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**Report by Ambassador John R. Bolton,
U.S. Permanent Representative to the United Nations,
on the Multinational Force in Iraq, in the Security Council, June 15, 2006**

As requested by UN Security Council Resolutions 1546 and 1637, I am pleased to report to the Security Council on behalf of the 29 countries making up the Multinational Force (MNF), on the Force's progress towards fulfilling its mandate.

Madame President, this reporting period has borne witness to a striking development. On June 7, MNF and Iraqi forces killed al-Qaida in Iraq terrorist leader Abu Musab al-Zarqawi and one of his key associates Sheikh Abd Al-Rahman in an air strike against an identified isolated safe house. Tips and intelligence from Zarqawi's network led forces to al-Zarqawi and some of his associates who were conducting a meeting. Although the original leader of al-Qaida in Iraq is now dead, he has now been replaced, and the terrorist organization still poses a threat, as its members will continue to attempt to intimidate the Iraqi people and threaten the Iraqi government as it moves toward greater stability and prosperity.

The Iraqi people overwhelmingly reject violence as a means to drive political change. The international community continues to stand with the people of Iraq in their determined drive for a secure, stable, and democratic country. We honor the memory and sacrifice of all who have lost their lives in the struggle for a federal, democratic, pluralist, and unified Iraq.

There have been historic developments since our last report, some of them unfolding even as we meet today. Iraq's leaders and the Iraqi people reached a critical milestone in Iraq's political development on April 22, when Iraqi political leaders announced the selection of senior members of a new government, including the Prime Minister-designate, President, and two Deputy Presidents, and Speaker of the Council of representatives. This key event was followed on May 20 by the Council of Representative's approval of nearly all of Prime Minister Maliki's cabinet. The final three ministers were approved June 8. Prime Minister Maliki and his Council of Ministers brought into office with them the hopes of all Iraqis as well as the good wishes of the international community. So significant was the combination of forming a fully democratic government and the well deserved end of Zarqawi that President Bush this week visited Baghdad to demonstrate our commitment to those who support peace and democracy and oppose the terrorists.

Madame President, the extremists and terrorists remain capable of and intent on carrying out attacks against Iraqi civilians, officials, and security forces, with a goal of destabilizing the legitimately elected government of Iraq and denying the Iraqi people the democracy that they have chosen through free and fair elections.

During this period, more than 81 percent of attacks were concentrated in four of Iraq's 18 provinces (Baghdad, Al Anbar, Salah ad Din, and Diyala). Since our last report, Diyala province replaced Ninawa province as being among the four most attack-prone provinces. Twelve provinces, containing more than 50 percent of the population, experienced only 6 percent of all attacks. Nine provinces have averaged one or no attacks per day since February. In addition to the threat from terrorist groups such as al-Qaida in Iraq, militias and other groups continue to challenge the rule of law at local and regional levels.

Attacks on Iraq's infrastructure continue to adversely affect oil revenues and the availability of electricity. However, the number of infrastructure attacks has declined since August 2005, suggesting that MNF and ISF efforts to secure Iraq's infrastructure are meeting with some success. The Multinational Force will continue to work with the Iraqi government and other international partners to strengthen further infrastructure security. Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) continue to grow, improve, and conduct more and more independent operations each day. Multinational Forces continue to train, mentor, and equip the ISF and to hand over battle responsibilities to Iraqi forces as proficiency allows and conditions permit. Transfers are evaluated area-by-area and region-by-region, and are incremental to ensure an effective and successful handover of security responsibilities.

As of May 29th, 111 Iraqi Army, Strategic Infrastructure and special operations battalions are conducting counter-insurgency operations. Seventy-one of these battalions are operating in the lead with coalition support; several are operating independently. All 28 Iraqi National Police battalions are operational with 2 of these battalions also operating in the lead with coalition support. Iraqi Security Forces assuming security and control of their own areas of responsibility increased to 2 division headquarters, 16 brigade headquarters, and 63 battalions. These areas include more than 30,000 square miles of Iraq. By the end of summer, 75 percent of Iraqi brigades and battalions will be leading counter-insurgency operations with coalition support. A strong Iraqi Security Force presence continues in Baghdad.

Iraqi forces now total over 265,000 Ministry of Defense and Ministry of Interior personnel trained and equipped for counter-insurgency operations. This includes over 117,000 Ministry of Defense personnel, over 103,000 police, and over 45,000 other Ministry of Interior forces.

Recent examples of how Iraqi Ministry of Defense (MOD) and Ministry of Interior (MOI) forces are progressing in the ability to provide security to the Iraq people include the following:

In late March, 196 Iraqi police officers, known as the sons of al Anbar, successfully graduated from the Baghdad police academy. Upon their return to Ramadi, where they protect the people of their home province, they were enthusiastically greeted by Iraqi and MNF forces. "We are the future of Iraq, each and every one of us," proclaimed one new graduate. "We will make a difference for our sons and daughters."

In April, the 1st Brigade, 4th Iraqi Army Division began the first phase of assuming responsibility for security in Salah Ad Din Province. The event was commemorated by a ceremony attended by MNF and Iraqi officials. The First Brigade had progressively taken a larger role in security for the province by assuming responsibility for security in residential areas including Samarra and Tikrit.

In April, soldiers from the 4th Company, 2nd Battalion, 4th Brigade 8th Iraqi Army Division conducted operation Cobra Strike with MNF forces. Cobra strike was a mission to locate the suspected leader and financier of a terrorist cell working in the area. Iraqi leadership planned the scheme of maneuvers for the operation. MNF forces were on hand in an advisory role.

In May, the 3rd Battalion, 3rd Brigade 3rd Iraqi Army Division assumed the lead in security operations in and

around Sinjar, in western Nenevah province, marking another example of the steadily-increasing Iraqi Army role in providing security to the people of Iraq.

In May, the first class of 20 Iraqi soldiers graduated from the Iraqi Army Basic Medical Course, certifying them as Iraqi medics who will serve with the Iraqi military throughout western al Anbar province. The goal is to have 150 trained Iraqi medics by year s end to serve with the Iraqi Army, partnered with the MNF forces throughout the province.

Madame President, the UN's contributions are vital. We urge the UN to continue to fulfill its mandate under Security Council resolution 1546. Considerable work remains. We look forward to UNAMI's expansion of its presence in Iraq, especially to Basra and Erbil.

The Multinational Force, notably the Georgian, Romanian, and South Korean contingents, continues to provide security for the United Nations in Baghdad, Basra, and Erbil, respectively. These troops provide static site security, reconnaissance, security patrols, convoy escorts, checkpoints, and, when necessary, MEDEVAC and emergency evacuation. Also, Fijian troops provide static and close-in protection for UN personnel and facilities in Baghdad.

Madame President, the measure of success will be the dawn of the day when the Iraqi people are fully able to secure their own safety, freedom and prosperity. Training Iraqi Security Forces to assume primary responsibility for security is essential. The completion of the government formation process under the popularly-ratified constitution heralds the beginning of a new era in Iraq's history. Prime Minister Maliki's government faces great challenges. We hope that he will work to promote national dialogue and inclusion, as well as strive tirelessly to deliver improvements in security, stability, and quality of life to the Iraqi people.

The international community and Iraq's neighbors, especially Syria and Iran, must do more to stop foreign fighters entering Iraq. Additionally, they must do more to answer the Security Council's call in resolution 1546 to end material and financial support for individuals and groups that oppose the new legitimate Iraqi government. Moreover, we call upon the entire international community to support Iraq's sovereign government and redouble its assistance efforts. In conclusion, Madame President, the MNF and combined MNF-ISF efforts continue to provide security necessary for Iraq's new democratically elected, constitutional government to succeed. We are pleased to note Foreign Minister Zebari's June 9 letter to the Security Council expressing the Iraqi Government's support for the MNF's continued role in providing for security and stability in Iraq. The MNF remains committed to its responsibilities and to achieving ultimate success.

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