



For Immediate Release
Office of the Press Secretary
October 1, 2005

President's Radio Address

 [en Español](#)

[Audio](#)

THE PRESIDENT: Good morning. This week I met with the generals who are overseeing our efforts in Iraq -- Generals Abizaid and Casey -- to discuss our strategy for victory. They updated me on the operations in Baghdad last weekend in which Iraqi and coalition forces tracked down and killed the second most wanted al Qaeda leader in Iraq. This brutal killer was a top lieutenant of the terrorist Zargawi. He was also one of the terrorists responsible for the recent wave of attacks in the Iraqi capital, which is part of the terrorist campaign to halt political progress in Iraq, by stopping this month's referendum on the Iraqi constitution.

Our strategy in Iraq is clear: We're hunting down deadly terrorist leaders. We're conducting aggressive counterterrorism operations in the areas where the terrorists are concentrated. We are constantly adapting our tactics to the changing tactics of the terrorists, and we're training more Iraqi forces to assume increasing responsibility for their country's security.

The growing size and increasing capability of the Iraqi security forces are helping our coalition address a challenge we have faced since the beginning of the war. It used to be that after we cleared the terrorists out of a city there were not enough qualified Iraqi troops to maintain control, so if we left to conduct missions in other areas of Iraq, the terrorists would try to move back in. Now the increasing number of more capable Iraqi troops has allowed us to keep a better hold on the cities we have taken from the terrorists. The Iraqi troops know their people and their language, and they know who the terrorists are. By leaving Iraqi units in the cities we have cleared out, we can keep those cities safe, while moving on to hunt down the terrorists in other parts of the country.



➤ Radio Address

- [2006](#)
- [2005](#)
- [2004](#)
- [2003](#)
- [2002](#)
- [2001](#)

➤ Radio Interviews

- [2005](#)
- [2004](#)

We used this approach recently in Iraq's northwest region where Iraqi and coalition forces targeted an area that was one of the main routes for foreign terrorists entering Iraq from Syria. During operations in the key town of Tal Afar, Iraqi security forces outnumbered coalition forces for the first time in a major offensive operation. Because of our joint efforts, hundreds of insurgents and terrorists have been killed, or captured, or flushed out, and our continued efforts will make it more difficult for foreign terrorists to enter Iraq.

As part of our strategy, Iraqi forces have stayed behind in Tal Afar to ensure that the terrorists cannot return and regroup. And coalition and Iraqi troops are pursuing the terrorists in western Iraq, working to deny al Qaeda a safe haven there, and to stop terrorists from crossing into the country through Syria.

I'm encouraged by the increasing size and capability of the Iraqi security forces. Today they have more than 100 battalions operating throughout the country, and our commanders report that the Iraqi forces are serving with increasing effectiveness. In fact, this week coalition forces were able to turn over security responsibility for one of Iraq's largest cities, Karbala, to Iraqi soldiers. As Iraqi forces show they're capable of fighting the terrorists, they are earning the trust and confidence of the Iraqi people, which will ensure the success of a free and democratic Iraq.

More difficult and dangerous work still lies ahead. The terrorists have a history of escalating their attacks before Iraq's major political milestones, and two elections are fast approaching. In two weeks, Iraqis will vote on a democratic constitution, and if that constitution is approved, they will return to the polls later this year to elect a fully constitutional government.

As Iraqis take these next steps on the path to freedom and democracy, the terrorists will do everything they can to stop this progress and try to break our will. They will fail. Defeating the terrorists in Iraq will require more time and more sacrifice. Yet all Americans can have confidence in the military commanders who are leading the effort in Iraq, and in the troops under their command. They have made important gains in recent weeks and months; they are adapting our strategy to meet the needs on the ground; and they're helping us to bring victory in the war on terror.

Thank you for listening.

END

Return to this article at:

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2005/10/20051001.html>

 [CLICK HERE TO PRINT](#)