and control will be handed to Iraqi forces



**British troops:** Cut from 8,500 to 3,000 by mid-2006, reducing costs from £1bn a year to £500m.  
**3,000 more troops for Afghanistan**



**U.S. troops:** Reduced from 140,000 to 60,000 by early 2006. **Control to be handed to Iraqi forces in 14 out of 18 provinces**

**Italy:** Plans to withdraw first 300 of its 3,000 soldiers from Iraq in September

**Other withdrawals – 2004:** Spain, 1,400 troops; Honduras, 370; Thailand, 460; Dominican Republic, 300; Hungary, 300; Nicaragua, 115; New Zealand, 60; Philippines, 51; Tonga, 44. **2005:** Portugal, 120; Moldova, 25

**Planned withdrawals:** Ukraine, 1,700; Netherlands, 1,263; Bulgaria, 455. Under U.S. pressure **Poland** has backed off plan to withdraw its 2,400 troops

**Five northern provinces:** Likely handed to **Kurdish peshmerga** paramilitary

