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**President Jalal Talabani's speech before the General Assembly
[English translation - check against delivery] 22-09-2006**

Madam President,

With confident steps, Iraq is making the transition to a nationhood sustained by its own soil. Under extremely difficult circumstances, it pursues this goal and the inherently complicated task of rebuilding the country. Yet Iraq continues, courageously, to reach for the promise of a democratic, federal, and pluralistic state, where generations of oppressed Iraqis yearn will regain their dignity, freedom, and right to join the civilized and progressive nations of the world.

While we push forward, we aspire to sow our democracy with deep roots, with seeds made of the same stuff as Iraq's authentically rich and ancient heritage. We will take the lessons of older civilizations in Iraq, ones that better embodied the spectrum and diversity of its makeup.

Even though the New Iraq has passed through crucial stages in an incredibly short period of time. The political process has been strengthened and its scope was enlarged by the joining of social, political and civil forces that are larger and more effective.

During the last year, parliamentary elections were held for the first time, electing a Transitional National Assembly, followed by a national referendum for a permanent constitution for the first time in the history of modern Iraq. A second election was held on the 15th of December, 2005, which chose a Council of Representatives for period of four years which convened on 1st February, 2006.

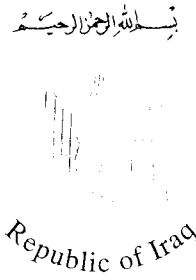
These developments, supported by the will of the Iraqi political forces and the help of its friends, gathered the Iraqi majority with all their political social and intellectual backgrounds, and established the authority of Iraq's democratic inclinations. They created a positive political process, which produced a government of National Unity, under the premiership of Mr. Nouri Al-Maliki.

The Region of Iraqi Kurdistan witnessed the election of the Council of Representatives, followed by the formation of the united Kurdistan Regional Government. This demonstrates that political harmony does exist in the midst of larger project as a whole. It also shows the significant development in the economy and culture, in the social fabric as a whole. A market economy has been successful and prosperous for Iraq.

What we have achieved so far in the political arena represents a joint national will, that is devoted to the process of building an Iraq which is capable of confronting all of its challenges, from defeating the terrorist, Takfiri [labeling others as infidels] and extremist ideology, to achieving security and stability.

The terrorist operations and the activities of the Tekfiris and organized crime groups in our country is not only characterized by killing innocent people, and provoking security chaos, but it also aims to destroy infrastructures and hamper the continuous efforts for rebuilding the country and putting it on the path of peace, security and democracy..

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We must emphasize that the extremist forces that oppose democracy and humanitarian values, intend to make Iraq a stepping stone for reaching other goals, for even more destruction. They are comprised of regional and Arab elements that export their crises to outside their borders, in the hope of making Iraq a ground for resolving these crises and fight their battles on Iraq's territory and amongst the people of Iraq.

These groups are mainly composed of the remnants of the former regime, in league with organized crime, itself a product of the oppression of the old regime, and the lapse of security after its collapse.

The supply line of money and weapons for these groups extend to neighboring Arab, and regional states. They are further supported by individuals who infiltrate across the borders, many of them Al-Qaeda operatives and runaway Saddamists.

Such groups have the illusion that they can oppress the will of our people by continuing to kill, terrorize, and spread despair amongst them.

To confront this evil intent, national determination will rise, and open it's doors to all the people of Iraq in order to bring them into the process of building national consensus. His Excellency, the Prime Minister, launched the National Reconciliation Plan with the hope of providing the protection and conditions which are necessary for stability.

This initiative was grown and developed with the contributions of a number of political parties that hold seats in parliament, who are represented in the Political Council for National Security, and thus achieved its first steps towards success.

This initiative received the support of several opposing political groups, including militant groups that were previously firm in armed opposition.

We continue our efforts, within the three presidential councils, to expand the range of participation for groups that are genuinely interested in the initiative, regardless of their intellectual, political, or organizational orientation.

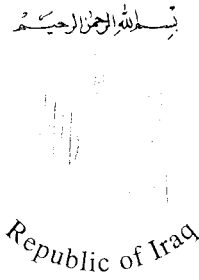
We are encouraging them to join the national action until all forces are mobilized to bring about political stability and security in the country..

While we doggedly work for a secure and stable Iraq, we also strive to re-establish an advanced and developed country, to do our part in ensuring safety and the possibility of peace for all.

This aim is not for Iraq alone, but it is for all the states of the Middle East, and reflects Iraq's concern, despite being busy with its internal situation, for the suffering of its Arab brothers and for the Palestinians, above all.

Iraq recognizes the implications of the destruction, which the brotherly state of Lebanon and its proud people were exposed to as a result of the Israel military attack. For this, we call for the implementation of the international resolutions and legitimacy for resolving the Palestinian issue, which is the core of the chronic dispute. We call for the implementation of UNSC Resolution 1701 concerning our brotherly State of Lebanon, which deserves sympathy and honest support through funding and technology from all civilized nations, in addition to its Arab brothers.

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The ongoing crises, the outbreaks of war in our region impose an enormous responsibility on the International Community and states of the region itself to reach a just and permanent political settlement that defuses crises, conflicts and wars. It also obliges us to reach a permanent and just peace that rids the area and humanity from the dangers of wars, bloody conflicts and terrorism.

Iraq has approved, through its Minister of Foreign Affairs, the latest resolution by the Arab League. Therefore, I call on you and the international community to accept these fair, logical decisions that remain capable of ending quarrels, achieving security, and establishing peace between the people of the region.

Influential States on the international level have increased responsibility because of the strategic vitality of the Middle East in the policy, economy and global objectives of these States. Hence, they should adopt a decisive approach in approving solutions that respect the rights and interests of the states and those of the people of the region included in UN documents and human rights code.

The decisive factor in establishing firm foundations for a regional understanding requires just solutions, a permanent peace based on transparency, and the principle of respecting the rights of all parties.

The stability of the Middle East is embodied in the collaboration of efforts and the will of neighboring countries, and in their serious resolve to defeat terrorism, eliminate its bases and desiccate its sources.

Limiting the global war on terrorism to the sole use of military means is not sufficient to defeat terrorism. Hence, we need to explore and adopt political, economic and other means and tools to strengthen the elements of victory in this war.

We deem it beneficial in this context to look at UN General Assembly Order 10407 issued in the 60th session of the General Assembly. It calls on the governments, the UN and civil society organizations to develop their efforts in this direction and work on spreading an environment of peace and condemnation of violence. It also calls for the development of tools that expand the circle of dialogue between the civilizations on religious, popular and civil society levels.

What has been stated above supports Iraq's vision in the importance of creating a Middle East free of weapons of mass destruction, especially nuclear weapons - similar to the African and Latin American continents. This is provided that the countries' rights are safeguarded to develop technical capabilities for scientific and peaceful use of nuclear energy in order to achieve the goals of a sustainable development. In this regard, I would like to emphasize that the new Iraq is committed, pursuant to its permanent Constitution and its supreme national interests, not to produce these weapons.

Iraq will also join the Non-Proliferation of Chemical Weapons Treaty and other international treaties special to these weapons.

We emphasize from this responsible international platform that Iraq is devoid of any type of weapons of mass destruction, as confirmed in the reports of the last UN team. Taking this fact into account and respecting our country's interest is important for us. We urge

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the International Security Council to dissolve UNMOVIC and decommission it or transform it into an international commission or institution connected to the UN and funded in the organization's general budget.

The status of this commission in its current form and its financing, using Iraqi accounts, squanders Iraq's money. Our people are in desperate need of these funds this stage of the country's development.

Great global objectives can only be achieved by uniting the efforts and activating the good wills in service of humanity as a whole. The UN took upon itself to play a constructive role in building a global environment suitable for world peace and security. International changes impose on us keeping up with the advancement in all fields in order to enable the UN to carry out its functions. This is done by better employing the resources and capabilities in service of the people of the world and in a manner that consolidates its role in maintaining world peace and security, respecting equality between all countries and their right to partake in adopting the directions and policies, and embracing the decisions that concern the international community.

We need to establish suitable democratic mechanisms for those who have the desire and capabilities to support the efforts and choices that lead to implementing our programs and achieving our common goals.

In this context, we see that the reform of our international organization must proceed by incorporating everyone's interests and ensuring their feeling of equality and justice by way of achieving a transparent consensus and balance.

In light of these principles, Iraq values the effective role of the UN in solving international problems and values the role of the Special UN Representative in Iraq, Mr. Ashraf Qadhi. Iraq hopes that the UN special programs return to operate in Iraq in order to activate their role in the development and reconstruction programs.

In this context, I have to mention the international compact with Iraq. It came as an initiative of the Iraqi government to form a global contact group that includes the countries and organizations willing to help Iraq and encourage its efforts in reconstruction and in achieving a sustainable partnership between it and the international community, in order to overcome the challenges imposed by the economic and political transitional stage.

We are hopeful that the international community fulfills its obligations by providing the required resources to deal with the key priorities and achieve a common vision in the framework of an economic transformation process for the sustainable development program, through agreed upon mechanisms. Here, I would like to thank the foreign ministers who took part in the successful meeting held in this building a few days ago. The meeting proved that Iraq was no longer isolated from the international community and the new Iraq is on its way to occupy its proper place in the free and developed world. In respect to reconstruction and the donor states' obligations toward Iraq, we thank these states for their help which will effectively contribute to the creation of optimism in regard to discarding the past and starting the comprehensive reform and development projects.

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Yet, we also look forward to more support and determination in fulfilling these commitments because of our belief that starting the reconstruction projects and stimulating the economy will represent a decisive factor in strengthening the security situation and restoring stability to Iraq, the region and the whole world.

I would like to emphasize here that we are committed, with a free national will, to move forward in rebuilding and implementing the national development programs and plans.

We recognize that it is our right to ask for the cancellation of the numerous and expensive reparations and the debts of the new democratic Iraq which must not shoulder the sins of a dictatorship that committed crimes against its people and betrayed the nation.

Iraq believes that achieving a sustainable development parallels respecting human rights, providing security, achieving justice, fair distribution of wealth, and development of the agricultural, economic and services sectors. In order to rise up to these tasks, we must respect women and their rights, and activate their role in the development process and the political arena. This feeling has become a fixed principle in our pursuits, stipulated in the Iraqi constitution, which confirmed the woman's right to contribute in a percentage not less than %25 of the Council of Representatives' seats.

Iraqi women are also participating in 4 ministerial positions in the Iraqi National Unity Government.

In conclusion, I would like to state from this platform to everyone and anyone who has any doubts that we are committed, as we were 3 years ago, to achieving national reconciliation. I assure all of you that the reconciliation process is promising. It is receiving all the support and is moving forward with the backing of all the political blocs. Our efforts will concentrate on making this reconciliation a fixed living rhythm for the aspirations and hopes of the people of Iraq, in particular because important steps were taken. These steps achieved national consensus and the support of all the influential political forces in the country. We also succeeded in putting a roadmap to solve all the main outstanding issues, like the constitution, the federal regions, the militias, the oil, de-Bathification and the new national flag, emblem and anthem.

While we stress this will, we hope from the Arab and regional parties and from the neighboring countries, in particular, to interact with this will and halt any activity or support or salutation by any means for the forces of terrorism, "Takfir" and the remnants of the dictatorial fascist gang. And also to take the necessary measures to close its borders in the face of the infiltrators.

We declare from this platform our eagerness for the security and safety of our neighbors and the principal non-intervention in their internal affairs. This is in order to avoid turning our land into bases for activities against them.

However, we say it openly, our people's patience is nearing its end particularly when it sees the blood of its innocent sons and daughters being spilled and defiled, its infrastructure destroyed and its mosques and "Husseiniyas" ruined, and the rebuilding of its armed forces and security services is impeded to prevent completing our sovereignty.

It is difficult for our political leadership to keep quiet forever.

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The ferocity of the terrorist attack that targets our people and country will not dissuade us from working persistently and with an unflinching will to defeat it.

In that we shall depend on our people's awareness and its political forces, as well as our military and security capabilities which are being developed and consolidated visibly in a number of Iraq's governorates where the tide of the terrorism is receding.

The building of the Iraqi national armed forces and its elevation to the desired levels continues so that our capabilities reach the level, the competency and the required readiness to arrive at the requirements of ending the presence of the coalition forces in the country gradually.

These forces are present pursuant to an international decision and they are essential for us in the present circumstances while accomplishing the mission of building our armed forces that are capable of ending terrorism and maintaining stability and security. Only then will it be possible to talk about a timetable for the withdrawal of the Multinational forces from Iraq. We here renew our gratitude for these forces that took part in liberating our country from the worst dictatorship known in history. We specifically thank President George W Bush for his leadership of the campaign to liberate Iraq from tyranny and opening the doors for a new, democratic, pluralistic and federal Iraq that is at peace with itself and the world. This historic mission has served the people of Iraq and peace and security in the region.

Madam President

Permit me finally, in the name of Iraq, people and government, to congratulate you on presiding over the 61st session of the United Nations General Assembly wishing you every success achieving the aspired goals for this session, stressing our desire to cooperate with you in this noble mission.

It is also a good opportunity to thank and pay tribute to the Secretary General Mr. Kofi Annan for his diligent work in activating the United Nations in attaining international peace and security and pushing the wheel of progress and the respect of human rights in the world.

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