

To the members of the British Forces who have served on OP TELIC.

Congratulations on a job well done! Today's restructuring of Multi-National Division South East command in Basra and the transfer of security responsibilities in Basra marks a historic occasion. On behalf of the American service members who have served proudly alongside you in Iraq, I would like to thank you for your hard work and sacrifice over the last six years.

You and your comrades in arms have helped produce important achievements. Your expert assistance has been instrumental in building and professionalizing the new Iraqi Navy and Marines. During Operation Charge of the Knights a year

ago, British advisors and transition teams, medical evacuation teams, and combat quick reaction forces helped Iraqi forces achieve a decisive impact on the operational and strategic landscape in Basra and throughout Iraq. And United Kingdom staff officers have provided expertise of immeasurable value on our key coalition staffs in Iraq. Because of your proven record of professionalism and competence, the Government of Iraq requests that forces from the United Kingdom remain in Iraq after the expiration of the 2008 United Nations Security Council Resolution authorizing the multi-national force.

Our shared experience in Iraq have brought our militaries even closer than they were before the operation in Iraq was launched. Today we, and our other partners, are a more effective and more Interoperable force. As we look together beyond Iraq, your American comrades are heartened that we will continue to serve together in Afghanistan. Thanks to each of you for your commitment, your sacrifice, and your skill.

With respect

David H Petraeus

General, United States Army

Commanding

This letter was released by the UK Ministry of Defence on 6th April 2009