



HEADQUARTERS
UNITED STATES FORCES - IRAQ
BAGHDAD, IRAQ
APO AE 09342

June 1, 2010

To the Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines, Coast Guardsmen and Civilians of United States Forces-Iraq:

On March 7, 2010, Iraq conducted successful national elections deemed credible and legitimate in the eyes of Iraqi citizens and those of the international community. Despite extremist intent to disrupt the elections, record numbers of Iraqis exercised their right to vote, buoyed by faith in the democratic process and the competence of the Iraqi Security Forces. The certification of the election results endured politically-motivated challenges, including a ballot recount, which only served to confirm the validity of the election process. Planned, prepared and executed by Iraqis for Iraqis, these elections mark a new era in Iraq's history. The Iraqi people have again resoundingly rejected extremism and demonstrated their hope and conviction in a brighter future. Your efforts in improving security—through training, advising, enabling and partnering with Iraqi Security Forces—have provided the foundation upon which Iraqis are choosing and constructing their future.

Because of our success, Iraq is able to take the next step of forming the next national government. We expect security challenges as extremist organizations attempt to thwart Iraq's progress. With our Iraqi partners in the lead, we will remain vigilant and prevail. Throughout the remainder of 2010, we will support the national transition, engaging with new national leaders while simultaneously supporting ongoing provincial and local good-governance efforts aimed at improving the lives of all Iraqis.

We have a time of great opportunity ahead of us. In accordance with our responsible drawdown and indicative of Iraq's progress, we will end combat operations and establish a transition force of Advisory and Assistance Brigades by September 1, 2010. At this important juncture OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM will end and OPERATION NEW DAWN will begin. With this change, our commitment to the Iraqi people will remain steadfast and we will not waiver in our support.

The time is right; the Iraqi Security Forces are ready to assume full responsibility for their internal defense. This by no means suggests we are finished. After September 1, 2010, we will continue to conduct partnered counter-terrorism operations and provide combat enablers to help the Iraqi Security Forces maintain pressure on the extremist networks. Our primary mission will remain to train and advise Iraqi Security Forces, as well as support Provincial Reconstruction Teams, the United Nations and other non-governmental organizations dedicated to building Iraqi capacity. Through unity of effort with our civilian partners, orchestrated by the US ambassador and his team, we will continue to enable Iraq to succeed. We will continue to operate in a complex environment, certainly facing challenges that will require continued ingenuity, flexibility and adaptability—traits demonstrated every day by our service members and civilians.

Given the courage, compassion and commitment of all who have served and who continue to serve here, Iraq is on a path toward our combined goals of a sovereign, stable, self-reliant Iraq with just, representative and accountable government that contributes to peace and stability in the region. I remain humbled and honored to serve in your ranks as we continue to support Iraq in establishing its future.

With respect and admiration,

Raymond T. Odierno
General, US Army
Commanding