



HEADQUARTERS
MULTI-NATIONAL FORCE - IRAQ
BAGHDAD, IRAQ
APO AE 09342-1400

27 February 2009

Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines, Coast Guardsmen, and Civilians of Multi-National Force-Iraq:

Next month will mark the 6th year anniversary of Operation Iraqi Freedom. Your sacrifice, dedication and commitment have moved a nation from a brutal dictatorship to one where the Iraqi people can freely elect their representatives without fear. Future generations of Iraqis will study in the schools you helped build, heal in the hospitals that you have worked on, and participate in the administration of their country because of the institutions you assisted in establishing. Thanks to your efforts, the Iraqi people now have hope; and the Iraqi government is able to exercise its sovereignty and to take increased responsibility for the future of its people.

After extensive consultation with Iraqis, US military chain of command and civilian leaders, the President announced his plan for the responsible drawdown of US forces in Iraq and the continued development of a partnership between our two nations. In accordance with the Security Agreement and Strategic Framework Agreement, the President has provided clear guidance regarding the change of mission for our forces, and his plan provides significant flexibility to military commanders on the ground to implement this guidance.

Our Joint Campaign Plan sets out how we are transitioning from a primary focus on population security to one focused on building Iraqi capacity to achieve sustainable stability. Following an initial drawdown over the next six months, our forces will remain at a robust level through the critical time leading up to and immediately following Iraq's national elections in late-2009/early-2010. As of 31 August 2010 our combat mission in Iraq will end. US forces will be composed of a transition force that consists of a single headquarters, several Advisory and Assistance Brigades, and appropriate supporting forces. The mission of our transition force will be to train, equip and advise professional Iraqi Security Forces; to conduct coordinated counter-terrorism missions; and to protect our ongoing civilian and military efforts within Iraq.

I am continually amazed and humbled by your gallantry and adaptability, and I want to thank each and every one of you – as well as your families at home – for your selfless dedication and commitment to this cause which is vital to Iraq and our Nation. It is a tremendous honor to soldier with you.

Sincerely,

Raymond T. Odierno
General, US Army
Commanding