



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

27 November 2008

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

Thanksgiving is a time for gratitude, and as we celebrate this American holiday, I want to take the opportunity to thank each and every one of you for your courage, versatility, and steadfast dedication to our mission and the people of Iraq. Throughout this campaign, you have been warriors and diplomats, guardians and mentors, trainers and friends. You have been fearless defenders of freedom, and you have been compassionate builders of peace and stability. I am continually amazed by your ingenuity and perseverance, and not a day that goes by that I do not pause to appreciate the extraordinary patriots of this command and the incredibly important endeavor in which we are engaged.

I also give thanks for the significant progress achieved in the past year. Together with our Iraqi partners, you have reduced violence to its lowest level in nearly five years, and a sense of normalcy is beginning to return to communities across the country. You have proven to the people of Iraq – and to the entire world – how much is achievable when gallant troopers commit themselves wholeheartedly to their mission, and you have renewed hope in the hearts of millions.

As Americans gather with their families and loved ones this holiday, they will no doubt pause for a moment to give thanks for the brave men and women who are selflessly protecting freedoms around the world. I join in their gratitude, and I am honored to be in the company of heroes who make up our family here in MNF-I. Thank you for your selfless service and resolute determination, and may you have a happy and blessed Thanksgiving.

With pride and determination,

Raymond T. Odierno
General, US Army
Commanding