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Statement by Ambassador John R. Bolton, U.S. Permanent Representative to the United Nations, on the Work of the Multinational Force, in the Security Council, December 14, 2005

Mr. President, as mandated by [UN Security Council Resolution 1546](#), I am pleased to report to the Security Council, on behalf of the 30 countries making up the Multinational Force (MNF), on the Force's efforts and progress to fulfill its mandate. During this reporting period, at the request of the Iraqi Government, this Council unanimously extended this mandate until December 31, 2006.

We cannot and should not gloss over the violence and instability in Iraq. To do so would disrespect those Iraqis and internationals who have lost their lives fighting for a federal, democratic, pluralistic and unified Iraq. At the same time, however, we cannot dismiss Iraq's successful political transition, and strides in training and equipping Iraq's security forces.

SECURITY SITUATION

Mr. President, as in the run-up to the October referendum, there has been an increase in insurgent attacks leading up to tomorrow's election. Insurgent attacks remain concentrated in four of Iraq's eighteen provinces (Baghdad, Ninevah, al-Anbar, and Salah ad Din). Although about 80 percent of all attacks are directed against the Multinational Force, about 80 percent of all casualties are suffered by the Iraqi population.

While attacks on Iraq's infrastructure account for a small portion of total attacks, they continue to have a significant impact on the Iraqi government's oil revenue and provoke public dissatisfaction with essential services. Attacks on infrastructure have increased in this reporting period, but are below the historic highs of 2004.

MNF operations are coordinated with local officials, tribes, and/or clerics. These operations have disrupted key insurgent cells, limited insurgents movement, and facilitated progress in reconstruction and democracy -building. The dramatic increase in intelligence tips provided by the population in recent months has been crucial and indicates increasing, popular rejection of the insurgents. In March 2005, Iraqi and multinational forces received more than 400 intelligence tips from Iraqi citizens. In August 2005, they received 3,300, and in September 2005 more than 4,700.

Despite persistent security challenges, significant progress has been made in wresting territory from enemy control. Parts of Iraq previously under terrorist control are now, due to MNF and Iraqi-led operations, under Iraqi Government control. Furthermore, residents of these areas can participate freely in the political process, which continues to move forward. In rural Iraq, Iraqi and multinational forces have worked to clear out hard-core enemy elements, maintaining a security presence, and building local institutions to advance local reconstruction and civil society.

IRAQI SECURITY FORCES

Mr. President, the Multinational Force continues to work with the Iraqi Government to train and equip the Iraqi

Security Forces or ISF. We have worked together to identify a force structure to meet Iraq's security needs and we continually reassess force requirements based on current threats. The goal is to complete total force generation, which refers to institutional capacity, by August 2007. Despite repeated brutal attacks against volunteers for the ISF, recruiting continues to outpace demand even as the ISF rapidly expands. Nor are these recruits only from the Shia and Kurdish communities, as some erroneously assert; in the past several months, nearly 5,000 recruits have joined from Sunni areas.

As one senior military official has said, "Iraqi security forces are fighting hard. They're fighting well. They are not cracking under pressure ... and they are making a tremendous contribution." The ISF, which now numbers more than 214,000, continues to develop despite an insurgency actively attempting to disrupt the forces' development, destroy their infrastructure and equipment, and intimidate recruits. Iraqis are taking on more of the fight, both combat missions and follow-on operations, including bringing supplies, medical help and other services to return affected communities to normalcy.

Specific examples of Iraqi Ministry of Defense and Ministry of Interior or MOI forces progressing in their ability to take ownership of Iraqi security include the following:

- Iraqi units are increasingly able to take the lead in combat operations against the insurgency. Ninety-seven Iraqi Army and special operations battalions are conducting combat operations against the enemy. Of the 97 operational Army and Special Operations units, 38 have the security lead with MNF support or are fully independent. There are also 28 Special Police Force battalions capable of combat operations.
- The ISF is assuming more battle space and is preparing to assume command and control responsibilities at the division level. In June 2004, no ISF unit controlled territory. At present, Iraqi forces are responsible for security in Najaf and Karbala and much of Baghdad province. Other Iraqi battalions and brigades control hundreds of square miles of territory in other provinces with MNF support and assistance. In September 2005, eleven Iraqi battalions participated in operations in Tal Afar, controlling their own battle space, and outnumbering multinational forces for the first time in a major offensive operation. Over the last six months, the number of patrols being conducted independently by Iraqi forces has doubled, bringing the overall percentage to nearly a quarter of all patrols in theater.
- The number of operational units and individuals trained, equipped, and formed has increased. More than 102,000 Ministry of Defense soldiers, sailors, and airmen have been trained and equipped. In addition, 75,000 police and highway patrol have been trained and equipped. They work alongside 37,000 other Ministry of Interior forces for a total of approximately 112,000. Overall, this represents an approximate 12 percent increase in MOD and MOI forces trained and equipped for counterinsurgency operations in the last five months.

However, while acknowledging all of this success, we must also acknowledge that the Iraqi forces are not yet ready to conduct independent operations unilaterally without the MNF's assistance. The MNF stands ready to continue to provide this assistance.

SECURITY FOR THE UNITED NATIONS IN IRAQ

Mr. President, distinct entities of the Multinational Force, notably the Georgians, Romanians, and South Koreans,

continue to provide security for the United Nations in Baghdad, Basra and Erbil, respectively. They provide static site security, reconnaissance, security patrols, convoy escorts, checkpoints, and, when necessary, MEDEVAC and emergency evacuation.

The UN's contributions, most notably preparations for tomorrow's election, are vital. We urge the UN to continue to fulfill its mandate as per resolution 1546. Considerable work - including humanitarian and reconstruction assistance - remains to be done, and expansion to Basra and Erbil is necessary for [UNAMI](#) to do that work and fulfill its mandate. We're pleased to have signed with Undersecretary General Gambari a Memorandum of Understanding to codify the security arrangements with UNAMI.

CONCLUSION

Mr. President, even with the progress I have outlined today, the MNF and its Iraqi partners continue to face multiple challenges in the security sphere. These include:

- Countering the intimidation and brutality of enemies who are not constrained by law or moral norms;
- Building representative Iraqi security forces and institutions whose first loyalties are to the Iraqi government;
- Neutralizing the actions of countries such as Syria and Iran, which provide comfort and/or support to terrorists and the enemies of democracy in Iraq;
- Understanding the composition of, and relationships between, terrorists and other enemy networks;
- Addressing the militias and armed groups that are outside the formal security sector and central government command;
- Ensuring that the security ministries have the capacity to sustain Iraq's new army and police forces; and
- Integrating political, economic, and security tools --and synchronizing them with Iraqi government efforts -- to foster good and transparent governance, the rule of law, respect for human rights, and the well-being of all Iraqi citizens.

Mr. President, the Multinational Force is serving its mandate and working with the Iraqi Government to build security and stability in Iraq. The Force is helping the Iraqis develop police forces and combat units, as well as the elements necessary to manage, control, and sustain them. It is moving toward fulfilling its mandate and it looks forward to the day when the Iraqis are able to assume full responsibility for the maintenance of security and stability in Iraq.

Lastly, in closing, I know I speak for all members in the MNF and the Council in wishing Iraq a safe and successful election tomorrow. It is important that Iraq's election be transparent and inclusive. We urge all Iraqis to participate in the election to make their views known regarding the future of Iraq. We welcome the efforts of the Iraqis, the United Nations, and other members of the international community that are enabling

Iraqi citizens to participate in their political process.

Thank you.

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