



For Immediate Release
Office of the Press Secretary
June 10, 2006

President's Radio Address

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THE PRESIDENT: Good morning. This was a good week for the cause of freedom. On Wednesday night in Iraq, U.S. military forces killed the terrorist Zarqawi.

The killing of Zarqawi is an important victory in the global war on terror. This Jordanian-born terrorist was the operational commander of al Qaida in Iraq. He led a campaign of car bombings, and kidnappings, and suicide attacks that has taken the lives of many American forces, international aid workers, and thousands of innocent Iraqis. Zarqawi had a long history of murder and bloodshed. Before September the 11th, 2001, he ran a camp in Afghanistan that trained terrorists -- until Coalition forces destroyed that camp. He fled to Iraq, where he received medical care and set up operations with terrorist associates.

After the fall of Saddam, Zarqawi went underground and declared his allegiance to Osama bin Laden, who called him the "Prince of al Qaida in Iraq" and instructed terrorists around the world to "listen to him and obey him." Zarqawi personally beheaded American hostages and other civilians in Iraq; he masterminded the destruction of the United Nations headquarters in Baghdad; and he was responsible for the assassination of an American diplomat in Jordan and the bombing of hotels in Amman. His goals in Iraq were clear: He wanted to stop the rise of democracy, drive coalition forces out, incite a civil war, and turn that country into a safe haven from which al Qaida could launch new attacks on America and other free nations. Instead, Zarqawi died in the free and democratic Iraq that he fought so hard to prevent, and the world is better off because this violent man will never kill again.

Iraqis can be justly proud of their new government and its early steps to improve their security. And Americans can be enormously proud of the men and women of our Armed Forces, and the intelligence officers who support them. In the past three years, our troops have overthrown a cruel dictator, fought the terrorists and insurgents house to house, and trained

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Iraqi forces to defend their new democracy. All the while, they stayed on the trail of this brutal terrorist, persevering through years of near misses and false leads and never giving up hope. This week they got their man. And all Americans are grateful for their remarkable achievement.

Zarqawi is dead, but the difficult and necessary mission in Iraq continues. In the weeks ahead, violence in Iraq may escalate. The terrorists and insurgents will seek to prove that they can carry on without Zarqawi. And Coalition and Iraqi forces are seizing this moment to strike the enemies of freedom in Iraq at this time of uncertainty for their cause. The work ahead will require more sacrifice and the continued patience of the American people.

I'm encouraged by Prime Minister Maliki's determination to defeat our common enemies and bring security and rule of law to all Iraqis. This week he took another major step toward this objective when he completed the formation of his cabinet -- naming a new Minister of Defense, a new Minister of the Interior, and a new Minister of State for National Security. These new leaders will help the government address its top priorities: reconciliation, reconstruction, and putting an end to the kidnappings, beheadings, and suicide bombings.

As they pursue these goals, they will have America's full support. On Monday, I will convene my national security team and other key members of my Cabinet at Camp David to discuss the way ahead in Iraq. On Tuesday, Iraq's new Ambassador to the United States will join us, and we will have a teleconference discussion with Prime Minister Maliki and members of his cabinet. Together we will determine how to best deploy America's resources in Iraq and achieve our shared goal of an Iraq that can govern itself, sustain itself, and defend itself.

There's still difficult work ahead in Iraq. Yet this week, the ideology of terror has suffered a severe blow. Al Qaida has lost its leader in Iraq, the Iraqi people have completed a democratic government that is determined to defend them, and freedom has achieved a great victory in the heart of the Middle East.

Thank you for listening.

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