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Office of the Press Secretary
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Fact Sheet: Update on the New Iraq Strategy

Helping Iraq's Leaders Secure Their Population

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Today, President Bush Updated The American People On His

New Iraq Strategy. In January, President Bush and his Administration concluded an extensive review of the situation in Iraq and made major changes to our strategy in Iraq. The President described how this new campaign is unfolding in Baghdad, Anbar Province, and the outskirts of Baghdad where terrorists and extremists are making a stand.

- **The New Strategy Recognizes That Our Top Priority Must Be To Help Iraq's Leaders Secure Their Population, Especially In Baghdad.** Until the Iraqi people have a basic measure of security, they will not be able to make political and economic progress.
- **We Are Seeing Positive Indicators Under The New Strategy That We Hope Will Translate Into Positive Trends.** General Petraeus has been carrying out this new strategy for just over two months. He reports that it will be later this year before we can judge its potential for success. Yet the first indicators show that the operation is meeting our expectations. While there are still horrific attacks in Iraq, the direction of the fight is beginning to shift.
- **Iraqi And American Forces Are Making Incremental Gains In The Iraqi Capital.**
 - American and Iraqi forces tracked down and captured the leaders of a major car bomb ring.
 - We found and cleared a warehouse where terrorists were storing chemicals to make weapons.
 - We captured members of a death squad that had paralyzed hundreds of residents in a Baghdad neighborhood.
 - Displaced families are beginning to return home.
 - The number of sectarian murders in Baghdad has dropped by half since the operation began.
- **Democrats In Congress Are Pushing Legislation That Would Undercut The Strategy General Petraeus Has Just Started To Pursue.** Democratic leaders need to put politics aside and send the President a bill that funds our troops without artificial deadlines or wasteful spending and without handcuffing our commanders.

- It has now been 74 days since the President requested emergency funding. Our men and women in uniform should never be caught in the middle of a debate in Washington.
- To cover ongoing Army operations, the Pentagon is being forced to transfer money from military personnel accounts.

The Most Significant Element Of Our New Strategy Is Being Carried Out In Baghdad

Baghdad Was The Site Of Most Of The Sectarian Violence In Iraq And Is The Destination For Most Of Our Reinforcements. Three additional American brigades have reached the Iraqi capital, while another is in Kuwait preparing to deploy to Iraq and one more will arrive next month.

- **The Iraqi Government Is Meeting Its Pledge To Boost Force Levels In Baghdad.** For every American combat soldier deployed to Baghdad, there are now about three members of the Iraqi Security Force.
- **American Troops Are Now Living And Working Side-By-Side With Iraqi Forces At Small Neighborhood Posts Called Joint Security Stations, And Cooperation And Tips Have Increased.** Late last year, most American troops were at bases on the outskirts of the city. They would move into Baghdad to help Iraqi forces clear neighborhoods during the day and then return to their bases at night, allowing the insurgents and death squads to move back to the neighborhoods. Troops in Baghdad are changing their positions in the city, and today:
 - There are more than two dozen Joint Security Stations located throughout Baghdad, and more are planned.
 - Iraqi and American forces are working together to clear out and secure neighborhoods.
 - If a heavy fight breaks out, American forces step in and Iraqi forces learn valuable skills fighting shoulder-to-shoulder with our troops.
- **Iraqi And American Forces Have Received More Tips In The Past Three Months Than During Any Three-Month Period On Record.** By living in Baghdad neighborhoods, American forces get to know the culture and concerns of local residents, and local residents get to know them and gain confidence and trust. Many of the tips received in the past three months have led to successful operations against terrorists and insurgents.

U.S. And Iraqi Security Forces Are Carrying Out The New Strategy In Anbar Province

While Anbar Province Is Still Not Safe, Significant Progress Is Occurring. For much of the past four years, insurgents and al Qaeda members terrorized the local population through a ruthless campaign of violence. Now the situation has begun to change:

- Tribal sheiks have begun cooperating with American and Iraqi forces to fight al Qaeda by providing highly specific intelligence.
- We have sent more troops to Anbar Province.

- Significant changes are taking place in Ramadi, where the presence of al Qaeda terrorists in the city has declined substantially in the past six months.

As Al Qaeda Responds To These Changes With Sickening Brutality, Local Sunnis Are Refusing To Be Intimidated And Are Stepping Forward To Drive Out The Terrorists.

We Are Adjusting To Conditions In Other Areas Of Iraq.

We Are Cracking Down On Extremists Gathering In Other Parts Of Iraq.

- We are increasing our force levels and carrying out aggressive operations in the “Baghdad belts” – the areas on the outskirts of the capital that have been staging grounds for deadly attacks.
- We have moved an additional Stryker battalion to Diyala Province.
- We have sent reinforcements to Diwaniyah, where we are working with Iraqi forces to root out militia fighters and other Shia extremists.

Our Enemies Are Fighting Back As American And Iraqi Forces Fight To Clear And Hold Territory The Enemy Considers Its Own, But Our Operations Are Having An Important Impact.

As violence increases in these areas, American and Iraqi operations are:

- Keeping the pressure on terrorists and insurgents who flee Baghdad and Anbar Province
- Helping cut off the supply of weapons and fighters to violent groups inside the Iraqi capital
- Showing Iraqi citizens across the country that there will be no sanctuary for killers anywhere in a free Iraq

We Are Working With Iraqis To Make Political And Economic Progress

As We Increase Our Troop Levels, We Are Also Increasing Our Civilian Presence. We are doubling the number of Provincial Reconstruction Teams that help restore basic services, stimulate job creation, and promote reconciliation.

Military Operations Are Beginning To Open Up Breathing Space For Political Progress. Iraq's leaders must take advantage of this space to make further political progress. America's patience is not unlimited, but we understand that the Iraqi government is working hard in an extremely difficult environment.

Iraq's Government Is Beginning To Follow Through On Securing The Free And Democratic Future That Nearly Twelve Million Iraqis Voted For.

- The Iraqi legislature met a key benchmark by passing a budget that commits 10 billion dollars for reconstruction project
- The Council of Ministers recently approved legislation that would provide a framework for an equitable sharing of oil resources – and now that legislation is going before the Iraqi parliament

for its approval

- The government has formed a committee to organize provincial elections
- The Iraqi cabinet is taking steps to finalize toward agreement on a de-Baathification law.
- At a conference in Egypt next month, Prime Minister Maliki will seek increased diplomatic and financial commitments for Iraq's democracy.

Giving Up In Iraq Would Have Consequences Far Beyond Iraq's Borders. It is natural to wish there was an easy way out, yet in Iraq the easy road would be disastrous since Iraq is a battlefield in a much broader struggle. We cannot allow terrorists to gain a safe haven overseas like they had in Afghanistan during the 1990s, especially in a land with vast oil resources that terrorists could use to fund their ambitions.

Withdrawal Is Not A Strategy. Withdrawal would do nothing to prevent violence from spilling out across the country and plunging Iraq into chaos and anarchy. If anything, it would make that more likely.

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