



For Immediate Release  
Office of the Press Secretary  
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## President's Radio Address

**THE PRESIDENT:** Good morning. Fifteen months ago this week, I announced the surge. And this week, General Petraeus and Ambassador Crocker gave Congress a detailed report on the results.

[President's Radio Address](#)

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Since the surge began, American and Iraqi forces have made significant progress. While there's more to be done, sectarian violence, civilian deaths, and military deaths are down. Improvements in security have helped clear the way for political and economic progress. The Iraqi government has passed a budget and three major "benchmark" laws. And many economic indicators are now pointed in the right direction.

Serious and complex challenges remain in Iraq. Yet with the surge, a major strategic shift has occurred. Fifteen months ago, extremists were sowing sectarian violence; today, many mainstream Sunni and Shia are actively confronting the extremists. Fifteen months ago, al Qaeda was using bases in Iraq to kill our troops and terrorize Iraqis; today, we have put al Qaeda on the defensive in Iraq, and now we are working to deliver a crippling blow. Fifteen months ago, Americans were worried about the prospect of failure in Iraq; today, thanks to the surge, we've revived the prospect of success in Iraq.

This week, General Petraeus reported that security conditions have improved enough to withdraw all five surge brigades. By July 31, the number of U.S. combat brigades in Iraq will be down 25 percent from the year before. Beyond that, General Petraeus says he will need time to assess how this reduced American presence will affect conditions on the ground before making recommendations on further reductions. I've told him he'll have time he needs to make his assessment.

Our job in the period ahead is to stand with the Iraqi government as it makes the transition to responsibility for its own security and its own destiny. So what would this transition look like? On the security front, we will stay on the offense, continue to support the Iraqi security forces, continue to transfer security responsibilities to them, and move over time into an overwatch role.

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Radio Address:

[2008](#)

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[2002](#)

[2001](#)

Radio Interviews:

On the economic front, Iraq's economy is growing. Iraq is assuming responsibility for almost all the funding of large-scale reconstruction projects, and our share of security costs is dropping as well. On the political front, Iraq is planning to hold elections that will provide a way for Iraqis to settle disputes through the political process instead of through violence.

[2006](#)

[2005](#)

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## FAQ

Our efforts are aimed at a clear goal: a free Iraq that can protect its people, support itself economically, and take charge of its own political affairs. And no one wants to achieve that goal more than the Iraqis themselves.

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The turnaround that our men and women in uniform have made possible in Iraq is a brilliant achievement. And we expect that, as conditions on the ground continue to improve, they will permit us to continue the policy of return on success.

I'm confident in our success because I know the valor of the young Americans who defend us. This week, I commemorated the sacrifice of Michael Monsoor, a Navy SEAL who gave his life in Iraq, and became the fourth Medal of Honor recipient in the war on terror. On September 29, 2006, Mike and two teammates had taken a position on a rooftop when an insurgent grenade landed on the roof. Mike threw himself onto the grenade. One of the survivors put it this way: "Mikey looked death in the face that day and said, 'You cannot take my brothers. I will go in their stead.'"

It is heroism like Michael Monsoor's that pays the cost of human freedom. Our prayers remain with Michael's family and with all the men and women who continue his noble fight. We look forward to the day when they return home in victory.

Thank you for listening.

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