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# Surge: My Journey With General David Petraeus And The Remaking Of The Iraq War



## Synopsis

Surge is an insider's view of the most decisive phase of the Iraq War. After exploring the dynamics of the war during its first three years, the book takes the listener on a journey to Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, where the controversial new U.S. Army and Marine Corps counterinsurgency doctrine was developed; to Washington, D.C., and the halls of the Pentagon, where the Joint Chiefs of Staff struggled to understand the conflict; to the streets of Baghdad, where soldiers worked to implement the surge and reenergize the flagging war effort before the Iraqi state splintered; and to the halls of Congress, where Ambassador Ryan Crocker and General David Petraeus testified in some of the most contentious hearings in recent memory. Using newly declassified documents, unpublished manuscripts, interviews, author notes, and published sources, Surge explains how President George W. Bush, Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki, Ambassador Crocker, General Petraeus, and other U.S. and Iraqi political and military leaders shaped the surge from the center of the maelstrom in Baghdad and Washington.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

This is as honest, accurate and detailed an account of the last great American effort in Iraq that we are likely to get. Well-written by a military eyewitness deeply enmeshed in the action, this book makes clear the tremendous practical difficulties--most of them overcome--behind the political sound-bites and the "wisdom" of the talking heads. Although the Surge did not achieve the enduring effects promised by the counterinsurgency doctrine of General David Petraeus (consider Iraq

today), it did accomplish, impressively, the immediate military mission of exploiting the "Sunni flip" and suppressing al Qaeda to give the "new" Iraq a chance. The arguments will go on for decades as to who or what was to blame for the ultimate reversal of that initial, hard-won success, but Colonel Mansoor's purpose isn't to take a political or partisan stance (beyond his uncritical admiration for Petraeus), but to document what happened on the ground with a scholar's thoroughness, a soldier's integrity, and a talented author's writing ability. This will be one of the very few--of so many--books about the American experience in Iraq that will prove of enduring value. Excellent.

Author Peter Mansoor is a Prof of History at OSU and former X.O. to GEN Petraeus (DHP) during the Surge in 2007. Each chapter was read by DHP for accuracy so the book is really a product of Mansoor and DHP. The author clearly has a bond with DHP so that his writing is uniformly pro-DHP. The Foreword by DHP is a summary of what follows in the book. The Foreword makes clear that the Surge was not only a military influx of 30,000 troopers, but a new set of ideas by a new commanding general in Iraq. DHP's ideas included establishing security for the Iraqi People from al-Qaeda and the sectarian hoodlums--both Sunni and Shia, establishing rule of law, turning Iraq over to the Iraqis by training a new Iraqi police force and armed service, and reestablishing infrastructure--electricity, agriculture, schools--with Amb. Crocker's people. The author describes step-by-step how progress was made. It was hard all the time according to DHP--there was ethnosectarian hate, intraservice rivalry, Maliki--a Shia in charge of a Sunni majority, Congress to appease pre-election, multiple task forces and their reports to digest, and little understanding of Iraqi history, tribalism, culture, or religion at the start. How DHP and Team Petraeus accomplished what they did in 2007 makes 'Surge' required reading for junior officers, Poli Sci majors, and Foreign Service workers and MHQ buffs. 'Surge' may have too much detail for casual readers of military history.

The value of this book, as the author notes, is that this is the first publication written by ranking officer within the command staff that carried out the surge, an insider's perspective. This book gives a brief history of the Iraq war leading up to the surge and the key elements that resulted in the anarchy that engulfed Iraq and also spurred intense political debate at home as to how to solve the problem. The author gives an in depth account of the various key actors, events, and the nature of the problems that were confronted by coalition forces in Iraq and the solutions that were developed to deal with these problems. Personally, as someone who has invested time into learning about the history of the Iraq war and counter insurgency, the greatest value in this book is how Mansoor

tackles the many criticisms that have been leveraged against the surge that question its role in Iraq's improving the stability from 2007 forward. The surge was one of the most significant endeavors of recent human history, a strategy that was developed to pull a failed state out of anarchy and required a doctrinal renaissance on the part of the military as well as the incorporation of the assets and manpower of a variety of civilian agencies to deal with an extraordinary challenge. The methods and effects of the surge have already been the subject of intensive debate. Regardless of personal opinions on the justification of the war, once America invaded Iraq the well being of the country was America's responsibility. As Ambassador Crocker said in his testimony before Congress in 2008, "In the end, how we leave and what we leave behind will be more important than how we came". This book is the story of how we left Iraq and what we tried to leave behind.

Excellent book here!! This book will become the history of the surge. It will be a must read for both military officers and Department of State officials. The author was the chief of staff for General Petraeus. He was on the front row for the surge. Other authors reviewed accounts and records of the surge. This author lived the surge at the highest levels. Mr. Mansoor does a superb job of recording that adventure. The time period of the surge comes alive like a Tom Clancy novel. The reader will be put in the inner councils of the Army in Iraq. You will get an understanding of the difficulty of the surge. General Petraeus had to not only navigate dangerous Iraq he had to overcome hazardous Washington too. The author breaks down the event to give a very comprehensive look at the event. You will hear of the operational demands but also how things like internal Iraqi politics contributed or hindered victory. His analysis of Iraqi President Maliki's political work during the surge has the seeds of the current problems Iraq faced. He never quite created a sense of unity among the different groups then. The book also illustrates how staffs support VIPs. I think his stories of how the personal staff to the General operated can have lessons for staffs of large organizations of all types here in the states.

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