

# RESPONSES TO OSAMA BIN LADEN'S DEATH

May 2, 2011

(CNN) - Former presidents, former and U.S. officials, members of Congress, governors and potential presidential candidates responded to the death of al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden Sunday night.

Former President George W. Bush:

"Earlier this evening, President Obama called to inform me that American forces killed Osama bin Laden, the leader of the al-Qaeda network that attacked America on September 11, 2001. I congratulated him and the men and women of our military and intelligence communities who devoted their lives to this mission. They have our everlasting gratitude. This momentous achievement marks a victory for America, for people who seek peace around the world, and for all those who lost loved ones on September 11, 2001. The fight against terror goes on, but tonight America has sent an unmistakable message: No matter how long it takes, justice will be done."

Former President Bill Clinton:

"This is a profoundly important moment not just for the families of those who lost their lives on 9/11 and in al-Qaeda's other attacks but for people all over the world who want to build a common future of peace, freedom, and cooperation for our children.

I congratulate the President, the National Security team and the members of our armed forces on bringing Osama bin Laden to justice after more than a decade of murderous al-Qaeda attacks."

Former Vice President Dick Cheney:

"I also want to congratulate President Obama and the members of his national security team. At this moment when bin Laden has been brought to justice, we especially remember the sacrifice of the young Americans who've paid the ultimate price in defense of the nation, as well as the nearly 3000 Americans who lost their lives on 9/11."

Former Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice:

"The demise of Osama bin Laden is a tremendous victory for the American people. Justice has been done and we are all indebted to the American military and intelligence community for their skill and dedication. Nothing can bring back bin Laden's innocent victims, but perhaps this can help salve the wounds of their loved ones.

I am overwhelmed with pride in America and in those who protect us. We are all united tonight in gratitude and love for our country. God Bless America."

Retired Gen. Colin Powell, former Secretary of State:

"Osama bin Laden is dead and buried at sea. Justice has been done. His death brings a sense of relief to the families of 9/11 and the families of all those brave America troops who have fought this war over the past ten years. I congratulate the intelligence community and the assaulting troops for this flawless operation. Osama bin Laden was just one man. The al-Qaeda threat remains and we must be vigilant and aggressive against them until they are totally destroyed."

New York Democratic Gov. Andrew Cuomo:

"The death of Osama bin Laden is a historic moment that represents a major step in our country's efforts to defeat terrorism around the world and should bring a sense of justice to the victims of 9/11 and his other attacks.

We will never forget those who were lost, their families and those who risked their lives to save others. New Yorkers endured bin Laden's most devastating and destructive attack, and his death brings back the horrific images and emotions of that terrible day. However, his death also reminds us of our strength, courage, and unity as a people in our response to his actions.

The Administration's vigilance and dedication to hunt down Osama bin Laden has never wavered and I applaud their commitment to this cause. I also applaud our men and women in uniform who have fought tirelessly against terrorism and to defend freedom.

The threat to our state and our nation unfortunately does not die with Osama bin Laden. We must remain vigilant in preventing terror acts and continue to do everything to keep our state and nation safe and secure."

New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg:

"The killing of Osama bin Laden does not lessen the suffering that New Yorkers and Americans experienced at his hands, but it is a critically important victory for our nation. ... New Yorkers have waited nearly 10 years for this news. It is my hope that it will bring some closure and comfort to all those who lost loved ones on September 11, 2001."

House Speaker John Boehner, R-Ohio:

"This is great news for the security of the American people and a victory in our continued fight against al-Qaeda and radical extremism around the world. We continue to face a complex and evolving terrorist threat, and it is important that we remain vigilant in our efforts to confront and defeat the terrorist enemy and protect the American people. I want to congratulate - and thank - the hard-working men and women of our Armed Forces and intelligence community for their tireless efforts and perseverance that led to this success. I also want to commend President Obama and his team, as well as President Bush, for all of their efforts to bring Osama bin Laden to justice."

House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi, D-California:

"The death of Osama bin Laden marks the most significant development in our fight against al-Qaeda. I salute President Obama, his national security team, Director Panetta, our men and women in the intelligence community and military, and other nations who supported this effort for their leadership in achieving this major accomplishment. It is a testament to the professionalism of our dedicated national security professionals that no American lives were lost in this operation.

As we approach the 10th anniversary of the 9/11 attacks, I hope that today's action provides some comfort to the 9/11 families who lost loved ones in the devastating attacks on our shores.

Though the death of Osama bin Laden is historic, it does not diminish our relentless pursuit of terrorists who threaten our country."

U.S. House Majority Leader Eric Cantor, R-Virginia:

"Justice has been done. The man with the blood of more than 3,000 (people) on his hands, the man who forced us to begin to think the unthinkable - is now dead. ... While this is no doubt a major event in our battle against terrorism, we will not relent in our fight against terror and our efforts to keep America safe and secure."

House Majority Whip Kevin McCarthy, R-California:

"The terrorist leader behind the September 11th attacks on American soil, Osama bin Laden, represented a threat not only to our nation, but to those seeking freedom and democracy around the world. Our brave troops have done a tremendous job in bringing an end to this symbol of hatred and intolerance, never wavering in their commitment to protect our nation. I join the President and all Americans in commending the members of our armed forces and intelligence community for the sacrifices they've made, and continue to make, on behalf of our security and freedom."

Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, D-Nevada:

"Osama bin Laden is dead, killed in a targeted U.S. operation authorized by President Obama.

This is the most significant victory in our fight against al-Qaeda and terrorism, but that fight is not over. We will continue to support our troops and the American civilians who are fighting every day to protect our homeland.

Nine-and-a-half years ago, Osama bin Laden masterminded the horrific attacks against the United States that killed nearly 3,000 people. As we remember those who were killed on that dark day in September and their families, we also reaffirm our resolve to defeat the terrorist forces that killed them and thousands of others across the globe. Because of courageous Americans in our military and intelligence community, their leader is now gone."

Sen. Susan Collins, R-Maine, ranking Republican on the Senate Homeland Security Committee:

"The director of the National Counterterrorism Center informed me tonight that Osama bin Laden was killed in a U.S. operation. This welcome news is a credit to our intelligence efforts and brings to justice the architect of the attacks on our country that killed nearly 3000 people on September 11, 2001."

Sen. Joe Lieberman, I-Connecticut, Chairman of the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee:

"The death of Osama bin Laden unfortunately does not mean the end of the al-Qaeda network he built, the hateful ideology he helped propagate, or the threat against our homeland. Terrorists will continue to seek to murder Americans at home and abroad, and so too must our ever more determined global efforts to thwart their plots, destroy their networks, and defeat their ideology.

But the end of Osama bin Laden—at American hands, and in partnership with a Muslim ally—marks a historic victory in this longer struggle. Bin Laden's death should bring a measure of justice and solace to al-Qaeda's victims, and fear to its ranks, who now must know their hour of reckoning, too, shall come.

The death of bin Laden should also provide all of us with a renewed sense of hope and confidence about the progress we have achieved in this struggle since 9/11 and the ultimate success I am confident we will achieve in this long war. While the path from this moment remains long, Americans will wake up tomorrow in a safer, better, and more just world."

U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman John Kerry, D-Massachusetts:

"(This) closes an important chapter in our war against extremists who kill innocent people around the world. We are a nation of peace and laws, and people everywhere should understand that our 10-year manhunt was in search of justice, not revenge."

Sen. Saxby Chambliss, R-Georgia, vice chairman of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence:

"This is a historic moment for the U.S. special operations and intelligence communities. I highly commend the special operations units who undertook this mission and carried it out with no injuries to women or children inside the compound. The CIA and others in the U.S. intelligence community did a phenomenal job over several months in carrying out this assignment."

Sen. John McCain, R-Arizona, ranking Republican on the Senate Armed Services Committee:

"I am overjoyed that we finally got the world's top terrorist. The world is a better and more just place now that Osama bin Laden is no longer in it. I hope the families of the victims of the September 11th attacks will sleep easier tonight and every night hence knowing that justice has been done. I commend the President and his team, as well as our men and women in uniform and our intelligence professionals, for this superb achievement.

But while we take heart in the news that Osama bin Laden is dead, we must be mindful that al-Qaeda and its terrorist allies are still lethal and determined enemies, and we must remain vigilant to defeat them."

Sen. Roy Blunt, R-Missouri, member of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence:

“Osama bin Laden’s death is a major victory for America. This development is the culmination of the sacrifices and dedication from our brave troops and intelligence professionals. After nearly a decade, it also brings a great measure of justice and closure for all Americans who lost loved ones as a result of the brutal attacks against our nation on 9/11. While this does not mean the end of our fight against global terrorism, bin Laden’s death is a major blow to al-Qaeda and the terrorist organizations that he financed.”

Rep. Peter King, R-New York, Chairman of the House Committee on Homeland Security:

“I commend President Obama on the announcement of the killing of Osama bin Laden. Today, the American people have seen justice. The leader of the United States’ top enemy has gotten what he deserves for orchestrating the deaths of nearly 3,000 innocent Americans on September 11, 2001. In 2001, President Bush said ‘we will not tire, we will not falter, and we will not fail.’ President Bush deserves great credit for putting action behind those words. President Obama deserves equal credit for his resolve in this long war against al-Qaeda.

This great success would not have been possible without the tireless work of countless brave men and women who have served around the world in this War on Terror.”

Rep. Michele Bachmann, R-Minnesota, member of the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence:

“I want to express my deepest gratitude to the men and women of the U.S. military and intelligence community. Their persistence and dedicated service has yielded success in a mission that has gripped our nation since the terrible events of 9/11. Tonight’s news does not bring back the lives of the thousands of innocent people who were killed that day by Osama bin Laden’s horrific plan, and it does not end the threat posed by terrorists, but it is my hope that this is the beginning of the end of Sharia-compliant terrorism.”

Former Republican Massachusetts Gov. Mitt Romney:

“This is a great victory for lovers of freedom and justice everywhere. Congratulations to our intelligence community, our military and the president. My thoughts are with the families of Osama bin Laden’s many thousands of victims, and the brave servicemen and women who have laid down their lives in pursuit of this murderous terrorist.”

Former Pennsylvania Sen. Rick Santorum:

"This is extraordinary news for all freedom loving people of the world, and I commend all those involved for this historic triumph. Americans have waited nearly ten years for the news of Osama bin Laden's death. And while this is a very significant objective that cannot be minimized, the threat from Jihadism does not die with bin Laden. As we were vigilant in taking him out we need to demonstrate we will continue to be vigilant until the enemy has been subdued."

Former Minnesota Gov. Tim Pawlenty:

"This is terrific news for freedom and justice. In the hours after the 9/11 attacks, President Bush promised that America would bring Osama bin Laden to justice—and we did. I want to congratulate America's armed forces and President Obama for a job well done. Let history show that the perseverance of the US military and the American people never wavered. America will never shrink from the fight and ultimately those who seek to harm us face only defeat. Today, justice is done, but the fight against radical Islamic terrorism is not yet over."

Former Arkansas Gov. Mike Huckabee:

"It is unusual to celebrate a death, but today Americans and decent people the world over cheer the news that madman, murderer and terrorist Osama bin Laden is dead. The leader of Al Qaeda- responsible for the deaths of 3000 innocent citizens on September 11, 2001, and whose maniacal hate is responsible for the deaths of thousands of US servicemen and women was killed by U.S. military. President Obama confirmed the announcement late last night. DNA tests confirmed his death and his body is in the possession of the U.S.

It has taken a long time for this monster to be brought to justice. Welcome to hell, bin Laden. Let us all hope that his demise will serve notice to Islamic radicals the world over that the United States will be relentless in tracking down and terminating those who would inflict terror, mayhem and death on any of our citizens."

Former Alaska Gov. Sarah Palin:

"Americans tonight are united in celebration and gratitude. God bless all the brave men and women in our military and our intelligence services who contributed to carrying out the successful mission to bring bin Laden to justice and who laid the groundwork over the years to make this victory possible. It's a testament to the hard work and dedication of these brave Americans who relentlessly hunted down our enemy.

This is a victory for the American people, for the victims who were heartlessly murdered on September 11 and in Al Qaeda's other numerous attacks, and for all the peace-loving people of the world.

May God bless our troops and our intelligence services, and God bless America!"

Sen. Dianne Feinstein, D-California, chairman of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence:

"The announcement that Osama bin Laden is dead is welcome news, and I congratulate the CIA for finding him and providing the information that led to his death. I also congratulate the U.S. military team who conducted this clean and precise operation.

Bin Laden is responsible for the attacks of 9/11 and has been the head of al-Qaeda and inspirational leader of extremism for more than a decade. His death presents an opportunity for a new and better day if the will is there. I truly hope this will be a turning point in our efforts to defeat global terrorism."

The death of bin Laden also provides some measure of justice for the family and loved ones of the nearly 3,000 who lost their lives on 9/11.

I was notified on Sunday of the strike and have been briefed in the past about intelligence on bin Laden's whereabouts. It has been a very impressive CIA operation and they deserve praise."

Sen. Mark Warner, D-VA, member of Senate Select Committee on Intelligence:

"I want to commend our military and intelligence professionals for the coordinated and painstaking work that was responsible for tracking down Osama bin Laden.

Bin Laden was behind the tragedies in New York, Pennsylvania and at the Pentagon in Northern Virginia on September 11th, 2001, the bombing of the Norfolk-based USS Cole in 2000, and countless other acts of terror that have killed thousands of innocent people.

His death does not mean that the threat posed by terrorism to our nation has passed. We must remain vigilant. But bin Laden's death does provide a sense of justice, and hopefully a measure of comfort, for those who have given so much in America's fight against international terrorism."

U.S. Sen. John McCain, R-Arizona:

"The world is a better and more just place now that Osama bin Laden is no longer in it. I hope the families of the victims of the September 11th attacks will sleep easier tonight and every night hence knowing that justice has been done."

Defense Secretary Robert Gates:

"From Chief Spokesman Geoff Morrell: "Secretary Gates is enormously proud of everyone involved in making yesterday's operation a success. It was an extraordinary achievement."

Janet Napolitano, Secretary of Homeland Security:

"The death of Osama bin Laden is an important success not only for the United States, but the entire world. Our efforts to combat terrorism, however, do not fixate on one individual, and we remain completely focused on protecting our nation against violent extremism of all kinds

We remain at a heightened state of vigilance, but the Department of Homeland Security does not intend to issue an NTAS alert at this time. I have been clear since announcing NTAS in January that we will only issue alerts when we have specific or credible information to convey to the American public. However, our security posture, which always includes a number of measures both seen and unseen, will continue to respond appropriately to protect the American people from an evolving threat picture both in the coming days and beyond.

I commend the President and offer my gratitude to the men and women who defend and protect our nation at home and abroad, whether they wear a military or law enforcement uniform or serve as one of thousands of unsung heroes in the intelligence and homeland security community. It is true that we are stronger and safer than we were on 9/11—not only because Osama bin Laden is dead, but because of the unflagging dedication and hard work of so many people throughout the world committed to freedom and security."

Former Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld:

"The man who once called the United States "a paper tiger" and issued a fatwa to "kill all Americans" believed that our nation would not strike back if provoked. Today that man, responsible for the deaths of 3,000 Americans on September 11th, Osama bin Laden, is dead. It is an achievement of which our country can be proud.

Credit belongs to the courageous special operators who executed the mission. As America awoke to celebration this morning, these professionals quietly went about their work, for they know as well as any that this fight is not over.

Recognition should also go to the intelligence professionals who have worked tirelessly over the past decade to collect information on al-Qaeda. Initial reports indicate that intelligence efforts at Guantanamo Bay may have played an essential role in this success.

All of this was made possible by the relentless, sustained pressure on al-Qaeda that the Bush administration initiated after 9/11 and that the Obama administration has wisely chosen to continue.

This is an important victory in the fight against Islamist terrorism, but the struggle will go on. We must not have any illusions that it ends today or that America can afford to let down its guard tomorrow."

Former U.S. Secretary of Homeland Security Tom Ridge:

"The news that Osama bin Laden is no more demonstrates the resolve of the intelligence and military community and the American community writ large. We did not forget, nor will we ever. May this news give some measure of comfort to those we lost on 9/11 and those we have lost since that day, who fought so bravely to answer brutality with justice."

Sen. Charles Schumer, D-New York:

"This is a thunderous strike for justice for the thousands of my fellow New Yorkers - and citizens from all over the world - who were murdered on 9/11. It took close to ten years, but the world's most wanted terrorist has finally met his deserved fate. New York's heart is still broken from the tragedy of 9/11, but this at least brings some measure of closure and consolation to the victims and their families.

This is a massive accomplishment for the countless military and intelligence personnel who have been urgently dedicated to this task for the past decade. Because bin Laden's evil dogma has poisoned the minds of so many others, we cannot let up in the war on terror. This successful mission sends a definitive message to those who would test the resolve of the people of the United States of America: do not doubt our resolve; if you do us harm, we will find you, we will mete out justice, and we will prevail."

Rep. Charlie Rangel, D-New York:

“As we near the ten-year anniversary commemorating al-Qaeda’s terrorist attacks against our great nation on September 11, President Obama’s announcement of Osama bin Laden’s death marks a significant milestone in our global fight on terrorism.

Our nation’s heartfelt thanks go out to the brave men and women of the U.S. Armed Forces who have succeeded in executing their mission. Their courage brings justice to the 3,000 innocent victims of 9/11, and nearly 850 first responders who died in the aftermath; it brings honor to the 6,000 American soldiers killed and 42,500 wounded in Iraq and Afghanistan since 9/11. We will never forget their sacrifices.

I congratulate President Obama’s leadership and the dedicated effort of our national security and intelligence team in their successful operation. While fear and violent acts of terrorism have not been eradicated, we will continue to protect Americans at home and fight injustice in the world.”

Former House Speaker Newt Gingrich:

“The killing of Osama bin Laden is a significant victory in the long struggle between radical Islamists and modern civilization.

This victory is a tribute to the patient endurance of American justice. I commend both President George W. Bush who led the campaign against our enemies through seven long years and President Obama who continued and intensified the campaign in both Afghanistan and Pakistan.”

Rep. Paul Ryan, R-Wisconsin:

“The President’s announcement that Osama bin Laden has been found and killed is simply fantastic news. After ten years of dedicated effort across two administrations, we have struck a major blow against al-Qaeda and achieved a momentous turning point in our nation’s ongoing War on Terrorism. While we must remain vigilant in defense of freedom and democracy in Iraq, in Afghanistan, and on other fronts, we can rest assured that the murderer who orchestrated the deaths of thousands of our countrymen has finally met justice at the hands of the brave men and women of our military and intelligence community.”

Source: CNN

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