

**THE BLOG**

The Magnificent 37

By Marty Kaplan09/13/2007 10:25 pm ET | **Updated** May 25, 2011

In case you're wondering what other nations make up the 37-nation coalition of forces in Iraq cited by President Bush in his Oval Office speech, you may need a scorecard.

Moldova is in (12 troops), but Tonga is out. Bosnia & Herzegovina contributed as many as 37 soldiers in theater, but Slovakia and Hungary have pulled out. El Salvador has stayed, but Nicaragua has gone. Australia, yes; New Zealand, not so much. Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia, you betcha; Denmark and Norway, gone. Mongolia is in, but Ukraine is out. It appears that Kazakhstan's 29 troops, and Armenia's 46, are hanging in there, but Thailand has left the building. For more stats, there's always the Google.

All those troops' lives are, of course, as precious to their families, nations and Gods as are the lives of Americans serving in Iraq sacred to their kin and communities and Creators. So, too, though it may be hard for some to imagine, are Iraqi lives.

But when George W. Bush tries to bolster his case for a permanent US military presence in Iraq by citing the splendid international alliance he's mustered, you have to wonder whether what he really wants us to believe —and what he actually may believe himself — is that the contributions he's strongarmed from Fiji, Albania et al are just as impressive as the 160,000 troops that his old man wrung from the likes of Saudi Arabia, Egypt and France.

Sometimes it's just too hard to suppress the suspicion that all of us are just bit players in a delusional son's deadly Oedipal psychodrama.

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