



For Immediate Release
Office of the Press Secretary
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Background Briefing by Senior Administration Officials

Room 450
Eisenhower Executive Office Building

-  [Highlights of the Iraq Strategy Review \(PDF\)](#)
-  [Fact Sheet: The New Way Forward in Iraq](#)

12:25 P.M. EST

MR. SNOW: Hello, everybody. The ground rules are this is a background briefing by a senior administration official. We have promised some documents to you; those are still in production. We will notify you as soon as they are ready, but they will be ready for you well in advance of the President's speech tonight. They'll lay out a lot of the basics of the policy. Obviously, feel free to contact us with any questions you have afterward.

But in order to frame it up, I introduce SAO.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I'm going to try and give you a little feel for what the President is going to say tonight, but I'm going to try to do it in a way that walks you through the logic of the strategy review we've been through, and a little bit, the logic of the President's thinking and how I think you'll hear it tonight.

He will talk about the hopes we had at the end of 2005 for progress in 2006 on the political side, against the violence, and the prospects even for beginning to reduce our troops. He will say that that was dashed in 2006. And really what happened was sectarian violence got out ahead of Iraqi forces, it got out ahead of American forces, and it overwhelmed the political progress that we expected.

And he will then conclude that the situation in Iraq is unacceptable. It's unacceptable to the American people and it's unacceptable to him. He will make clear that our current strategy in Iraq is not working; that he has conducted an extensive review to develop a new strategy; that in the course of that review, two things became clear and really almost reflected a consensus, whether it was congressional leaders, foreign leaders, or the Iraq Study Group, and that is two things -- one, there are no silver bullets here, and secondly, America cannot afford to fail, but we must succeed.

So the challenge, then, is, what is a strategy for success? And you have to start that with, what is the diagnosis of the problem? And the problem, at this point, is the challenge of sectarian violence. It is