



**Statement of
H.E. Mr. Jalal Talabani
President of the Republic of Iraq**

**at the (63) Session of the General
Assembly Hall**

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Translated copy of the Speech of the President of Iraq at the 63rd session of the UN General Assembly

President of the Assembly, Ladies and Gentlemen

At the outset, let me extend my congratulations to Mr. Miguel d'Escoto on behalf of the people of Iraq, for his election as President of the 63rd Session of the General Assembly. We are confident that his wisdom and generous merit will lead to success in the current session of the General Assembly. I would like also to thank his predecessor Mr. Sirjan Karim for the excellent work he did as a president of the (62) Session of the General Assembly.

It is with honor and pleasure that I am amongst you at this major international gathering to convey greetings from the Government of the Republic of Iraq and its people. Iraq's former regime left behind security and political conditions that had been a drain on the energy of the Iraqi people, and that significantly led to a deterioration of the country's economy. These conditions also left behind significant environmental and social damage. The foreign policy of the former regime as well as its domestic practices dragged the country into futile wars leaving millions of victims and the destruction of economic and state institutions.

While the Iraqi people are building a new federal state based on democracy, pluralism, and the peaceful distribution of power, they have, been subjected to, and affected by, a series of terrorist acts which target all Iraqis be they Arabs, Kurds, Turkmens and Kildo Assyrian that attempted to ignite sectarian strife and undermine the political process and stability of the country, while aiming to return Iraq to the days of tyranny, backwardness, oppression, and dictatorship.

Terrorism is a blind danger that threatens everyone. At a time when the Iraqi people call upon the representatives of the elected national government to combat its remnants, they call upon the international community, and in particular neighboring countries, to support Iraq in its effort to combat

violence and terrorism, all while promoting peace, security, and stability. This positively impacts the stability and security of the region, the interests of its peoples, and the international community as a whole.

These acts of terrorism, committed by the enemies of freedom will not discourage our people from establishing a new democratic experience, which our people paid a heavy price for.

Our position requires the support and assistance from countries around the world to be able to build a modern nation which ensures justice, equality, the strengthening of the rule of law, the respect for human rights, and women's participation in all spheres of life.

The Iraqi Government has relentless determination towards imposing the rule of law throughout Iraq, disarming militias, fighting sectarian conflict, and building state institutions on the basis of nationalism.

Mr. President,

The initiative of reconciliation and national dialogue launched by the Iraqi Government draws its strength from the heritage of the Iraqi people which rendered great services to humanity. Iraqis have coexisted in a spirit of fraternity, love, and tolerance since the dawn of history. Their religious, sectarian, and nationalistic diversity is a driving force in promoting national unity.

National reconciliation is a shared responsibility between political forces, policy makers, religious scholars, intellectuals, civil society organizations, and all active actors in the Iraqi arena.

Advancements have been achieved on the ground due to ongoing national reconciliation activities, bringing forth the end of sectarian killings and the improvement of the security situation, coupled with the return of thousands of displaced families to their homes and the commencement of construction projects and the offering of services to citizens.

The well preparation and continual training that security and military forces have undertaken has greatly impacted their capabilities and efficiency in responding to criminal gangs, militias, and terrorist organizations. These

forces carried out successful and extensive security campaigns to enforce the law in Baghdad, and were able to eliminate most of the armed militias and terrorist groups, which greatly helped to restore security and stability. Following Baghdad, the forces carried out more successful and wide operations in Basra, Mosul, Diyala, in addition to other provinces.

The Iraqi Security Forces took over the responsibility of security from the multinational forces in many of Iraq's provinces, most recently this month in Anbar. The forces are also working to take over full responsibility to defend and preserve the democratic gains of our people. The Government realizes that these steps do not fully satisfy our ambitions, for the road to achieving our desired goal of a secure, stable, and prosperous Iraq is long. We hope that the international community will support and assist Iraq in achieving these goals.

The National Unity Government has taken the initiative to improve Iraq's relations with countries of the world, especially those who border Iraq. This is done in accordance to the principles set forth in the new Iraqi constitution which calls for building good relations with neighboring countries with common interests, while not interfering in their internal affairs, and relying on diplomacy and direct lines of communication and peaceful channels to resolve arising differences. Based on this, Iraq no longer threatens international peace and security, and therefore calls upon the international community to take steps towards removing Iraq from Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter, and ending and settling of all actions taken by the Security Council through its resolutions based on Chapter VII, including the issue of compensation.

Three extensive conferences were held for Iraq's neighboring countries, with the most recent in Kuwait in April 2008. The conferences sought to continue the coordination and cooperation in supporting the efforts of the Iraqi Government to restore peace and stability and achieve prosperity. The conferences also promoted the ongoing dialogue about national reconciliation, the fight against terrorism, strengthening the rule of law, increasing political participation, and provided nations with an opportunity to demonstrate their commitment to Iraq's territorial integrity, unity, full sovereignty and independence, without interfering in its internal affairs, as well as affirming its commitment to implement these promises. We are now preparing for the next meeting of Iraq's neighboring countries in Baghdad.

Mr. President,

Thanks to Iraq's new policies, it has become a meeting point and a place for dialogue between rival regional and international. We will work to enhance the positive role and to adopt a policy to start anew, and diffuse conflicts and distance the shadow of wars and conflicts from the region, because tension and instability casts a shadow over the security situation, not only in Iraq but also throughout the region.

This year senior Iraqi officials made important visits to neighboring countries as well as to other nations. Concurrently, senior officials from the region visited Iraq and contributed to the discussion of developing stable and balanced political and economic relations, leading to an increased Arab diplomatic representation in Iraq. In this regard, we call upon all nations to open, or reopen diplomatic missions, and strengthen existing missions by increasing the level of representation.

Iraq is also planning, within the priorities of its foreign policies, for the return to the international community by actively participating in meetings and conferences of the United Nations, its agencies and offices in all international issues. Iraq signed a number of UN conventions such as the conventions on the prohibition of chemical weapons and the treaty banning nuclear tests, and about to join special agreements and protocols against terrorism, amongst others.

Iraq has signed the international compact to achieve economic growth and social justice in partnership with the international community. This document represented a new stage in establishing balanced relations between Iraq and nations of the world. The first annual review meeting of the international compact was held in the Swedish capital of Stockholm in May 2008, and had a large international presence. The meeting resulted in the proposal of a new partnership for the sake of development including a mechanism for the co-financing of new programs with international partners in Iraq, and identifying critical areas of mutual interest during the coming year such as human development, human rights, reconstruction, and economic administration, in order to form a new turn and developed formulation of international cooperation and assistance to Iraq in defying all obstacles.

This project placed responsibility on everyone for taking a clear and strong position against terrorism in Iraq and the cooperation in draining its resources.

This international project not only stops at this point with Iraq, but also includes political, economic, cultural, and health facets, and particularly development and reconstruction efforts, and calls to drop the debt accumulated from the policies of the former regime, which stands in the way of the overall development that Iraq is seeking.

To this end, the Government of Iraq thanks the international community for its interest and efforts in helping Iraq handle from crises, and we thank the UN Secretary General Secretary for his kind efforts in making this meeting a success.

The Government of Iraq is keen to cooperate with the United Nations and calls for boosting its activities in Iraq, including the engagement of the international community and revitalizing its role in construction, reconstruction, development, the support of the national reconciliation, and the democratic experience. In this regard, we call upon the United Nations to beef up its presence in Iraq, for these efforts will produce far greater returns.

Mr. President,

The problems being faced in the Middle East can be solved through constructive and meaningful dialogue, and in accordance with resolutions of international legitimacy and principles of the United Nations and international law. From this standpoint, the Iraqi Government supports the Palestinian people's struggle for the resolution of their inalienable rights, including the establishment of an independent state. We also call for the need to implement the resolutions of international legitimacy to restore the occupied Arab territories. In order to promote peace and security in the region and in the world, we call for making the Middle East a region free of weapons of mass destruction.

The Government of Iraq attaches great importance to reforming the United Nations, in a way that improves its performance, especially reform of the Security Council. At the time which we hold interest in expanding the size

of the Council to be more representative and more able to respond to a large increase of member nations the way it was 60 years ago. However, at the same time we pay special attention to improving the operations of the Council, for the sake of its effectiveness and ability to perform. This affects the interests of all UN members. At any rate, the membership increase to the Security Council should not affect its efficiency and effectiveness.

Achieving stability and prosperity demands strengthening the scope of cooperation between all nations of the world while working to establish proportionate relations between countries, in addition to the development of a global system to become more justified to assist poor and developing countries and increase the support from rich countries in order to enhance development programs in poor and developing countries.