

# VETS ★FOR★ FREEDOM

Senator Obama has repeatedly denied the success of the surge, credited anything but the surge for reductions in violence in Iraq, and attempted to doom it to failure before it was even fully implemented. *Senator Obama in his own words:*

- ★ “The surge is not working,” Obama’s old Iraq plan stated (on website). **Daily News, 7/14/08**
  - ★ "We don't need more spin about how the surge is succeeding in doing what it was supposed to do which is to get the Iraqi's to stand up and take responsibility for their own future, so we can start sending our troops home." **Sen. Barack Obama, Remarks At a Town Hall, Rapid City, SD, 5/31/08**
  - ★ "I welcome the genuine reductions of violence that have taken place, although I would point out that much of that violence has been reduced because there was an agreement with tribes in Anbar province -- Sunni tribes -- who started to see, after the Democrats were elected in 2006, you know what, the Americans may be leaving soon, and we are going to be left very vulnerable to the Shi'as. We should start negotiating now. That's how you change behavior." **Democratic Debate at St. Anselm College in Manchester, N.H, 1/5/08**
  - ★ “So, I think it is fair to say that the president has simply tried to gain another six months to continue on the same course that he's been on for several years now. It is a course that will not succeed.” **Huffington Post Mash-Up: 2007 Democratic on-line debate 9/13/07**
  - ★ "I am not persuaded that 20,000 additional troops in Iraq is going to solve the sectarian violence there. In fact, I think it will do the reverse." **MSNBC's "Response to the President's Speech On Iraq," 1/10/07**
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Other quotes:

- ★ “So far, I think we have not seen the kind of political reconciliation that’s going to bring about long-term stability in Iraq.” **Obama speaks during a news conference at the citadel in Amman, Jordan, Tuesday, 7/22/08**
- ★ "But the same factors that led me to oppose the surge still hold true. The strain on our military has grown, the situation in Afghanistan has deteriorated and we've spent nearly \$200 billion more in Iraq than we had budgeted. Iraq's leaders have failed to invest tens of billions of dollars in oil revenues in rebuilding their own country, and they have not reached the political accommodation that was the stated purpose of the surge." **Barack Obama, Op-Ed, "My Plan For Iraq," The New York Times, 7/14/08**
- ★ "Obama will immediately begin to remove our troops from Iraq. He will remove one to two combat brigades each month, and have all of our combat brigades out of Iraq within 16 months." **Obama For America Website, Accessed 7/3/08**

- ★ "The Problem -- The Surge: The goal of the surge was to create space for Iraq's political leaders to reach an agreement to end Iraq's civil war. At great cost, our troops have helped reduce violence in some areas of Iraq, but even those reductions do not get us below the unsustainable levels of violence of mid-2006. Moreover, Iraq's political leaders have made no progress in resolving the political differences at the heart of their civil war." **Obama For America Website, Accessed 7/3/08**
- ★ "The overall strategy is failed because we have not seen any change in behavior among Iraq's political leaders. **2007 Democratic debate in Las Vegas, Nevada 11/15/07**
- ★ "And it is very important at this stage, understanding how badly the president's strategy has failed." **2007 Democratic primary debate at Dartmouth College 9/27/07**
- ★ "My assessment is that the surge has not worked and we will not see a different report eight weeks from now." **NBC's "The Today Show," 7/18/07**
- ★ "Given the deteriorating situation, it is clear at this point that we cannot, through putting in more troops or maintaining the presence that we have, expect that somehow the situation is going to improve." **NBC's "Meet the Press," 10/22/06**

While on his trip to Iraq, Senator Obama suggested he would shrug off the counsel and advice from commanders on the ground with regards to force levels. In a television interview from the US Embassy, Senator Obama made the following statements:

★ **Barack Obama ABC Nightline Interview, July 21, 2008**

**ABC's Terry Moran:** "And then we sat down with [Barack Obama] to talk about what has become an open disagreement between military commanders here and Obama, over his plan to withdraw all U.S. combat troops from Iraq on a 16-month timetable. Did General Petraeus talk about military concerns about your timetable?"

**Barack Obama:** "You know, I would characterize the concerns differently. I don't think that they're deep concerns about the notion of a pullout per se. There are deep concerns about, from their perspective, a timetable that doesn't take into account what they anticipate might be some sort of changing conditions. And this is what I mean when I say we play different roles. My job is to think about the national security interests as a whole, and to have to weigh and balance risks, in Afghanistan, in Iraq. Their job is just to get the job done here. And I completely understand that."

**Moran:** "But the difference is real. Commanders here want withdrawals to be based on conditions on the ground. Obama emphasizes his timetable, but he insists he would remain flexible. I'm going to try to pin you down on this "

**Obama:** "Here let me say this, though, Terry, because, you know, what I will refuse to do, and I think that, you know...is to get boxed in into what I consider two false choices, which is either I have a rigid timeline of such and such a date, come hell or high water, we've gotten our combat troops out, and I am blind to anything that happens in the intervening six months or 16 months. Or, alternatively, I am completely deferring to whatever the commanders on the ground says, which is what George Bush says he's doing, in which case I'm not doing my job as commander-in-chief."