

INVITE ADMIRAL FALLON TO TELL US IF WE'RE SAFER

You've no doubt heard that General Petraeus has no fucking clue whether sustaining the surge and succeeding in Iraq will make us safer. (To some degree, this is appropriate, because his command is limited to Iraq, and his job is to do the best job in Iraq he can.) You've also probably heard that some at the Pentagon have their own plan to get us out of the Iraq, fast.

NEWSWEEK has learned that a separate internal report being prepared by a Pentagon working group will "differ substantially" from Petraeus's recommendations, according to an official who is privy to the ongoing discussions but would speak about them only on condition of anonymity. An early version of the report, which is currently being drafted and is expected to be completed by the beginning of next year, will "recommend a very rapid reduction in American forces: as much as two-thirds of the existing force very quickly, while keeping the remainder there." The strategy will involve unwinding the still large U.S. presence in big forward operation bases and putting smaller teams in outposts. "There is interest at senior levels [of the Pentagon] in getting alternative views" to Petraeus, the official said. Among others, Centcom commander Admiral William Fallon is known to want to draw down faster than Petraeus.

I have a suggestion for John Warner (who can get away with anything, now that he has announced his retirement). Invite Admiral Fallon to answer your question. Hell, while you're at it, have

General Pace, head of the Joint Chiefs, answer it too. Invite them in to the SFRC **tomorrow**, before Ed Gillespie's PR elves get to them to give them a script.

I have a feeling both Fallon and Pace have a clearer idea whether winning in Iraq—with the financial and troop commitments it would demand—would make us safer.