



## Fact Sheet: Five Years Later: New Strategy Improving Security In Iraq

 [President Bush Discusses Global War on Terror](#)

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**Today, President Bush spoke at the Pentagon to mark the fifth anniversary of Operation Iraqi Freedom.** The past five years have been a critical time in history. U.S. troops should be proud of their partnership with Iraqis and the progress in Iraq.

- **The battle in Iraq is noble, necessary, and just.**
- **Defeating the enemy in Iraq will make it less likely we will face this enemy here at home.** The terrorists who murder the innocent in the streets of Baghdad also want to murder the innocent in the streets of American cities.
- **Because we acted against Saddam Hussein, the world is better and America is safer.** Because we acted, Saddam Hussein no longer fills fields with the remains of innocent men, women, and children, invades his neighbors, pays the families of suicide bombers, or defies the will of the United Nations. Saddam's torture chambers, rape rooms, and children's prisons have been closed for good.

### The "Surge" Strategy Has Produced Dramatic Results In Iraq

**The U.S. is carrying out a new strategy in Iraq based on providing population security.** In late 2006, the U.S. reviewed its strategy and gave our troops a new mission under General Petraeus' command centered on:

- Working with Iraq's security forces to protect the Iraqi people.
- Pursuing the enemy in its strongholds.
- Denying sanctuary to the terrorists.

**The surge is working.** Since all the surge forces began operating in mid-2007:

- Overall violence in Iraq is significantly down.
- Civilian deaths are down.
- Sectarian killings are down.
- Attacks on American forces are down.
- Coalition forces have captured or killed thousands of extremists in Iraq, including hundreds of

key al Qaeda leaders and operatives.

- We have begun bringing some of our troops home as a "return on success."

**More than 90,000 concerned local citizens are now helping to protect their communities from terrorists, insurgents, and extremists.** The "Awakening" movement began in Anbar in 2006, when Sunni tribal leaders grew tired of al Qaeda's brutality and started a popular uprising. As this effort succeeded, it inspired other Iraqis to take up the fight.

- **To take advantage of this opportunity, we sent 4,000 additional Marines to help these brave Iraqis drive al Qaeda from the province.**
- **The government in Baghdad has stepped forward with a surge of its own by adding more than 100,000 new Iraqi soldiers and police during the past year.** Iraqi troops have fought bravely, and thousands have given their lives in this struggle.

**As we have fought al Qaeda, Coalition and Iraqi forces have also taken the fight to Shia extremist groups – many of them backed, financed, and armed by Iran.** A year ago these groups were on the rise. Today, these groups are increasingly isolated, and Iraqis of all faiths are putting their lives on the line to stop these extremists from hijacking Iraq's democracy.

**The U.S. has doubled the number of provincial reconstruction teams in Iraq.** Teams of civilian experts are serving in all 18 Iraqi provinces, and they are helping to strengthen responsible leaders, build up local economies, and bring Iraqis together so that reconciliation can happen from the ground up.

### **The Stakes In Iraq Are Great**

**The surge has opened the door to a major strategic victory in the broader war on terror.** In Iraq, we are witnessing the first large-scale Arab uprising against Osama bin Laden, his grim ideology, and his terror network.

- **The terrorist movement feeds on the appearance of inevitability and claims to rise on the tide of history, but the accomplishments of the surge are exposing this myth.**
- **Defeating al Qaeda in Iraq will show that men and women who love liberty can defeat the terrorists.**

**Al Qaeda terrorists in Mosul will suffer the same fate al Qaeda did elsewhere in Iraq.** American and Iraqi forces have driven the terrorists from many of the sanctuaries they once held and will relentlessly pursue those who have now gathered in and around Mosul.

**The challenge in the period ahead is to consolidate the gains we have made and seal the extremists' defeat.**

- Over the last five years, we have learned what happens when we pull our forces back too fast: terrorists and extremists step in, and establish safe havens where they can spread chaos and

carnage.

- General Petraeus has warned that too fast a drawdown could result in such an unraveling again.
- Any further drawdown will be based on conditions on the ground and the recommendations of our commanders and must not jeopardize the hard-fought gains our troops and civilians have made over the past year.

**While no one would argue that this war has not come at a high cost in lives and treasure, those costs are necessary when we consider the cost of a strategic victory for our enemies in Iraq.**

- Allowing our enemies to prevail in Iraq could lead to chaos.
- Al Qaeda would regain its lost sanctuaries and establish new ones – fomenting violence and terror that could spread beyond Iraq's borders.
- An emboldened al Qaeda with access to Iraq's oil resources could pursue its ambitions to acquire weapons of mass destruction to attack America and other free nations.

### **Political Progress Is Taking Place In Iraq**

**Millions of Iraqis have risked their lives to secure a democratic future for their nation, and America will not abandon them in their time of need.** The vast majority of Iraq's citizens want to live in peace, and they are showing their courage every day.

- In October 2005, Iraqi voters approved a new permanent constitution.
- In December 2005, nearly 12 million Iraqis braved car bombers and assassins to choose a permanent government in free elections under the new constitution.

**On February 3, 2008, Iraq's Presidency Council issued the Accountability and Justice Law, which will allow thousands of former Ba'athists to return to government jobs.**

**On February 13, 2008, the Council of Representatives passed two key pieces of legislation.**

- Amnesty Law:
  - The Government of Iraq's General Amnesty Law represents a benchmark in facilitating political reconciliation and the rule of law in Iraq. The General Amnesty Law addresses the scope of eligibility for amnesty for Iraqis in Iraqi detention facilities, whether they have been brought to trial or not. The law exempts from this amnesty those who have committed specific serious crimes, such as premeditated murder or kidnapping, and those who are subject to the death penalty.
- Fiscal Budget:
  - The \$48 billion Iraqi budget represents a 17 percent increase in spending over last year's budget, with a 23 percent increase in security expenditures. Capital funds allocated to the 15 provinces will increase over 50 percent, from \$2.1 billion to \$3.3 billion, reflecting the improved budget execution performance by provinces in 2007.

**The Iraqi government passed a pension law in late 2007.**

**The central government of Iraq continues to distribute oil revenue to provinces, even though the proposed oil law is still being negotiated.**

**The central government of Iraq reached its 2007 target of \$30.2 billion in budget revenue one month before the end of the year.**

**The Government of Iraq recently completed early repayment of its outstanding obligations to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and reached a new Stand-By Arrangement with the IMF.**

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