



ENABLE FROM OVERWATCH: MNF-Iraq

General Raymond T. Odierno, U.S. Army

WE SERVE DURING A PIVOTAL PERIOD in the campaign for a secure, stable, and prosperous Iraq. Our coalition forces and Iraqi partners have sacrificed much, and together we have achieved remarkable gains. Today, the Iraqi people enjoy greater freedoms than at any point in several generations. And there is tremendous hope for the future in this ancient land. As we look ahead, we continue to see an evolution of progress in Iraq. As Iraqi Security Forces stand on their own, coalition forces will increasingly *Enable from Overwatch*.

Together, coalition and Iraqi forces will continue to protect the populace while fostering reconciliation, promoting good governance, and encouraging Iraqi men and women to build upon their newly won hope by investing in their communities. Given Iraq's changing environment, accomplishing this will require a subtle shift in how we think about our mission, how we operate to accomplish that mission, and the principles that define who we are.

How We Think

- **Protect and serve the population.** The Iraqi people are the decisive terrain. Enable our Iraqi partners to provide security and help the people of Iraq to invest and take pride in their communities. Foster local governance, provision of basic services, maintenance of infrastructure, and economic revitalization.

- **Understand the complexity of the conflict.** The environment in which we operate is complex and demands that we employ every weapon in our arsenal, kinetic and non-kinetic. To fully utilize all approaches, we must understand the local culture and history. Learn about tribes, formal and informal leaders, governmental and religious structures, and local security forces. We must understand how the society functions so we can enable Iraqis to build a stable, self-reliant nation.

- **Give the people justice and honor.** We want the hands that bring security to be the hands that help bring justice and honor as well. In this complex struggle, strive to be the honest broker. Ensure that complaints and abuses are dealt with quickly and publicly. Provide an environment that creates honorable work, rewards honorable behavior, and emphasizes honorable treatment for all.

- **Foster Government of Iraq legitimacy—Make it easy for the people to choose.** Exemplify professionalism in all your actions and promote the same in our Iraqi partners. Continually develop the capability and legitimacy of Iraqi Security Forces, and give the Iraqi people hope by showing them

General Raymond T. Odierno, U.S. Army, is the Commanding General of Multi-National Force-Iraq. He previously served as Commanding General, Multi-National Corps-Iraq. From late 2006 to early 2008 he was the operational commander implementing the "surge" strategy. General Odierno holds a B.S. from the United States Military Academy at West Point and masters degrees from North Carolina State University and the Naval War College. General Odierno is also a graduate of the Army War College.

PHOTO: U.S. Army GEN Raymond T. Odierno, the commander of Multi-National Force-Iraq, and Lesley Stahl, CBS news correspondent, tour a market in the Sadr City district of Baghdad, Iraq, 18 September 2008. (U.S. Air Force, TSGT Cohen A. Young)

that loyalty to the national government is the best way to improve the lives of their families.

- **Promote reconciliation.** Separate those who promote and practice violence from those now willing to reconcile and become productive members of Iraqi society. Encourage and enable the Iraqi government to reintegrate those committed to peaceful coexistence with their neighbors.

How We Operate

- **Conduct operations by, with, or through our Iraqi partners—Enable from Overwatch.** Understand Iraqi systems and capabilities, and help Iraqis make them work. Always look for sustainable solutions. Coalition and Iraqi units must live, work, and fight together, with the Iraqis more and more in the lead. Ultimately, the legitimacy of the ISF in the eyes of the Iraqi people is essential to long-term success.

- **Walk.** Move mounted, work dismounted. Patrol on foot and engage the population—with the Iraqi Security Forces in front whenever possible. Situational awareness can only be gained by interacting with the people face-to-face. Every patrol should have tasks designed to augment understanding of the area and the enemy.

- **Defeat the network, not just the attack.** Defeat enemy attacks before they happen by identifying the network behind attack preparations. Pursue the network’s leaders, bomb makers, financiers, suppliers, and operators. Use both lethal and non-lethal means to destroy the network and prevent it from regenerating.

- **Share intelligence.** Establish collection systems and promptly and regularly share information up and down the chain of command and with our Iraqi partners. Know that small pieces of information paint the big picture.

- **Integrate civilian and military efforts.** As we move closer to sustainable security, civilian and governmental agencies will naturally take on more responsibility as we reduce our military presence. Coordinate operations and initiatives with our embassy and interagency partners, our Iraqi counterparts, local civilian leaders, and non-governmental organizations to ensure all are working to achieve a common purpose. At all levels, continue to build Iraqi capacity to independently execute governance functions.

- **Transfer security responsibility.** Enable

Iraqi units to accept security responsibility as local conditions permit. Don’t rush to failure. Closely supervise deliberate, well-coordinated transitions that preserve security gains and maintain momentum. “Thin” our presence in sector, but stay engaged, and maintain situational awareness and vigilance in protecting our force.

Who We Are

- **Be first with the truth.** Communicate accurate information—good or bad—to the chain of command, to Iraqi leaders, and to the public as soon as possible. Preempt rumors and beat the insurgents, extremists, and criminals to the headlines. Hold the press (and ourselves) accountable for accuracy and context. Challenge enemy disinformation. Turn our enemies’ extremist ideologies, oppressive practices, and indiscriminate violence against them.

- **Have realistic expectations.** We have made great gains, but much remains to be done. The enemy still has a vote, and progress may sometimes be slow. Make no premature declarations of victory, but identify and share successes and champion the Iraqi people’s cause.

- **Live our values.** Stay true to the values we hold dear and that distinguish us from our enemies. This endeavor is often brutal, physically demanding, and frustrating. We all experience moments of anger, but we can neither submit to dark impulses nor tolerate unethical actions by others.

- **Leaders make the difference.** Warfare has never been more complex or required more imaginative leadership. Leaders should empower subordinates and push decisions, resources, and authorities to the lowest level possible. Provide appropriate right and left limits for subordinate leaders and give them the flexibility necessary to be imaginative and adaptive. Communicate with your subordinates daily to ensure awareness. Leaders are the barometers for their units. Do what’s right and trust your fellow troopers to do the same.

Many challenges still lie ahead. I salute your professionalism, your skill, and your extraordinary dedication in this complex environment. The world watches our progress with great anticipation. You are the authors of one of our era’s proudest chapters of military history, and I am honored to lead Multi-National Force-Iraq as we put to practice these tenets of counterinsurgency. *MR*