

PRESS CONFERENCE:

**Al-Dabbagh
Brigadier General Passem[ph] Atta**

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PARTICIPANTS:

**Al-Dabbagh
Brigadier General Passem[ph] Atta**

REPORTERS:

**Ann Simmons from The Los Angeles Times
Bryan [Last Name Not Provided] from American Forces Press Service**

REPORTERS 1-8

***REP1 = REPORTER 1**

***INT = INTERPRETER**

TBD: Speaks in Arabic.

INT: Mr. Kasamata[ph] is with you today. He's safe and sound. He's in good condition. Thank you.

TBD: Speaks in Arabic

INT: By the name of God, merciful, the most compassionate. The Iraqi Government expresses its appreciation of the meeting which held in Egypt to mark the Iraq peace to counter the terrorist groups which want to sow insecurity and sedition between the Sunnis and Shiites. The people have proved they are impatient on all the attempts set by al-Qaeda against this people. The religious authorities and Mr. Alia's[ph] family appreciates this effort. The second issue, the declaration of principles signed by the Prime Minister and the American President, George Bush, is the beginning of the new terms for strategic relations between the two countries. This agreement has been ratified by the Presidency Council and the political blocks. Its guidelines were laid out in 26 August, 2000[sic]—it wants to help Iraq to develop its human resources and move toward a free market. And among the obligations of the countries towards Iraq as with came in the international pact for Iraq and helped Iraq to integrate into the international economic organizations, cancel its debts, and restore its properties smuggled

by the family of Saddam and his aides, and help Iraq to encourage the foreign investments to encourage reconstruction of Iraq, and also to help Iraq to get professional loans. And Iraq will be the first country and the first market and Iraq should receive the most important part of the U.S. aid. On the security level, the Iraqi Government will be back to confront the terrorist groups. The most important of these groups is al-Qaeda and the remnants of the past regime. And support the Iraqi Government to train and put the Iraqi armed forces on the diplomatic and political level. The Iraqi Government will be helped to force of democracy and force of the efforts exerted to achieve national reconciliation and support Iraq to be an effective country in the regional—on the regional and international level and encourage cooperation between the two nations of Iraq and the U.S. This would develop into a strategic commitment and this will make this agreement to serve the countries of two full—the two countries of full sovereignty and emphasize the sovereignty of Iraq over its territories, water, and airspace. And Iraq will be able to manage its own affairs to restore it to its best condition. The Iraqi Government will ask and next December will be the last renewal for the mandate of the Multi-National Forces. And Iraq will get—will be—will get out of the seventh chapter. There isn't any reason why Iraq should stay under the chapter seven of the United Nations charter. Iraq no longer

poses a threat to national security. Today 385 families will return from Damascus to Iraq. The families will be given \$1 million Iraqi dinar for each family to help them during this period. And similar trips will be organized in next few days to encourage those who want to come back to Iraq. The government wants to provide security to enable the displaced families to return to Iraq. And Iraqis are determined to counter and confront the terrorist extremist groups and all people should live in peace and prosperity.

TBD: Speaks in Arabic.

INT: Yesterday we detained a guy who forge the Iraqi money of 10,000 Iraqi dinar bills. And this was carried out by the Iraqi Security Forces. Investigations are taking place. And I would like to tell the Iraqi people and the Iraqi traders that none of this money has come to the market or penetrated the market and we have been able to confiscate this amount of money before it goes to the market on 27th November. We detained three people of al-Qaeda organization in Iraq. Their names will be announced later because we are conducting investigations with them by the security forces. One of them is the Emir of some sector in Baghdad. This group fired rockets, Petrusha[ph] rockets, on Baghdad International Airport and they are responsible for the weapons used to carry out operations against Iraqi Security Forces and Multi-National Forces. Brigadier

Passem[ph] Atta[ph] will talk about the issue of the pilgrimage to Mecca and then we will take your questions. Thank you by name of God, merciful, most compassionate. God say that all people should pay pilgrimage to Mecca.

**BRIG GEN
PASSEM:**

Speaking in Arabic.

INT:

Dear brothers, ladies, and gentlemen. Peace be upon you. According to revelations and directions of the Prime Minister and the Commanding General of the Armed Forces. The Commander of Baghdad Operations has prepared a special plan to protect the pilgrims in coordination with the Ministry of Defense and Ministry of Interior and the High Commission for Pilgrimage and the Multi-National Forces to provide security and good conditions—favorable conditions to the Iraqi pilgrims who will head to Mecca from different parts in Baghdad and from northern Iraq. You know very well that terrorist groups targeted the pilgrims last year. They targeted them by a number of military operations which afflicted heavy losses on these pilgrims. And many of them were injured in these terrorist operations. After the improvement of the security situation, after the accommodation of Fardh al-Qanoon Operation, the Commander of Baghdad will provide security to the—all the Iraqi people and all the religious and social events. And we are

going to prevent the terrorist groups from targeting these people during these occasions. The Iraqi people cooperated with us and they played a very important part to bring these plans to success. The Commander of Baghdad Operations has laid out—worked out a complete security plan to protect the pilgrims during this year. These are the guidelines of this plan. First, the Commander of Baghdad and the units which belong to it will protect the starting points and stations of the pilgrims leaving from the first day announced by the Higher Commission of Pilgrimage until the return of the pilgrims from Mecca, God willing. And these stations will give fighters to many centers in al-Safa and al-Kirk[ph]. And special groups will be designed for these convoys. There will be checkpoints set up in every of these stations composed of the IAD directorates in the Ministry of Health, the directorates of traffic, police, and woman[?] teams from the [unintelligible] in addition to other security organizations. Fourth, the pilgrims will arrive at a certain time, a certain date—the same day. Fifth, the Iraqi Security Forces will secure the roads leading to Baghdad International Airport and will enable the pilgrims to arrive at the airport safely and areas of responsibility in Baghdad by 8th and the 7th and the 10th Division. There are some other procedures. We are not going to announce them now for security reasons. The High Commission for the Pilgrims have issued some relations and these relations will be

distributed to the pilgrims. And they set the dates and the time of the beginning of the pilgrimage. And we will—we would like to assure to the pilgrims that Iraqi Security Forces will stay on the alert until they come back from—they come back to Iraq. I applaud all the pilgrims towards you to the medical organizations. And we are going also to provide air defense by the Multi-National Forces and the Iraqi Air Force. Thank you very much.

TBD: Thank you. Microphone, please.

REP1: Asks question in Arabic.

INT: The document signed by Maliki and President Bush on the relation between the two countries, the U.S. and Iraq. Did it detail the American military bases in Iraq? Second question, the Iraqi Government has been able to restore many families that were outside Iraq. Will the Iraqi Government be able to return the educated people and—like the doctors and engineers to Iraq?

TBD: Speaks in Arabic.

INT: There isn't any talk about any military bases—American military bases in Iraq. There should be an agreement to organize the relation between Iraq and the United States. Among this relation is the presence of the American Force in Iraq. There isn't anybody talking

about permanent presence of the American Forces in Iraq. The House of Representatives is the only authority who can decide the type and the kind of this relation. This existence will be determined by the—will be decided by the Iraqis according to the capabilities of the Iraqi Security Forces. This will be the most important fact concerning the existence of any military force after the end of the MNF-I mandate. About the Iraqi people who return to Iraq, there will be more procedures to welcome all the Iraqi people who were forced to immigrate outside Iraq. Iraq needs all these elements especially those who left Iraq because they were threatened. And the level of security, thank God, is now very good. And the Iraqi Government would like all the Iraqis to come back to Iraq. Especially those—the elite people who left Iraq. I think that Iraq needs them very much and we depend on them. We encourage them to come back to Iraq.

REP2: Asks question in Arabic.

INT: I am [unintelligible] from Samariyah[ph]. Dr. Ali[ph], about this relation. Are you—will this relation be organized after the extending of the mission of the MNF-I? And you know that Iraqis are always complaining about some violations. These violations were committed by the American Forces against the Iraqi people.

DR ALI[ph]: Speaks in Arabic.

INT: Inside the Parliament there isn't any presence for the MNF-I. There is a security company, a foreign security company, to protect the Parliament. As for the document, these are the guidelines that will obligate the organizations. In the year 2008 we witness the end of the relations where of the existence of the MNF-I and the forces which would remain in Iraq. The document is about organizing the relations between Iraq and them.

REP3: Asks question in Arabic.

INT: Achmed[ph] Faval[ph] from Sorah[ph]. Doctor, there are some violations committed by the private security companies. The last of these violations the American Army opened fire on a bus carrying civilians in the Shabah area. Did the Iraqi Government reach an agreement with the American Forces to put an end to these violations? And my question to Mr. Kasamata[ph], the checkpoints now in the streets, some of these checkpoints are causing traffic congestion. If they want to come from Arasafa[ph] to al-Kirk[ph] it takes them a long time and you know very well about this problem. How are you going to tackle this problem? And about the Abunas [ph] Street, has it been opened or not? Thank you very much.

DR ALI[ph]: Speaks in Arabic.

INT:

In fact the incident of yesterday, the opening of fire by the American Forces near the American base in al-Shaba, the Multi-National Forces issued a press release about this incident. They said that the driver of the bus came very close to the area and he didn't care about the warning and the guards opened fire. And two people were killed and four injured. We always work in coordination with the Multi-National Forces on the highest level to reduce such incidents. And these incidents have caused the death of many innocent people. And we also call on the Iraqi people to keep away from the security forces because these security forces are target—always targeted. They don't know their enemy from a friend. Even the Iraqi forces sometimes cause such incidents because they ask the vehicles not to come near to them. As for the checkpoints, last week the Commander of Baghdad Operation proposed a plan to the Prime Minister. This plan is made to the reopening of the blocked streets in Baghdad in al-Kirk[ph] and al-Sasha[ph]. And we have started to reopen some streets. We opened the street of Belstine[ph] connecting Baghdad with Babashelthi[ph] and we are opening the first phase of Abunas[ph] Street. And the security—in they are tight security measures because we don't want the terrorists to target the people of this street. And people were fired at many times in this street. And we want to decrease the number of the checkpoints after the security improvement. I hope that next week a number of streets

will be reopened and many concrete barriers will also be lifted after the security improvement.

REP4: Asks question in Arabic.

INT: Salud[ph] Asayadi[ph] from [unintelligible] Press. General Kassani[ph], you talk about the Iraqi people—the Multi-National Forces in the Sinflan[ph] market were targeted by an attack and the high road was blocked completely and they put the concrete barriers. You talk about lifting the barriers and we have more barriers in other areas. Should not we see some contradiction in this fact.

TBD: Speaks in Arabic.

INT: There are some military headquarters, there's a headquarter for the security forces. The security forces should protect themselves against these attacks. Last week there was an indirect attack by mortar rounds on some military headquarters of the Multi-National Forces. And not only the streets were those and some areas leading to these headquarters were also blocked. And these areas will be reopened after we secure the roads. And we want to create good conditions for the Iraqi people. But not only the Multi-National Forces, the Multi-National Force has the right to protect themselves as well as the Iraqi Security Forces inside their bases. They have the

right to take some military procedures like blocking the roads leading to the headquarters.

REP5: Asks question in Arabic.

INT: Safel[ph] Hi[at]ph] from the Iranian News Agency. I have two questions. A security question I'd like to ask General Kassan[ph]. I think that Iraq is heading towards a new kind of violence. I mean the mafias inside the organizations away from al-Qaeda and the first organizations. Have you taken any measures against this new phenomenon? I think some people are posing as Iraqi Security Forces. They get the uniforms from the local markets and they disguise themselves as the Iraq Security Forces. And how—who is going to define the foreign policy of Iraq? We were surprised that Iraq rejected to take part in the conference of Annapolis because it has no relations with Israel.

TBD Speaks in Arabic.

INT: These are the ideas and ideology of the past regime, you know that. Israel is important country in the Middle East. There isn't any political decision to restore the relations with Israel and the decision was taken by the Council of Ministers and the Iraqi Government. It is the only authority who can decide the foreign policy of Iraq. And this includes also the political blocks. As for the conference of

Annapolis, the Iraqi commandment was to enhance all the peace efforts in the Middle East and especially in Palestine and decisions which will be taken by the [unintelligible] will be accepted by Iraq. We also accept the decisions of the Arab nation and Arab countries. And that's why we didn't—we decided not to take part in the conference of Annapolis because we don't have enough information about the negotiations with Israel. As for the issue of corruption and the mafias you talked about. I think that our Iraqi Security Forces are now better than one year ago and you all know that the building of these security forces was carried out under exceptional circumstances and we faced many difficulties. We were living in abnormal situation and we are suffering from many negative aspects. The Minister of Interior since assumed the responsibility to try to purge the Ministry of corrupt elements and the elements who belong to the militias. And I think that the security forces should be clean and their allegiance should be—their first allegiance should be to Iraq and not to any other party. Now Iraq is heading towards a better future and violence has decreased in Iraq from 75 to 80 percent. And we are going to clear the areas of the militias and the outlaws. We have other missions within Operation Fardh al-Qanoon like the basic services and returning the displaced families. And then the security forces will assume the responsibility and at that time we're going to tackle the issue of corruption and those who

infiltrated the Iraqi Security Forces.

REP6: Dr. Al-Gabath[ph], Ann Simmons with the LA Times. Sir, how do you react or how does your government react to the opinion of some agencies, for example, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, that Iraq is moving too quickly in bringing people home, in asking returnees to come home, and that a slower approach should be taken because the country is not yet ready?

DR AL-GABATH[ph]: Speaks in Arabic.

INT: These—this is a voluntary return. These people are free to return. And these people have contacted their relatives in Iraq and they took the decision that this area, for example, has become secure and can return to this area. The Iraqi Government is not forcing the people to come back to Iraq but it's encouraging them to return to Iraq. I think that the security improvement in Iraq in al-Anbar and in the western Iraq—security has improved in these areas so the families can return to their homes in these areas. And the Iraqi Government will accept that—we do expect to protect these families.

REP7: Asks question in Arabic.

INT: Ali Hansa[ph] from Abubabi[ph]. Mr. Ali, about there is some information that the Prime Minister has accepted some ministers from [unintelligible] al-Anbar—of the awakening council of al-Anbar. What about the family of the reporter, Real[ph] Kalwaz[ph], whose family was killed?

TBD: Speaks in Arabic.

INT: Let me answer you about Real[ph] Kalwaz[ph]. I talked to the mother of Real[ph] Kalwaz[ph] and she categorically denied that the family was physically repudiated as Mr. Saviat[ph] said. Only one person of the family had an incident in Kut. The family is now living in Baghdad. They are living safely in Baghdad. I'm sorry that Mr. Real talked about this. He accused the Iraqi Government that it liquidated his family. I deny these—this news and the area was photographed and [Mr. unintelligible] sent a team from the Interior of Ministry to make sure of this information. As for the [unintelligible] in [unintelligible] al-Anbar, the awakening council of Anbar, they represent certain people and they, as Iraqis, have the right to apply for any government position. It is too early to talk about this issue and the negotiations are still underway and we continue to negotiate with some parties in the Accordance Front. Of course we welcome the—our brothers in the Accordance Front to

come back despite that the deadline has expired for them. But Iraq is the country of all the Iraqis and all the Iraqis should take part in building it.

REP8: Bryan from AFP. Dr. [unintelligible], you mentioned about the journalist's family. There was an incident with one member and could you expand on that? And the second question is do you have an update of the number of families who have returned in the last month or two? Thank you.

TBD: Speaks in Arabic.

INT: As for this family, I confirm that there isn't any physical liquidation of any member of the family of Mr. Real[ph] Kalwaz[ph] and the family was not targeted in Baghdad. Only one person in the area of Kut was killed or they have an accident. But all the family is sound and safe. As for the families who have returned to Baghdad, we have some preliminary statistics. Last month, 60,000 people returned from Syria and we expect more people to come back than last month. Today 800 people will come back. It consists of 385 families. And there will be mass return for the Iraqi people organized by the Iraqi people and some charity organizations for those Iraqis who wish to come back to Iraq. Thank you very much.