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AP Associated Press

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White House News - AP

By MERRILL HARTSON, Associated Press Writer

54 minutes ago

WASHINGTON - [President Bush](#) used terrorists' own words Tuesday to battle complacency among Americans about the threat of future attack, defending his record as the fall campaign season kicks into high gear.

Bush said that despite the absence of a successor on U.S. soil to the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks, the terrorist danger remains potent.

"Bin laden and his terrorist's allies have made their intentions as clear as Lenin and Hitler before them," the president said before the Military Officers Association of America and diplomatic representatives other countries that have suffered terrorist attacks. "The question is 'Will we listen? Will we pay attention to what these evil men say?'"

Quoting extensively from letters, Web site statements, audio recording and videotapes purportedly from terrorists, as well as documents found in various raids, Bush said that al Qaida, homegrown terrorists and other groups have adapted to changing U.S. defenses.

For example, Bush cited what he called "a grisly al Qaida manual" found in 2000 by British police during an anti-terrorist raid in London, which included a chapter called "Guidelines for Beating and Killing Hostages." He also cited what he said was a captured al Qaida document found during a recent raid in [Iraq](#). He said the document described plans to take over Iraq's western Anbar province and set up a governing structure including an education department, a social services department, a justice department, and an execution unit.

"The terrorists who attacked us on September the 11th, 2001, are men without conscience, but they're not madmen," he said. "They kill in the name of a clear and focused ideology, a set of beliefs that are evil but not insane."

His speech came after the White House released a strategy paper proclaiming the nation has made progress in the war on terror but that al-Qaida has adjusted to U.S. defenses and "we are not yet safe."

The White House also rejected Democrats' calls for replacing Defense Secretary Donald

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George W. Bush



Terrorism



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Rumsfeld. "It's not going to happen," presidential spokesman Tony Snow said. "Creating Don Rumsfeld as a bogeyman may make for good politics but would make for very lousy strategy at this time."

In its updated counterterrorism strategy, the White House said that "the enemy we face today in the war on terror is not the same enemy we faced on Sept. 11. Our effective counterterrorist efforts in part have forced the terrorists to evolve and modify their ways of doing business."

Two months before the midterm elections, the report was the White House's latest attempt to highlight national security, an issue that has helped Republicans in past campaigns. Democrats were releasing their own assessment.

Democrats released their own study, saying it shows the country is less secure today than before Bush took office. Citing research done by the nonpartisan, nonprofit Memorial Institute for the Prevention of Terrorism, the report said the number of al-Qaida members has jumped from 20,000 in 2001 to 50,000 today. It also charged that average weekly attacks in Iraq have jumped from almost 200 in spring 2004 to more than 600 this year, using numbers provided by the liberal-oriented Brookings Institution think tank.

"All the speeches in the world won't change what's going on in Iraq," said Senate Minority Leader Harry Reid.

"The truth is the president's policies have not worked and have not made us safer," said Sen. Thomas R. Carper ([news](#), [bio](#), [voting record](#)), D-Del.

Rep. John Murtha ([news](#), [bio](#), [voting record](#)), a hawkish Democrat who voted in favor of the war but now favors withdrawing troops, said the administration has so badly botched the war that a draft might be necessary.

The updated White House strategy came in the wake of the release of a new al-Qaida video over the weekend that raised concerns about the possibility of another attack as the fifth anniversary of Sept. 11 approaches. The tape featured an American — believed by the [FBI](#) to have attended al-Qaida training camps — calling for his countrymen to convert to Islam.

The Department of [Homeland Security](#) had raised the terror threat for aviation to red — its highest level — in mid-August at the time the British, working with the United States, broke up what was purported to be a plot against international flights bound from Britain to the United States.

Five years after the attacks on the World Trade Center in New York and the [Pentagon](#), about a third of the American people think the terrorists are winning, according to a recent AP-Ipsos poll.

In its updated terror-fighting strategy, the administration took credit for some successes, but it also acknowledged, "While the United States government and its partners have thwarted many attacks, we have not been able to prevent them all. Terrorists have struck in many places throughout the world, from Bali to Beslan to Baghdad."

"There will continue to be challenges ahead, but along with our partners, we will attack terrorism and its ideology and bring hope and freedom to the people of the world," the policy said. "This is how we will win the war on terror."

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