

Joint Statement by the United States and the Republic of Iraq Higher Coordinating Committee

November 30, 2011

The United States of America and the Republic of Iraq are committed to forging a strong partnership based on mutual interests that will continue to grow for years to come. Our two nations are entering a new phase in our relationship. We have a historic opportunity to strengthen our ties beyond security and build a multi-faceted relationship through trade, education, culture, law enforcement, environment, energy, and other important areas.

Three years ago, our nations signed the Strategic Framework Agreement (SFA), affirming both sides' desire to establish long-term bonds of cooperation and friendship. The SFA is a lasting agreement, and one that serves as the foundation on which we are building a durable and mutually beneficial relationship. Today, we gather again in Baghdad to reaffirm our commitment to this important partnership and to the principles of cooperation, sovereignty, and mutual respect articulated in the SFA.

Vice President Joe Biden and Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki convened the SFA's Higher Coordinating Committee on November 30. Together, they affirmed the significant accomplishments under the SFA thus far and charted a course for further joint efforts.

Cultural and Education Cooperation

The Republic of Iraq seeks the cooperation of the United States in its efforts to build a stronger higher education system, expanding English language programs, and preserving Iraq's rich cultural heritage, especially through assistance in conserving archeological sites such as the Babylon historical site, which the United States has helped preserve, and through support to the Iraqi Institute for Conservation of Antiquities and Heritage.

Energy Cooperation

The United States is committed to supporting the Republic of Iraq in its efforts to develop the energy sector. Together, we are exploring ways to help boost Iraq's oil production, including through better protection for critical infrastructure. The U.S. also supports Iraq through training in operations and maintenance, the provision of spare parts, and the development of the Government of Iraq's Electricity Master Plan, which will guide Iraq's electricity sector development over the next 30 years.

Law Enforcement and Judicial Cooperation

The United States and the Iraq believe that an independent judicial system is an essential component of a stable, democratic Iraq. The United States has provided assistance and professional support to develop and professionalize the Iraqi corrections system through judicial training programs for Iraqis through the Judicial Development Institute. Under the Police Development Program, the United States will continue providing advisory and technical assistance to the Iraqi police, including an exchange program that will bring groups of Iraqi police to the United States for leadership development over the next three years.

Political and Diplomatic Cooperation

The United States will continue to cooperate closely with Iraq in international fora in pursuit of shared interests. The United States also reaffirms its support for efforts aimed at resolving all remaining Chapter VII issues. In December 2010, the U.S. chaired a special session of the United Nations Security Council to bring closure to several Chapter VII issues dating to the time of the former regime in Iraq.

Services, Technology, Environment, and Transportation Cooperation

The United States is committed to supporting the Iraqi government's plans to improve services, develop its system of roads and bridges, and bring its airports up to international standards. We will improve agriculture and irrigation, support trade, and generate export opportunities through exchange programs between U.S. and Iraqi businessmen. The United States is providing Iraq the expertise it needs to design and implement an advanced banking system that will meet Iraq's current and future needs. The United States pledges to support Iraq in developing its health care services, improving public health, and health awareness campaigns.

Trade and Finance Cooperation

The United States and Iraq will continue their efforts to reinforce their financial and trade cooperation and to strengthen ties between our nations' business communities. For the first time since 1988, the U.S. participated in the recent Baghdad International Trade Fair, showcasing 85 American businesses and organizations and building on the success of the Business and Investment Conference held in Washington, D.C. in 2009. The United States is supporting the Government of Iraq's efforts in the financial sector by providing the technical expertise needed to develop private banks and microfinance institutions. In this context, the United States is developing new lending products for small and medium enterprises, in addition to the roughly \$50 million set aside for such loans. Our governments are looking forward to the next meeting and recommendations of the U.S.-Iraq Business Dialogue, a forum of Iraqi and U.S. companies that promises to strengthen commercial ties between our countries.

Security and Defense Cooperation

The United States and Iraq recognize the importance of working closely together in the area of security and defense to strengthen our two countries' security and stability. Through the Strategic Framework Agreement, we have committed ourselves to continuing and strengthening our cooperation, guided by our common interests and shared goals. At the dawn of a new chapter in our relationship, the United States and Iraq stand shoulder to shoulder in increasing our efforts to build a better future for our two nations

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this joint statement.

Categories: Joint Statements : Iraq :: Higher Coordinating Committee.

Names: Biden, Joseph R., Jr.; Maliki, Nuri al-.

Subjects: Iraq : Educational system, development; Iraq : Energy cooperation with U.S.; Iraq : Governmental accountability and transparency, strengthening efforts; Iraq : Infrastructure and economic development; Iraq : Prime Minister; Iraq : Relations with U.S.; Iraq : Security cooperation with U.S.; Iraq : Strategic Framework Agreement with U.S.; Iraq : Trade with U.S.; White House Office : Vice President.

DCPD Number: DCPD201100909.