



Republic of Iraq

Statement by H.E. Mr. Jalal Talabani

**President of The Republic of Iraq,
At the General Debate of the 66th Session of the
United Nations General Assembly**

New York, 23 September 2011

Mr. President,

Allow me at the outset to congratulate you and our brothers, the people of Qatar, on the occasion of your Presidency of the 66th session of the General Assembly. Our delegation will be of assistance to you in performing your duties, and we are confident that the experience and wisdom you enjoy will be an important factor in the success of the General Assembly. We also give our thanks to your predecessor, Mr. Joseph Deiss, for his Presidency of the General Assembly in its outgoing session. I would also like to congratulate the UN Secretary General Mr. Ban Ki-Moon for his re-election for a second term as Secretary General and wish him all success in his work.

Mr. President,

It is an honor to stand in front of you one more time, to brief you on the notable developments that Iraq is witnessing while its working on building a modern state that lives in peace with its people and neighbors. Simultaneously, Iraq is building a homeland where everyone lives in peace and stability without regard to sectarian, ethnic or factional affiliations; a system where the rule of law prevails and human rights are respected; and a system that is based on democracy and the peaceful transition of power. This is the basis for the path which we are moving on and continually implementing. The events that are currently taking place in the Arab region have proved the correctness of the path we have followed and are now following. The values of change and reform, which Iraq has and will continue to calls for, have become an essential part of the aspirations of the Arab People for freedom and for their ability to chose their political system of their own full will on the basis of democracy and human rights.

We have come a long way in building our political system, which is based on the National Collaboration Government. Iraq has started to restore its elements of strength that were lost due to more than three decades of internal and external wars conducted by the former dictatorship; and the international isolation and sanctions that Iraq experienced; as well as the collapse of security institutions and the outbreak of sectarian strife that threatened its national existence that the country suffered after the collapse of the former regime. We began to overcome these negativities and they became a part of the past through our determination, willfulness and the help of the International community.

In the area of development, having witnessed the big improvement in the security situation in Iraq, we are still relying on the five year plan for the years 2010-2014 which was announced by the Iraqi Government on April 4th 2010, and the licensing rounds that were held between Iraq and major companies in the field of Oil and Natural Gas investments to improve our Oil Industry. That was done to turn the wheels of development and push the economy to advanced levels. It is expected that the direct five year plan will include about 2,700 strategic projects in different sectors with a cost of 186 Billion Dollars. The plan would provide about 4 million job opportunities that will help

deal with the unemployment problem in Iraq. It is hoped that by the end of this plan, the per capita income of the Iraqi individual would increase to 8,000 Dollars per year, and poverty levels would decrease by 16%.

In addition to this, we were able to get rid of the sanctions and restrictions imposed on Iraq as a result of the invasion of Kuwait. Based on Security Council Resolutions 1956, 1957 and 1958, adopted on 15 December 2010, Iraq has been freed completely from all of the restrictions imposed on it which have prevented the country from benefiting from scientific and technological advances, and Iraq has gained its sovereignty in regards to its financial resources. After this important stage in building the state, we feel that we are taking firm steps on the road of democracy and development and that we have a bigger need to open the doors of investment in Iraq. Therefore, the economic policy of Iraq is based on encouraging investments and providing the appropriate legislative environment to protect investors and their capital, so Iraq can become a safe and fertile investing environment in many essential sectors, such as oil, natural gas, electricity, reconstruction, infrastructure and other economic sectors. From this stage, I call on all countries to open collaboration channels with Iraq in the field of investment, and to take advantage from the available opportunities. Iraqi Kurdistan has witnessed important developments in the fields of construction, economy, culture and others. Thousands of villages that were destroyed by the Dictatorship were rebuilt; cities towns and roadways were modernized. The region has more than (15) public and private Universities with more than 100,000 students, compared to the past where there was only one University with number of students don't exceed couple of thousands.

At the end of this year, the United States Forces will withdraw according to the agreement signed between the two countries in 2008. During this year our security forces proved great ability to combat terrorism and provide security. These forces are capable and efficient to fill the vacuum that the withdrawal of United States forces will create, and that will promote the Iraqi national abilities to keep the gains achieved in the new Iraq. But the need will push the government of Iraq to keep numbers of American experts and others to benefit from their experiences in the fields of training and capacity building and according to the need of Iraq to these experiences. On this occasion, I would like to express on behalf of the Government and people of Iraq our thanks and appreciation for the assistance and support that were provided by the people and government of the United States, other friendly states and the United Nations to promote democracy in Iraq and its reconstruction. I avail the opportunity to be here in New York to express to the people of New York and all Americans the feelings of sympathy and solidarity on the tenth anniversary for the terrorist attacks in September 11.

In the extent of Iraq's International and Regional relations, the Constitution of Iraq and the national program for the current Iraqi Government determined the general basis for our Foreign Policy. It provides that Iraq is a founding and effective member in the League of Arab States and it is obliged with its charter in addition to that Iraq is part of

the Islamic world. On this basis Iraq is working on hosting the Arab summit at the end of March 2012. Also, Iraq respects the principles of good neighborliness and is obliged with not interfering in the internal affairs of the other states, seek to solve the disputes with peaceful means, establish its relations on the basis of common interests and reciprocity and respect its international obligations, on this basis we invite the two neighbors Turkey and The Islamic Republic of Iran to resort to diplomacy and positive dialogue to solve the issues and to stop the bombing of Iraqi territories in the Kurdistan region which is causing many victims from the innocents and civilians.

When it comes to our obligations to disarmament and non proliferation, the Constitution of Iraq was clear in determining the position of Iraq concerning this issue, Article (9 E) of the Iraqi Constitution provided that the Iraqi Government shall respect and implement Iraq's international obligations regarding the non-proliferation, non-development, non- production, and non-use of nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons, and shall prohibit associated equipment, materiel, technologies, and delivery systems for use in the development, manufacture, production, and use of such weapons. On this clear position and commitment of Iraq with the international Charters concerning disarmament, the Security Council adopted on 15 December 2010 Resolution 1957 which lifted all restrictions that were imposed on Iraq in this concern. In this context, we would like to confirm the legitimate right of States to peaceful use of nuclear power and its technologies according to the rules of the relevant International conventions. This right constitute one of the foundations for the disarmament system and non- proliferation. Within this approach, when it comes to the nuclear file of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Iraq believes in the legitimate right of states in using nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. This right is guaranteed by the international Charters; at the forefront of those charters is the non-proliferation treaty. We affirm the importance of reaching a peaceful solution in dealing with this issue; dialogue and calm diplomatic work are the best ways to achieve this goal. On the other hand any escalation will harm the interests of all parties and will put the security of the region at a great risk.

Mr. President,

Iraq is concerned about the tragic situation of the Palestinian People which is the result of Israeli Practices which are incompatible with international laws and customs and international humanitarian law. Iraq is doing everything in its capacity to support the struggle of Palestinian People in getting all its inalienable rights, in particular establish its independent state on their homeland, with its capital Jerusalem, and in this regard, Iraq endorses and supports the direction of the Palestinian Authority to go to the United Nations to achieve full international recognition of a Palestinian state during the meeting of the current session of the General Assembly, and calls on the international community and all peace-loving forces to stand by the Palestinian people in their legitimate struggle to achieve its goals, and demanding the Israeli government to fully withdraw from all Arab territories occupied in 1967. This would contribute to the settlement of the Arab-

Israeli conflict, and to bring comprehensive and fair peace in this vital region of the world. Making the Middle East an area that is free from weapons of mass destruction is considered a vital matter to achieve peace, security and stability, and this requires Israel to join the Non Proliferation Treaty and to put its nuclear facilities under the safeguards system of the International Atomic Energy Agency .

The countries of the Arab world are witnessing significant developments and unprecedented reforms and political changes, the effects of those will be reflected on the future of the whole region, and will extend to areas beyond their effects. Iraq as an early actor in initiating this change supports the struggle of the people of the region in order to gain their freedom and to choose their political system and their right to peaceful demonstrations and protests in the so-called Arab spring. We hope that these changes contribute to regional stability and security and to avoid anything that might threaten the unity and sovereignty of the countries of the region or stirs strife or sectarian and ethnic conflicts.

In the area of international cooperation, Iraq will work to develop his cooperation with all countries that stood with it and supported it in the stability of the ongoing political process and the strengthening it and in reconstruction. We refer here to the United States of America and to the European Union, when we mention these two parties we mention them not because they are the only ones that stood with Iraq, but because we are linked by mechanisms of action that should be implemented. There are many friends, who stood with us in the difficult times we have witnessed, and we will keep and remember this favor, and we will develop relations of cooperation with them. After the withdrawal of United States forces from Iraq by end of this year we will work to enhance and expand the scope of cooperation based on the strategic framework agreement signed between the two countries in 2008, the relations according to this agreement will be for the long-term and will cover all aspects of life. The situation is the same with the European Union, After finishing drafting the Partnership and Cooperation agreement between Iraq and the European Union and the possible signing of the agreement in the near future and the signing of the memorandum of understanding on the Strategic Partnership in the field of energy between Iraq and the European Union. The cooperation between the two parties will take a broader scope in various fields covered by this agreement. Our economic, Commercial and political relations with the People's Republic of China are expanding. Our relations with neighboring countries, Arab countries, India and Pakistan are also constantly improving.

In the area of the relationship with the United Nations, we will continue in the approach of constructive cooperation with all United Nations bodies, in the forefront of these is the Security Council and the General Secretariat and will keep the commitments which we made to ourselves. I would like to take this opportunity to express my appreciation for the efforts made by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Ed Melkert throughout his time in Iraq, and I wish him success and good health for

him and his family, and I welcome the new representative of the secretary-general, and we will continue our cooperation with him in a way which enable him to carry out these tasks in accordance with resolution 1770 and the subsequent resolutions. The United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) will receive all forms of support, assistance and in particular during the next phase, and we will do our best to provide the necessary protection for its staff and premises.

Mr.President

We look forward with confidence and optimism to the future, and we are working on Iraq to become, as it is one of the emerging democracies and with the attributes of richness in natural and human resources, an important factor in regional stability, security and prosperity and as a living example of democracy and federalism, voluntary co-existence of different ethnic and sectarian groups.

Thank You