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Headquarters
United States Central Command
7115 South Boundary Boulevard
MacDill AFB, FL 33621

May 14, 2009

A. G. Houston, AC, AFC
Air Chief Marshal
Chief of the Defense Force
Russell Offices
CANBERRA ACT 2600
Australia

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EXECUTIVE SUPPORT

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Dear Air Chief Marshal Houston,

As the last elements of Australian forces near the completion of their deployment to Iraq, I want to thank you for the long-standing and superb efforts of the Australian Defense Force in support of Operation IRAQI FREEDOM. The Australian Defense Force has, as always, performed admirably and achieved tremendous success in a variety of missions.

Australia's accomplishments in Operation CATALYST—the Australian Defense Force's commitment to the rehabilitation of Iraq—are many and impressive. Since March 2003, Aussie professionals have contributed significantly to progress in Iraq by providing a Quick Reaction Force to Al Muthanna Province and by assuming operational overwatch of Dhi Qar Province. Australian troopers supported security and stabilization operations at Taji and Tallil by training approximately 33,000 Iraqi Army soldiers in logistics and counterinsurgency operations—helping to build the vitally important Iraqi Security Force. Indeed, Australia can take great pride in its enduring contribution to the future of Iraq.

As we look together beyond Iraq, I am comforted by the knowledge that our Australian allies will continue to serve as valued partners with American forces in Afghanistan and in any future conflict which may arise. Thanks again for the commitment, the sacrifice, and the skill of the Australian Defense Force.

Argus—

*All Australians should
be proud of what your forces
accomplished in Iraq. Thank
you for their great work!*

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With gratitude,

David H. Petraeus
General, United States Army
Commanding