

**WASHINGTON, DC** – Congressman Joe Courtney today release the following statement after President Obama announced that all U.S. military forces will be withdrawn from Iraq by year's end:

"President Obama's decision to protect U.S. military personnel from unacceptable exposure to prosecution in Iraqi courts and instead execute the final removal of American troops from Iraq is the right decision for both countries. This milestone was achieved through negotiations between our two countries that provided a clear path for the transition of responsibility to the Iraqi government. After eight long years, our brave volunteers have given that country the opportunity to create its own future with a sizable security force and the rudiments of democratic institutions.

"With the Fifth Fleet nearby in Bahrain and U.S. bases in Kuwait and Qatar, our ability to respond to any threat to American national security in the region is more than adequate. As the President said, our two nations will continue to have a special relationship for many years to come, built on the sacrifice and effort of our troops. Now is the time to pay particular homage to all who served in Iraq and their families - the "one percent" who have stepped up and volunteered to wear our nation's uniform through a difficult time in our history."

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