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Presenter: Commander, Multinational Corps Iraq Lt . Gen. Lloyd Austin III

August 18, 2008

DoD News Briefing with Lt . Gen. Austin from Iraq

BRYAN WHITMAN (deputy assistant secretary of Defense for Public Affairs): Good morning and welcome. And thank you for showing up this morning so bright and early. Let me just make sure that General Austin can hear me okay.

General Austin, Bryan Whitman at the Pentagon.

GEN. AUSTIN: Good morning, Bryan.

MR. WHITMAN: Again, thank you, general. And good afternoon to you.

It is a privilege to have our briefer today, Lieutenant General Lloyd Austin, who is the commanding general of Multinational Corps Iraq -- he assumed command on February 14th of this year -- and, as such, directs the operations of approximately 150,000 joint and coalition forces in all sectors of Iraq. He is not a stranger to Iraq. He previously served in Iraq as the deputy commanding general of the 3rd Infantry Division from March to May of 2003.

And I think this is the second time that General Austin has done this type of briefing with us. Hopefully we will have the opportunity to do many more during his tour. He is talking to us today from Camp Victory in Baghdad. And as is our custom, he is going to give you a brief overview of what's going on and then take some of your questions.

So General Austin, welcome, and thank you again.

GEN. AUSTIN: Well, thank you, Bryan, for the introduction. And good morning, ladies and gentlemen.

I'd like to take just a couple of minutes to provide a quick statement. And I look forward to entertaining some of your questions at the end.

Let me say up front that our mission in Iraq has not changed. Our number one task remains protecting the Iraqi population. We're also focused on developing a capable and professional Iraqi security force and helping to build civil capacity.