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Candidates on the War in Iraq

Compiled by Brookings Institution experts, this chart is part of a series of issue indices to be published during the 2008 Presidential election cycle. The policy issues included in this series were chosen by Brookings staff and represent the most critical topics facing America's next President.

CANDIDATES



Barack Obama (D)
 Senator from Illinois



John McCain (R)
 Senator from Arizona

Candidates	Obama (D)	McCain (R)
View of Surge Military Forces	<p>"I think that the surge has succeeded in ways that nobody anticipated, by the way, including President Bush and the other supporters. It has gone very well, partly because of the Anbar situation and the Sunni awakening, partly because of the Shia military." – The O'Reilly Factor: September 4, 2008</p> <p>Read more</p>	<p>"I've fought for the right strategy and more troops in Iraq when it wasn't a popular thing to do...Thanks to the leadership of a brilliant general, David Petraeus, and the brave men and women he has the honor to command, that strategy succeeded, and it rescued us from a defeat that would have demoralized our military, risked a wider war and threatened the security of all Americans." – Accepting the Republican nomination, September 4, 2008</p> <p>Read more</p>
View of Future Troop Levels	<p>"The removal of our troops will be responsible and phased, directed by military commanders on the ground and done in consultation with the Iraqi government. Military experts believe we can safely redeploy combat brigades from Iraq at a pace of 1 to 2 brigades a month that would remove them in 16 months...Under the Obama-Biden plan, a residual force will remain in Iraq and in the region to conduct targeted counter-terrorism missions against al Qaeda in Iraq and to protect American diplomatic and civilian personnel. They will not build permanent bases in Iraq, but will continue efforts to train and support the Iraqi security forces as long as Iraqi leaders move toward political reconciliation and away from sectarianism." – BarackObama.com</p> <p>Read more</p>	<p>"So, what I want to do today is take a little time to describe what I would hope to have achieved at the end of my first term as President...By January 2013, America has welcomed home most of the servicemen and women who have sacrificed terribly so that America might be secure in her freedom...The United States maintains a military presence there, but a much smaller one, and it does not play a direct combat role." – <i>New York Times</i>: May 15, 2008</p> <p>Read more</p>
View of/Role in Funding the War	<p>"Senator Obama has continued to be a strong advocate for legislative actions that could bring the war in Iraq to a responsible end. He opposes funding for the war in Iraq that does not immediately begin the responsible removal of our troops from Iraq, with a clear timeline and end-date for this drawdown." – Obama.Senate.gov</p> <p>Read more</p>	<p>"Congress has an obligation to provide our servicemen and women with the resources they need to fulfill their mission." – Statement submitted for the Congressional Record: May 22, 2008</p> <p>Read more</p>

Candidates	Obama (D)	McCain (R)
<p>Strategy if Elected</p>	<p>"Barack Obama and Joe Biden will launch an aggressive diplomatic effort to reach a comprehensive compact on the stability of Iraq and the region. This effort will include all of Iraq's neighbors—including Iran and Syria, as suggested by the bi-partisan The Iraq Study Group Report. This compact will aim to secure Iraq's borders; keep neighboring countries from meddling inside Iraq; isolate al Qaeda; support reconciliation among Iraq's sectarian groups; and provide financial support for Iraq's reconstruction and development." – BarackObama.com</p> <p>Read more</p>	<p>"It would be a grave mistake to leave Iraq before Al Qaeda in Iraq is defeated and before a competent, trained, and capable Iraqi security force is in place and operating effectively. We must help the Government of Iraq battle those who provoke sectarian tensions and promote a civil war that could destabilize the Middle East. Iraq must not become a failed state, a haven for terrorists, or a pawn of Iran." – JohnMcCain.com</p> <p>Read more</p> <p>"The international community should bolster proven microfinance programs to spur local-level entrepreneurship throughout the country. Iraq's Arab neighbors, in particular, should promote regional stability by directly investing the fruits of their oil exports in Iraq." – JohnMcCain.com</p> <p>Read more</p>