



For Immediate Release
Office of the Press Secretary
September 13, 2008

President's Radio Address

- [In Focus: National Security](#)
- [In Focus: Remembering 9/11](#)

- [President's Radio Address](#)
- [Audio](#)
- [En Español](#)

THE PRESIDENT: Good morning. This week, Americans marked seven years since the terrorist attacks that shook our Nation on September 11, 2001. On that day, we witnessed unspeakable destruction perpetrated by evil men. But we also witnessed selfless acts of valor and compassion performed by courageous citizens. And we saw the strength of the American people as they rallied in defense of the Nation.

On Thursday, I dedicated a new 9/11 memorial at the Pentagon. In the years to come, parents will visit this site to remember children who boarded Flight 77 for a field trip, and never emerged from the wreckage. Husbands and wives will visit the memorial to remember spouses who left for work one morning, and never returned home. And people from across our Nation will visit to remember the heroism of rescue workers who rushed into the burning Pentagon to save the lives of their fellow citizens.

Seven years after the attacks of 9/11, this spirit of heroism lives on. We see it in the courageous members of the United States Armed Forces. These brave men and women have volunteered to defend our Nation during a time of war. Every day, they are confronting our enemies abroad so we do not have to face them here at home. And because of their efforts, our Nation is safer today than it was seven years ago.

In Afghanistan, where the 9/11 attacks were planned, our men and women in uniform toppled the Taliban regime, destroyed al Qaeda camps, and liberated more than 25 million Afghans. In the years since, members of the Taliban and al Qaeda have sought to regain power through acts of terror. The United States and our allies are meeting this challenge head on. We will not allow Afghanistan to once again become a safe haven for terror.

Earlier this week, I announced additional American troop deployments to Afghanistan. In November, a Marine battalion that was scheduled to

Archives

Radio Address:

[2008](#)
[2007](#)
[2006](#)
[2005](#)
[2004](#)
[2003](#)
[2002](#)
[2001](#)

Radio Interviews:

[2006](#)

deploy to Iraq will deploy to Afghanistan instead. It will be followed in January by an Army combat brigade. This continuing commitment to the Afghan people illustrates a stark contrast: While the terrorists and extremists deliberately target and murder the innocent, coalition and Afghan forces risk their lives to protect the innocent.

[2005](#)

[2004](#)

FAQ

America is also on the offense against terrorists and extremists in Iraq. Since we launched the surge last year, violence has fallen to its lowest point since the spring of 2004. While the enemy in Iraq is still dangerous, we seized the offensive, and Iraqi forces are becoming increasingly capable of leading and winning the fight. As a result, we've been able to carry out a policy of "return on success" -- reducing the number of American combat forces in Iraq as conditions on the ground there continue to improve.

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After reviewing conditions in Iraq, General Petraeus and the Joint Chiefs of Staff have recommended additional force reductions. By February, about 8,000 additional American troops will have returned home without replacement. And if this progress in Iraq continues to hold, General Petraeus and our military leaders believe additional reductions will be possible in the first half of 2009.

In the seven years since the attacks of September the 11th, the men and women of our Armed Forces and their wonderful families have been a source of pride for the Nation. Those who do not wear the uniform also have a responsibility to serve our country. After 9/11, I called on Americans to devote at least 4,000 hours -- or two years over the course of a lifetime -- to volunteering in their communities. This morning, I renew that call. Serving others is more than just a generous act -- it is essential to the health of our society. And as any volunteer can tell you, when you bring hope to the lives of others, the life you enrich most is usually your own.

Thank you for listening.

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Return to this article at:

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2008/09/20080913.html>

