

## ANNOUNCEMENT

### GENERAL DAVID PETRAEUS ON CONVERSATIONS WITH BILL KRISTOL

NEW YORK, NY, February 15, 2016 – General David Petraeus joined Bill Kristol to discuss his time in command in Iraq (2007-2008). During this period, Petraeus led the “surge” that turned around the war, and, in the conversation, Gen. Petraeus and Bill Kristol discuss the conceptual groundwork for the strategy. Gen. Petraeus also recounts what it was like to run the war—from day-to-day operations and navigating Iraqi politics to weekly videoconferences with President Bush and testifying before Congress. This is a must-see [conversation](#) for anyone interested in our military, foreign policy, and recent political history. Below are excerpts from the *Conversation*:

**[On the “surge of ideas”]** PETRAEUS: The surge that mattered most was the surge of ideas. It was the change of strategy. [Prior to the surge], we were in the process, throughout 2006, of consolidating, getting onto bases, handing off [control] to the Iraqi forces, and accelerating that process even though the level of violence continued to rise... There was almost a sense that we were part of the problem instead of part of the solution... [Our biggest idea] was, we had to provide security for the [Iraqi] people. That was of the foundation for all other progress. The only way you could do it, biggest was by living with them.

**[On his belief in the mission]** PETRAEUS: I honestly believed [the surge] would work. I had done nothing but think about Iraq for close to four years leading up to being the commander, plus being in theater for approaching two and half [years] by the time I went back to command. We’d done a lot of [surge-style army work] in my first year [in Iraq], with the 101st airborne division. We lived with the people. We did reconciliation. Unfortunately, it was undone because Baghdad didn’t support it. But now [as commander] I was Baghdad.

**[On political responsibilities while in command]** PETRAEUS: [Being in command] was almost like being in a boxing ring. And you’re getting pummeled. Of

course you got folks coming from Washington who supposedly want to help. You've got a host nation that wants something: Understandable. Everybody wanted something. Especially in that society, as occupying commander, you are in charge. And if you're the Sheikh of the tribe, which essentially you are, you're supposed to take care of the tribal members and they come to you with their concerns. It's the way it works. And so you had an endless parade of people wanting something.

**Watch the *Conversation* here:**

<http://conversationswithbillkristol.org/video/larry-summers>

**About *Conversations with Bill Kristol*.** *Conversations with Bill Kristol* is an online interview program hosted by *Weekly Standard* editor Bill Kristol and produced by [The Foundation for Constitutional Government](#). A forum for substantive, thought-provoking dialogue on pressing issues in the news and American politics, *Conversations* segments feature informal discussions between Kristol and guests on a diverse array of issues of public concern—from the American presidency and the Middle East peace process to the ideas that have shaped Western civilization. Recent guests include syndicated columnist [Charles Krauthammer](#), former Vice President [Dick Cheney](#), former Speaker of the House [Newt Gingrich](#), business founder [Peter Thiel](#), best-selling author [Charles Murray](#), former U.S. Army Vice Chief of Staff [General Jack Keane](#), and Harvard professor [Harvey Mansfield](#). New conversations are released bi-weekly.

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