



For Immediate Release
Office of the Press Secretary
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Fact Sheet: The New Way Forward in Iraq: An Update

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Today, President Bush Made Remarks At The Naval War College In Newport, Rhode Island. The President provided an update on the strategy the U.S. is pursuing in Iraq and outlined some of the indicators that will tell us if we are succeeding.

- **General David Petraeus And Ambassador Ryan Crocker Are Leading A Strategy In Iraq The President Announced In January.** The top priority of this strategy is helping the Iraqi government and its security forces protect their population from attack – especially in Baghdad. America has sent reinforcements to help Iraqis secure their population by going after terrorists, insurgents, and militias that are inciting sectarian violence.
- **The Last Of The "Surge" Reinforcements Arrived In Iraq Earlier This Month And The Full Surge Has Now Begun.**
- **The Goal Of Our Strategy Is To Help The Iraqis Make Progress Toward Reconciliation And Build A Free Nation That Respects The Rights Of Its People, Upholds The Rule Of Law, And Is An Ally In The War On Terror.**

We Are Taking The Fight To The Enemy Both In Baghdad And Surrounding Regions

At This Beginning Stage Of The Offensive We Are Seeing Some Hopeful Signs.

- Within Baghdad, our military reports that despite an upward trend in May, sectarian murders in the capital are now down substantially from what they were in January.
- We are finding arms caches at more than three times the rate of a year ago.
- The total number of car bombings and suicide attacks has been down in May and June.
- Because U.S. and Iraqi forces are living among the people they secure, many Iraqis are now coming forward with information on where the terrorists are hiding.
- Just this week, our commanders reported the killing of two senior al Qaeda leaders north of Baghdad – one who operated a cell that helped move foreign fighters into Iraq.

- General Petraeus recently described what he called "astonishing signs of normalcy" in Baghdad –professional soccer leagues, amusement parks, and vibrant markets.

Operation Phantom Thunder Includes Offensive Operations Outside of Baghdad. This operation focuses on defeating al Qaeda terrorists, insurgents, and militias by denying them safe havens and breaking up their logistics, supply, and communications.

- **Diyala** - To the north of Baghdad, Iraqi and American troops have surged into Diyala Province and are fighting block by block to deny al Qaeda a major bastion in Baqubah.
- **Southeast Of Baghdad** - To the southeast of Baghdad, we are going after al Qaeda in safe havens they have established along the Tigris River.
- **Anbar** - To the west and northwest of Baghdad, Operation Phantom Thunder is going after al Qaeda's remaining outposts in Anbar Province.

In Baghdad, The Additional Forces Have Allowed Us To Establish A Presence In Areas Where Terrorists And Insurgents Had Embedded Themselves Among The People.

- In the past two weeks, our troops in Baghdad have captured five militia cells.
- Places like Adamiyah, Rashid, and Mansour represent so-called sectarian fault lines – locations where Shia extremists and al Qaeda terrorists are attempting to reignite sectarian violence through murder, kidnappings, and other violent activities.
- Until these areas and others like them are secured, the people of Baghdad cannot be protected.

We Can Expect More Casualties As Our Forces Enter Enemy Strongholds That Have Never Been Challenged Before. We have suffered tragic losses and our troops face many other challenges, but General Petraeus and our commanders have a carefully laid out plan that needs time and support to succeed.

Outsiders Continue To Exploit Sectarian Tension And Distrust In Iraq.

- Iran continues to supply deadly IED explosives that are being used against American forces and is providing training, funding, and weapons to Iraqi militants.
- Syria continues to be a transit station for al Qaeda and other foreign fighters on their way to Iraq.

We Are Succeeding In Anbar

Working With The Iraqis, We Have Succeeded In Reversing The Situation In Anbar Province. Last September, Anbar was seen as "lost" and an example of America's failure in Iraq, but situation has changed.

- While some were writing off Anbar, our troops were methodically clearing the capital city of

- Ramadi of terrorists, and winning the trust of the local population.
- In parallel with these efforts, a group of tribal sheiks who were tired of the murder and mayhem and knew exactly who the terrorists were launched a movement called "The Awakening" and began cooperating with American and Iraqi forces.
- To capitalize on this opportunity, the President sent more Marines into Anbar, where they gradually have been helping the locals take back their province from al Qaeda.

Operations In Anbar Are Showing Good Results. Our forces are going into parts of Anbar where they could not operate before and local Sunni tribes, with the help of Iraqi and Coalition forces, have driven al Qaeda from most of Ramadi.

- Attacks are now at a two-year low.
- Recruiting for Iraqi police forces now draws thousands of candidates, compared to a few hundred just a few months ago.
- This month, Anbar opened its first police academy.
- Overall attacks in Anbar are sharply down from this time last year.

Despite These Successes, Anbar Province Remains A Dangerous Place. Al Qaeda wants its base of operations back, and it is working to assassinate tribal sheiks and intimidate the local population. So we must prepare ourselves for more violence and setbacks ahead.

We Are Encouraged By Progress On The Local Level

Looking At Iraq From The Bottom Up Shows Encouraging Signs. We are seeing:

- Citizens forming neighborhood watch groups.
- Young Sunnis signing up for the army and police.
- More tribal sheiks joining the fight against al Qaeda.
- More Shia rejecting militias.

Iraq's Security Forces Are Improving. With the help of our troops, the Iraqi Security Forces are growing in number, becoming more capable, and coming closer to the day when they can assume responsibility for defending their own country.

- **Increase In Brigades.** Prime Minister Maliki promised to provide three brigades to support the operations in Baghdad and he came through.
- **Authority.** Iraqi leaders promised to give military commanders the authority they need to carry out the new strategy, and they for the most part have.
- **Reducing Sectarian Violence.** Iraqis have helped reduce sectarian violence and established joint security stations.
- **Improving Logistical Capabilities.** The Iraqi Ministry of Defense is working hard to improve its

logistical capabilities and it will spend nearly two billion dollars from its own funds to equip and modernize its forces.

We Are Keeping The Pressure On Iraqi Leaders To Meet Political Benchmarks. The slow pace of Iraqi lawmakers is frustrating, but the Iraqi Parliament is composed of members representing many different religions and ethnicities – all members of a country that is being attacked by extremists. On the benchmarks not related to legislation, the Iraqis have done better.

Much Of The Progress We Are Seeing In Iraq At The Local Level Is The Result Of The Work Of Our Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs). These teams bring together military and civilian experts to help local Iraqi communities pursue reconciliation, strengthen moderates, and speed the transition to Iraqi self-reliance.

- PRTs in Anbar are working with Iraqi judges to restore the rule of law.
- The PRT in Ramadi helped the provincial council pass a budget that appropriates more than \$100 million for capital expenditures so that people can begin rebuilding.
- The PRT in Kirkuk is extending micro-loans to finance reconstruction and help stimulate job creation.
- The PRT in Ninewah has created more than 1,000 jobs through new infrastructure projects that range from renovating a hospital and paving roads to building a new soccer field.

It Is Critical That We Not Withdraw From Iraq Before The Government Can Defend Itself Against Al Qaeda

Al Qaeda is the main enemy for Shia, Sunni, and Kurds alike. Al Qaeda is responsible for the most sensational killings in Iraq.

- **Our Commanders Say That 80 To 90 Percent Of The Suicide Bombings In Iraq Are The Work Of Foreign Fighters.**
- **Al Qaeda Uses Human Beings As Bombs To Create Grisly Images For The World To See In Hopes It Will Overwhelm The Quiet Progress On The Ground.**

The Consequences Of Withdrawing Before The Iraqi Government Can Defend Itself Would Be Disastrous. The extremists in the Middle East know that if the Iraqis succeed, it will be a terrible blow to their ambitions.

- We would yield the future of Iraq to terrorists like al Qaeda – and we would give a green light to violent extremists throughout the Middle East.
- In Iraq, sectarian violence would multiply on a horrific scale that could engulf the entire region in chaos.
- We could soon face a Middle East dominated by Islamic extremists who would control large oil supplies and pursue nuclear weapons.

Success In Iraq Must Not Be Measured By The Enemy's Ability To Get A Bombing Onto The Evening News. No matter how good the security, terrorists will always be able to explode a bomb on a crowded street. What we are looking for in Iraq is a government that can protect its people, deliver basic services to all its citizens, and function as a democracy even amid violence.

We Are Encouraged By The Way Iraqis Are Responding To Atrocities Intended To Inflamm Passions And Provoke Reprisals. When terrorists blew up the minarets on the Samarra mosque, Iraqi leaders united immediately and took swift and aggressive actions to prevent a re-run of the violence that followed the 2006 attack.

- Prime Minister Maliki imposed a curfew, ordered additional security for holy places, and convened a meeting of the Sunni, Shia, and Kurdish leadership.
- He traveled to Samarra with his Defense and Interior Ministers to demonstrate their commitment to peace and reconciliation.
- Though it is still too early to judge whether the government's efforts will be enough to prevent the spiral of violence we saw last year, it is not too early to say that their response has been impressive and very different than it was last time around.

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