

TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE ON IRAQ

By William E. Odom, LT General, USA, Ret.

2 April 2008

Good morning Mr. Chairman and members of the committee. It is an honor to appear before you again. The last occasion was in January 2007, when the topic was the troop surge. Today you are asking if it has worked. Last year I rejected the claim that it was a new strategy. Rather, I said, it is a new tactic used to achieve the same old strategic aim, political stability. And I foresaw no serious prospects for success.

I see no reason to change my judgment now. The surge is prolonging instability, not creating the conditions for unity as the president claims.

Last year, General Petraeus wisely declined to promise a military solution to this political problem, saying that he could lower the level of violence, allowing a limited time for the Iraqi leaders to strike a political deal. Violence has been temporarily reduced but today there is credible evidence that the political situation is far more fragmented. And currently we see violence surge in Baghdad and Basra. In fact, it has also remained sporadic and significant in several other parts of Iraq over the past year, notwithstanding the notable drop in Baghdad and Anbar Province.

More disturbing, Prime Minister Maliki has initiated military action and then dragged in US forces to help his own troops destroy his Shiite competitors. This is a political setback, not a political solution. Such is the result of the surge tactic.

[More...](#)