



"A Bloody Failure" is how *The Independent* subtitled this brilliant piece of reportage from Patrick Cockburn, direct from Baghdad:

The surge is now joining a host of discredited formulae for success and fake turning-points that the US (with the UK tripping along behind) has promoted in Iraq over the past 52 months. In December 2003, there was the capture of Saddam Hussein. Six months later, in June 2004, there was the return of sovereignty to Iraq. "Let freedom reign," said Bush in a highly publicised response. And yet the present Iraqi Prime Minister, Nouri al-Maliki, claims he cannot move a company of soldiers without American permission.

In 2005, there were two elections that were both won handsomely by Shia and Kurdish parties. "Despite endless threats from the killers in their midst," exulted Bush, "nearly 12 million Iraqi citizens came out to vote in a show of hope and solidarity that we should never forget."

In fact, he himself forgot this almost immediately. A year later, the US forced out the first democratically elected Shia prime minister, Ibrahim al-Jaafari, with the then US Ambassador in Baghdad, Zilmy Khalilzad, saying that Bush "doesn't want, doesn't support, and doesn't accept that Jaafari should form the next government".

[The surge: a special report by Patrick Cockburn - Independent Online Edition > Middle East](#)