

Statement on United States Military Personnel Recommendations From Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates

January 5, 2007

I am pleased to accept the recommendations of Secretary Gates for several key positions in our Nation's Armed Forces. These leaders are accomplished military professionals whose experience, skill, and dedication will enable them to successfully lead our troops as they protect our country.

General George Casey has been a strong and effective commander of the Multi-National Force in Iraq. I have come to depend on his wise counsel and solid judgment in our efforts to protect the American people in the war on terror. I look forward to working with him in his new role as Chief of Staff of the United States Army. General Casey will succeed General Peter Schoomaker, who has done an outstanding job in helping transform the U.S. Army to confront the challenges of the 21st century. I wish General Schoomaker all the best as he retires from active duty after a distinguished career.

Lieutenant General Dave Petraeus will succeed General Casey. General Petraeus is a soldier of vision and determination. His service in Iraq has equipped him with expertise in irregular warfare and stability operations and an understanding of the

enemy we face. I am confident that General Petraeus has the right experience, leadership skills, and judgment to be an outstanding commander of MNF-I.

Admiral William J. Fallon, currently the commander of U.S. Pacific Command, has earned a reputation as one of our country's foremost military strategists. His experience and leadership will be critical to helping our country achieve victory over the radicals and extremists who threaten freedom. He will be an excellent commander of U.S. Central Command.

Admiral Fallon will succeed General John Abizaid, who has overseen some of our military's most extraordinary efforts to spread freedom and democracy. He has earned the respect and admiration of a grateful nation, and his service is a model for those who wear our country's uniform. As he retires, I express my deep appreciation for all he has done for America.

NOTE: The statement referred to Lt. Gen. David H. Petraeus, USA, commanding general, U.S. Army Combined Arms Center and Fort Leavenworth.

The President's Radio Address

January 6, 2007

Good morning. Earlier this week, the newly elected Members of the House and the Senate took their oaths of office and became part of the 110th Congress. I congratulate them all, and I look forward to working with them over the next 2 years.

Since the November elections, I've had a number of productive meetings with the new leaders in Congress, including Speaker

of the House Nancy Pelosi, House Minority Leader John Boehner, Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, and Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell. I was encouraged by our discussions, and I'm confident that we can find common ground in our efforts to serve our fellow citizens and to move our country forward.