

George Bush's justification for the US troop withdrawal from Iraq – that the surge has promoted political reconciliation – is false.

The Iraq troop withdrawals President Bush announced on Tuesday at the National Defence University were much ado about nothing. The slight reduction in troop levels will keep US troop levels several thousand above what they were in January 2007 when he announced the "surge" of US troops. Bush administration critics will say the troop withdrawals are too little and too late, while supporters will echo Bush's "return on success" talking point.

The greatest myth promoted by Bush in his speech was found in this line: "Political reconciliation is moving forward, and the Iraqi government has passed several major pieces of legislation." By overstating the meagre steps taken by Iraq's leaders in barely passing a few relatively insignificant laws in their parliament, Bush's statement ranks right up there with his 2003 "mission accomplished" speech and vice-president Dick Cheney's assertion that the insurgency was in its "last throes" in 2005.

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