



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

May 25, 2009

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

As we move forward to achieve a stable and peaceful Iraq, I ask you to pause on this Memorial Day to honor the unforgettable bravery, selfless service and dedication of the servicemembers who have given their lives in the service of our nation and of our allies.

For over a century, Memorial Day has been an occasion for Americans to honor those who have given their lives to protect liberty. We in MNF-I are indebted to those Citizen-Soldiers who have come before us, men and women who served far from home in the defense of those at home. Some have made the ultimate sacrifice while carrying out their mission. As generations past served nobly, so today the Warrior Ethos defines the character of the brave Americans of MNF-I: “I will always place the mission first, I will never accept defeat, I will never quit, I will never leave a fallen comrade.” Tremendous selflessness, sacrifice, and volunteerism have allowed us to achieve progress in Iraq that many thought impossible. Our troopers thus share the professional bonds that exemplify the extraordinary service of Americans in uniform through the centuries.

From the Revolution to today, from Yorktown to Midway, and Fallujah to Baghdad, America’s servicemembers have not struggled in vain. We serve today in their shadow as alongside our Iraqi partners we seek to build a new era for Iraq, one that provides security for Iraqis, for Americans, and for our Allies alike.

Thank you once again for your service. It remains the greatest of privileges to soldier with you, and I am honored to be counted among the ranks of the finest, most adaptable, and most tenacious force the world has ever known. May God bless all of you, as together we remember our fallen warriors, from the first days of the Republic to today.

With pride and determination,

Raymond T. Odierno
General, United States Army
Commanding