

Quotes on the Surge and Political Progress

“No one” [in the U.S. and Iraqi governments] “feels that there has been sufficient progress by any means in the area of national reconciliation”

Gen. Petraeus, Washington Post article, 3/14/08

The following statements were made by administration officials to address the purpose and length of the surge. They question now becomes, if our commitment is based on the Iraqi government’s willingness to follow through on its promises, what do we do now that they have failed to do so?

- “I’ve been clear with each Iraqi leader I meet: America is a patient nation, and Iraq can count on our partnership, as long as the new government continues to make the hard decisions necessary to advance a unified, democratic and peaceful Iraq.” **President Bush, Address to the American Legion National Convention, 8/31/06**
- “A military solution alone will not stop violence. In the end, the Iraqi people and their government will have to make the difficult decisions necessary to solve these problems.” **President Bush, Press Conference, October 25, 2006**
- “I’ve made it clear to the Prime Minister and Iraq's other leaders that America's commitment is not open-ended. If the Iraqi government does not follow through on its promises, it will lose the support of the American people -- and it will lose the support of the Iraqi people.” **President Bush, Address to the Nation, 1/7/07**
- “A successful strategy for Iraq goes beyond military operations. Ordinary Iraqi citizens must see that military operations are accompanied by visible improvements in their neighborhoods and communities. So America will hold the Iraqi government to the benchmarks it has announced.” **President Bush, Address to the Nation, 1/7/07**
- “The president has made very clear...that American patience is limited. And obviously, if the Iraqis fail to maintain their commitments, we will have to revisit our strategy.” **Secretary Gates, HASC hearing, 1/11/07**
- “See, ultimately, the Iraqis are going to have to defend themselves. Ultimately, it is their responsibility. That's what the 12 million people who voted want. We just need to give them some breathing space so they can gain their confidence and have the capabilities necessary to protect this country.” **President Bush, Discussion on the Economy and War on Terror, Washington D.C., 3/28/07**
- “As more breathing space is created by reducing the sectarian violence, Iraq's leaders have got to take advantage of that breathing space. I have made it abundantly clear to the Prime Minister that our patience is not unlimited; that we fully recognize that there has to be political progress and economic progress, along with military progress, in order for that government to succeed.” **President Bush, Discussion on Global War on Terror, East Grand Rapids, Michigan, 4/20/07**

- “Without political progress it's going to be hard to achieve a military victory in Iraq.”
President Bush, Press Conference, the Pentagon, 5/10/07
- “The way to leave is to stabilize the situations in each area, and each area will require a slightly different solution... and then to establish a sustainable security arrangement that increasingly is one that Iraqis can take over by themselves.” **Gen. Petraeus, Joint HASC/HFAC hearing, 9/10/07**
- “Clearly we do have leverage, and we do use it. I mean, the presence of 160,000 troops is a lot of leverage. And you know, we are using those troops for their security. That gives us, again, not only the opportunity but the obligation to tell them they've got to use the space they're getting to move forward.” **Amb Crocker, Joint HASC/HFAC hearing, 9/10/07**
- “The premise of our strategy is that securing the Iraqi population is the foundation for all other progress. For Iraqis to bridge sectarian divides, they need to feel safe in their homes and neighborhoods. For lasting reconciliation to take root, Iraqis must feel confident that they do not need sectarian gangs for security. The goal of the surge is to provide that security and to help prepare Iraqi forces to maintain it...our success in meeting these objectives now allows us to begin bringing some of our troops home.”
President Bush, Address to the Nation, 9/13/07
- “The Iraq situation cannot be won by military means alone. There has to be political reconciliation to go with it...I fully understand those who say you can't win this thing militarily...That's why it's very important that we continue to work with the Iraqis on economic progress, as well as political progress.” **President Bush, Press Conference, the White House, 10/17/07**
- “Now what we have to continue to focus on is the implementation of these laws, which is now the next step. We had the laws passed. It's now most important that we go through now the implementation of these.” **Gen Odierno, SASC Hearing, 4/3/08**