



## Obama Has Touted Al Qaeda's Demise 32 Times since Benghazi Attack

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By [Fred Lucas](#)

(CNSNews.com) – President Barack Obama has described al Qaeda as having been “decimated,” “on the path to defeat” or some other variation at least 32 times since the attack on the U.S. consulate in Benghazi, Libya, according to White House transcripts.

This comes despite Libyan President Mohamed Yousef El-Magarief, members of Congress, an administration spokesperson, and several press reports suggesting that al Qaeda played a role in the attack.

Recently, on Nov. 1 in Green Bay, Wis., Obama said, “Thanks to sacrifice and service of our brave men and women in uniform, the war in Iraq is over, the war in Afghanistan is winding down, al Qaeda has been decimated, Osama bin Laden is dead.”

[video:1]

Fox News reported Monday about an Aug. 15 emergency meeting of personnel at the U.S. Mission in Benghazi over concerns of al Qaeda training camps in the area.

An Aug. 16 cable from Ambassador Chris Stevens, who was killed on Sept. 11, was sent to the Office of the Secretary of State and briefed on the emergency meeting, saying, “on the location of approximately ten Islamist militias and AQ training camps within Benghazi ... these groups ran the spectrum from Islamist militias, such as QRF Brigade and Ansar al-Sharia to Takfirist thugs,” Fox News reported the communication as saying.

One day after the Benghazi attack that occurred on the 11th anniversary of 9/11, Obama spoke at a campaign event in Las Vegas on Sept. 12.

“A day after 9/11, we are reminded that a new tower rises above the New York skyline, but al Qaeda is on the path to defeat and bin Laden is dead,” Obama said in Las Vegas.

On Sept. 13 in Golden, Colo., Obama said, “Four years ago, I promised to end the war in Iraq -- and we did. I said we’d wind down the war in Afghanistan -- and we are. And while a new tower rises above the New York skyline, al Qaeda is on the path to defeat, and Osama bin Laden is dead.” He repeated that line again on Sept. 17 in Cincinnati and again that day in Columbus, Ohio.

The next day at a fundraising event at the Waldorf Astoria Hotel in New York, Obama brought up the first 9/11 and used “decimated,” indicating past tense.

“We’ve got choices about war and peace,” Obama said. “I ended the war in Iraq, as I promised. We are transitioning out of Afghanistan. We have gone after the terrorists who actually attacked us 9/11 and decimated al Qaeda.”

On Sept. 20, speaking at the University of Miami, Obama said, “We’ve decimated al Qaeda’s top leadership in the border regions around Pakistan, but in Yemen, in Libya, in other of these places – increasingly in places like Syria – what you see is these elements that don’t have the same capacity that a bin Laden or core al Qaeda had, but can still cause a lot of damage, and we’ve got to make sure that we remain vigilant and are focused on preventing them from doing us any harm.”

On Sept. 21 in Woodbridge, Va. and Sept. 23 in Milwaukee, Obama again said, “al Qaeda is on the path to defeat.”

Off the campaign trail on Sept. 25, Obama spoke to the United Nations General Assembly and said, “Al Qaeda has been weakened, and Osama bin Laden is no more.”

The next day, campaigning in Bowling Green, Ohio, Obama again said, “al Qaeda is on the path to defeat.” That same day at Kent State University, Obama used the same line. Obama said the same thing on Sept. 27 in Virginia Beach, Va.

On Sept. 28 at the Hilton in Washington, Obama said, “We said that we would go after al Qaeda, and they are on the run and bin Laden is dead.”

Obama went back to saying the terrorist organization was on the “path to defeat” on Sept. 30 in Las Vegas, Oct. 4 in Denver and Oct. 4 at the University of Wisconsin in Madison.

On Oct. 5, Obama again said, “al Qaeda is on the run and Osama bin Laden is no more.”

At a fundraising event Oct. 9 in San Francisco, Obama said, “and today, al Qaeda is on its heels and Osama bin Laden is no more.” He made

the same statement on Oct. 11 at the University of Miami and later that day at a campaign event at the J.W. Marriott in Miami.

On Oct. 18 in Manchester, N.H., Obama returned to the "path to defeat" line, which he repeated Oct. 19 in Fairfax, Va.

Obama said Oct. 23 at Lynn University in Boca Raton, Fla., "al Qaeda's core leadership has been decimated." He repeated the same line at a campaign event in Delray Beach, Fla. that day.

That day in Dayton, Ohio, Obama said, "That's why, working with Joe Biden and our national security team, we've been able to decimate al Qaeda."

By Oct. 24, he returned to the dominant "path to defeat" theme, before going back to "decimated" the next day in Cleveland, where the president said, "I said we'd refocus on the terrorists who actually carried out the 9/11 attacks – and al Qaeda is decimated and Osama bin Laden is dead."

Obama returned to Las Vegas to again say "al Qaeda is on the path to defeat." He said the same thing Oct. 25 in Richmond, Va., again that day in Tampa and on Oct. 27 in Nashua, N.H.

But officials from the United States and Libya have suggested they believe al Qaeda was involved in the deadly Benghazi attack that killed four Americans, including U.S. Ambassador Stevens.

During a Sept. 16 interview on CBS's "Face the Nation," host Bob Schieffer asked Libyan President Mohamed Yousef El-Magariief, "And you believe that this was the work of al Qaeda and you believe that it was led by foreigners. Is that-- is that what you are telling us?"

Mohamed Yousef El-Magariief responded, "It was planned— definitely, it was planned by foreigners, by people who— who entered the country a few months ago, and they were planning this criminal act since their— since their arrival."

Shawn Turner, a spokesman for the director of National Intelligence, said on Sept. 28, "It remains unclear if any group or person exercised overall command and control of the attack, and if extremist group leaders directed their members to participate. However, we do assess that some of those involved were linked to groups affiliated with, or sympathetic to Al Qaeda."

A [Congressional Research Service Report](#) on Oct. 18, said, "Libyan General National Congress President Mohammed Yusuf al Magariaief has linked Al Qaeda to the attacks in interviews and stated his view that the attacks were planned to correspond with September 11 and avenge Al Libi's death. Al Qaeda's regional affiliate-Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM)-released a statement praising the September 11, 2012 attack, but did not claim credit for planning or helping to execute it."

In the Obama administration's fiscal year 2013 budget proposal, "One program would support the creation of Libyan Special Operations Forces 'to conduct special operations missions, including counterterrorism operations to fight Al Qaeda and its affiliates,'" the CRS report said. The Obama administration budget was defeated in both the House and Senate earlier this year.

Several members of Congress have cited al Qaeda's involvement with the attack.

A letter from Rep. Michael Burgess (R-Texas) to President Obama on Sept. 25, said, "Furthermore, last May an al Qaeda affiliated terror cell, the Imprisoned Omar Abdul Rahman Brigades, claimed responsibility for an attack on the International Red Cross office in Benghazi."

On Oct. 11, House Homeland Security Committee Chairman Peter King (R-N.Y.) wrote a letter to Secretary of State Hillary Clinton.

"According to public reports, in the hours following the attack, U.S. intelligence agencies monitored communications from jihadists affiliated with Ansar al-Sharia and members of al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), the group's North African affiliate," King wrote. "The intercepts reportedly indicated Ansar al Sharia jihadists conspired with AQIM in the attack and acted as subordinates to mid-level AQIM members during the operation."

House Foreign Relations Committee Chairwoman Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R- Fla.) wrote an Oct. 15 letter to Clinton.

"Moreover, it remains problematic that the security concerns of diplomats in the field may go unheeded by the State Department. Recent news reports indicate that Ambassador Christopher Stevens had expressed concern about security threats in Benghazi as attacks on Western targets increased and his name along with those of certain Western European ambassadors, appeared on an al Qaeda hit list," Ros-Lehtinen wrote.

A Sept. 27 Washington Post story headlined, "Attack on U.S. Consulate in Libya determined to be terrorism tied to al Qaeda," quoted an unnamed U.S. intelligence official saying, "There are people who at least have some association with AQIM," but added, "It's not so direct that you would say AQIM as an organization planned and carried this out."

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