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STATEMENT BY SECRETARY CLINTON

Iraqi National Elections

I congratulate all the people of Iraq who participated in national elections today and over the past three days. There is no better rebuke to the violent extremists who seek to derail Iraq's progress. Our thoughts and prayers are with the families who lost friends and loved ones, and we salute the determination of the Iraqi people to reaffirm their commitment to democracy and to chart their own future free of fear and intimidation.

Thanks to the efforts of the Iraq High Electoral Commission and the Iraqi Security Forces, which organized the voting and ensured security at thousands of polling sites throughout the country, men and women from all parts of Iraq were able to go to the polls and choose their leaders freely.

I also would like to commend Ambassador Hill, General Odierno and all the U.S. civilian and military personnel who supported this historic effort.

Iraqis have chosen a new government to lead their country at a critical time. In the coming months, we will work together with Iraqi leaders as our partnership continues its transition to a primarily civilian focus, with the goal of building a long-term, multidimensional relationship between our two nations - a relationship that will contribute to stability in the Middle East and growing peace and prosperity in Iraq.

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