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

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

Reflecting a maturing relationship between two sovereign nations and growing cooperation between partners, this year the Government of Iraq and the United States entered into historic accords—the Security Agreement (SA) and the Security Framework Agreement—guiding our current operations and future strategic partnership. Together, these demonstrate the United States' continued commitment to Iraq, its people and regional stability. Your efforts have made powerful strides toward achieving a sovereign, stable and self-reliant Iraq. You have improved security, trained an effective ISF and helped build civil capacity. Today, Iraqis have hope for the future.

Because of your success, we are ready for the next step. On 30 June, US combat forces will turn over the security of cities and towns to the ISF—a major step forward for Iraq. Your hard work and effective training set the stage for this milestone and the fulfillment of our obligations under the Security Agreement. This is the right time to transition security of the cities to the ISF who are ready for this task. But this by no means suggests we are finished.

After 30 June, we will continue to train, advise and enable the ISF in the cities and coordinate support necessary for ISF success. Outside the cities, we will continue to conduct full spectrum operations—by, with and through the ISF. Our combined efforts will establish a layered defense: as Iraqis secure the cities, our combat forces will secure the belts and borders eliminating safe havens and preventing the facilitation of foreign fighters. These synchronized operations have tremendous potential for increased security across Iraq.

As our mission continues, it will require a change in mindset as well as our tactics, techniques and procedures. We will conduct all operations within Iraq with complete transparency, full coordination and open communication with our Iraqi partners from platoon to force level, from private to general. Increasingly, we will transition to ISF-led operations.

We have a time of great opportunity ahead of us, as we help the GoI build a stable, just and prosperous society for all Iraqis. Through unity of effort with our civilian partners, we will accomplish long-term success. We will fully assist and support Provincial Reconstruction Teams, interagency and international organizations, and the GoI—all working to build Iraq's civil capacity. All of our efforts – combat operations, civil capacity, training and advising – will be tightly integrated with the whole of the US Government, orchestrated by the US ambassador and his team.

We face complex challenges as we assist the Iraqis in protecting their population and providing security. Continuing through the transitions ahead, every member of MNF-I must remain focused and sustain the adaptability, versatility and great initiative that have brought us to this point. Our Nation swells with pride at the courage, compassion, commitment and selflessness that you demonstrate daily. I'm humbled and honored to serve in your ranks as we continue to support Iraq in fulfilling its tremendous potential to prosper in a stable and just environment.

With determination,

Raymond T. Odierno
General, United States Army
Commanding