



For Immediate Release
Office of the Press Secretary
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President's Radio Address

[In Focus: Iraq](#)

THE PRESIDENT: Good morning. In America, August is considered a slow news month. But in the war on terror, America and our allies remain on the offense against our enemies. And this month, we've had some encouraging news from both Afghanistan and Iraq.

Earlier this week, I had a good meeting with President Karzai of Afghanistan at Camp David. He updated me on the work his government is doing to help build a more hopeful future for the Afghan people. He told me that senior officials and tribal leaders from Afghanistan and Pakistan are meeting to discuss how to deal with the extremists who are targeting both their countries. And he explained why he's confident that his government will prevail against the Taliban remnants who continue to launch attacks throughout his country.

Here's how President Karzai put it: "The Taliban do pose dangers to our innocent people [But] they are not posing any threat to the government of Afghanistan, they are not posing any threat to the institutions of Afghanistan, or to the buildup of institutions of Afghanistan." He continued: The Taliban "is a force that's defeated" and it is "acting in cowardice by killing children going to school." In other words, the Taliban fighters can still launch attacks on the innocent, but they cannot stop the march of democracy in Afghanistan.

In Iraq, we are working to help put the Iraqi government on the same path. The surge that General Petraeus and our troops are carrying out is designed to help provide security for the Iraqi people, especially in Baghdad -- and aid the rise of an Iraqi government that can protect its people, deliver basic services for all its citizens, and serve as an ally in the war on terror. Our new strategy is delivering good results, and our commanders recently reported more good news.

One encouraging development was a coalition air strike that killed a

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terrorist named al-Badri earlier this month. Al-Badri was the mastermind of the bombing of the Golden Mosque in Samarra, one of Shia Islam's holiest shrines. That bombing sparked the escalation in sectarian violence we saw in 2006. Al-Badri was the most notorious al Qaeda commander in Samarra. He sheltered foreign terrorists, and he was responsible for attacks that claimed many innocent lives. His death is a victory for a free Iraq, and a sign that America and the Iraqi government will not surrender the future of Iraq to cold-blooded killers.

Al-Badri is just one of the many al Qaeda leaders and other extremists who are coming under a withering assault across Iraq. Only a year ago, al Qaeda ruled places like Ramadi, terrorizing the local population and intimidating local authorities. Today al Qaeda has largely been driven out of these cities, markets and schools are reopening, and normal life is returning. And since January, each month we have killed or captured an average of more than 1,500 al Qaeda terrorists and other enemies of Iraq's elected government.

Our surge is seizing the initiative from the enemy and handing it to the Iraqi people. And Iraqis are responding. Local residents are coming forward with tips that are helping U.S. and Iraqi forces rout out terrorists hiding among the population. While political progress has been slower than we had hoped, the Iraqi parliament passed more than 50 pieces of legislation in its most recent session. They approved a \$41 billion budget, created an electoral commission and military courts, and laid the groundwork for private sector investment in production of gasoline and diesel fuel. At the same time, Iraqi forces have taken responsibility for security in a number of areas. They are taking losses at a much higher rate than we are. And they're making these sacrifices willingly, because they are determined to see their children live in freedom.

The enemy in Iraq is still dangerous, and the surge is still in its early stages. Changing conditions on the ground is difficult work. But our troops are proving that it can be done. They are carrying out their mission with skill and honor. They are accomplishing great things for the future of our Nation and for the future of a free Iraq.

Thank you for listening.

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