**War in Iraq Part 4**

**2007-2008 Troop Surge and Signs of Withdrawal**

**2007- A Surge in Troops and Time**

* A little more than a month after the Iraq Study Group warns that the situation in Iraq is "grave and deteriorating," President Bush announces changes in strategy in Iraq.
* **"The New Way Forward"** - A surge that involves an influx of 21,500 more troops into Iraq as a change in strategy.
* The price tag of the additional 12-month deployments is estimated to be up to $27 billion.
* After months of claiming the war in Iraq is improving, Bush concedes that his policies are not working.
* On April 11th, Defense Secretary Robert Gates announces a 3-month [extension of duty](http://www.time.com/time/nation/article/0%2C8599%2C1606888%2C00.html) for all soldiers in Iraq and Afghanistan.
* That same day, the [Washington Post](http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/04/10/AR2007041001776.html) reports that at least three retired four-star generals have rejected offers to become the Iraq War leader.

**2007- Links to Iran?**

* Around the same time that the Bush Administration announces the surge strategy, officials increase attempts to link Iran with the violence in Iraq
* The U.S. military presents evidence that it claims shows Iran is supplying militias in Iraq with the technology behind some of the deadliest IEDs in Iraq.
* The military also detains five Iranians captured at a government office in northern Iraq, and dispatches an aircraft carrier and anti-missile battery to the Persian Gulf.
* Washington goes out of its way to say that it has no intentions of starting a war with Iran
* Democrats make clear that they believe the President does not have prior authority to invade Iran without approval from Congress.

**2007- Trying to Withdraw**

* For only the second time in his presidency, George W. Bush exercises his veto power by rejecting legislation from Congress to impose an Oct. 1 deadline for withdrawing U.S. troops.
* A CNN poll later showed that 54% of Americans disapproved of the veto and just one week later, 144 Iraqi lawmakers sign a petition calling for a U.S. timetable for withdrawal.
* Bush cites America's continued post-war presence in South Korea as a model for the country's future in Iraq.
* Gen. David Petraeus [reports](http://www.time.com/time/nation/article/0%2C8599%2C1659375%2C00.html) on the progress of the new "surge" strategy, testifying that a drawdown in troop numbers may be possible in the future
* **Ryan Crocker-** the U.S. Ambassador to Iraq: offers a more grim assessment, [testifying](http://www.time.com/time/nation/article/0%2C8599%2C1659319%2C00.html) at the same hearing: "I frankly do not expect that we will see rapid progress."
* Neither men offer concrete timetables for troop withdrawal.
* In a nationally televised address just days after the sixth anniversary of 9/11, President Bush announces a reduction in troop levels from a current high of 169,000 to 130,000.

**2007 -Alliances Change**

* The number of unidentified corpses discovered in Baghdad soared more than 70% in four weeks, from 441 bodies found in April to 726 in May.
* Around the same time, American commanders begin arming some of the same Sunni Arab groups in central and north-central Iraq that used to battle U.S. forces
* The U.S. states that [alliances](http://www.time.com/time/world/article/0%2C8599%2C1627400%2C00.html) have shifted as the Iraqi civilian death toll mounts. "This isn't a black and white place. There are good guys and bad guys and there are groups in between,"
* Still, some critics of the move voice concern that American forces are arming both sides of a future civil war.
* CNN announces on June 26th that public support for the war has reached a new low, with more than 70 percent of Americans saying they oppose the conflict.

**2008- Progress without Withdrawal**

* Petraeus and Iraq ambassador Crocker cite significant progress in quelling tensions in Iraq but warns of the danger of reducing troop levels beyond pre-surge levels
* They believe this would threaten the security gains and be viewed as a sign of U.S. weakness.
* His message is practically overshadowed by the presence of the three remaining U.S. presidential candidates, senators Barack Obama, John McCain and Hillary Clinton
* McCain is supportive of keeping troop levels near 140,000, and claims "we can now look ahead to the genuine prospect of success"
* Both Obama and Clinton urge drafting plans for a full withdrawal.

**2008-Victories for the U.S . and the New Iraq Government**

* In September, local Iraqi police take over security control of the nation's [Anbar province](http://www.time.com/time/world/article/0%2C8599%2C1837866%2C00.html%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank), once the center of the country's Sunni insurgency and now home to 25,000 U.S. troops.
* President George W. Bush hails the milestone as a major victory against al-Qaeda extremists ousted by the region's Sunni leaders.
* Though Anbar is the 11th of 18th provinces returned to local authorities, it is the first predominately Sunni province to be handed over.
* [**Status-of-forces-agreement (SOFA)**](http://www.time.com/time/world/article/0%2C8599%2C1859501%2C00.html) Governing the presence of U.S. troops in Ira, the agreement calls for the American military to withdraw from the country by the end of 2011.
* Approval of the deal is a major political victory for Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki, who hopes to claim credit for bringing an end to the U.S. presence in Iraq.

**2008- Farewell to President Bush**

* During his final visit to Baghdad, Bush is targeted by an Iraqi journalist denouncing the U.S. presence in the country and hurling his two black dress shoes at the President.
* Bush laughs off the event, later joking he saw the man's "sole" and even going so far as to cite the incident as a sign of progress in a democratic Iraq.
* Barack Obama wins the 2008 election and once inaugurated in early 2009, inherits the War in Iraq and begins his campaign promise to end the war.