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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6225

August 19, 2020

His Excellency Mustafa Al-Kadhimi
Prime Minister of the Republic of Iraq
Embassy of the Republic of Iraq
3421 Massachusetts Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20007

Dear Prime Minister al-Kadhimi,

We write to welcome you to the United States in advance of your visit and to express our support for continuing the robust partnership between our two countries. We share your desire to see Iraq secure in its own sovereignty and free of unwanted foreign interference. We recognize that our two countries have a shared history, and we trust that the ongoing U.S.-Iraq Strategic Dialogue will lay the groundwork for both an enduring U.S.-Iraq relationship and a more secure, prosperous and sovereign Iraq that can benefit all Iraqis.

We have greatly appreciated your commitment to U.S.-Iraqi security cooperation and recognize that our cooperation will always be at the request and with the consent of the Iraqi government. Our mutual security cooperation shattered the Islamic State's physical caliphate, increased the professionalism and capability of the Iraqi security forces, and has set conditions for Iraqi forces to lead operations with diminishing levels of U.S. military support. Most importantly, our cooperation continues to reinforce the primacy of the Iraqi security forces as the true guarantors of Iraq's sovereignty, not other independent armed groups.

We have also been heartened by your commitment to politically difficult but necessary reforms and the concrete steps you have taken to implement those reforms. We applaud any and all efforts to begin to root out the corruption and reform the patronage system that have stifled economic growth in Iraq and driven many young Iraqis into the streets in protest over the past year. Furthermore, we respect your commitment to protect the peoples' right to peacefully protest and to listen to their demands. We believe that continuing U.S.-Iraqi economic cooperation can help Iraq harness the power of not only its natural resources but also of its people by pursuing further economic reforms that spur private entrepreneurship among Iraqis as well as foreign investment while strengthening diplomatic and economic ties with Iraq's Arab neighbors.

Finally, we are encouraged by your July 31 announcement that Iraq will hold early elections next June. As always, the U.S. stands ready to support Iraq's democratic process. As members of Congress, we believe that there are few stronger examples of Iraqi sovereignty than free and fair elections that clearly demonstrate that Iraqi leaders are subject to the rule of law and the will of the Iraqi people.

We recognize that the road ahead is not an easy one. From national and local reconciliation efforts, to the last scattered remnants of ISIS, to the fall of oil prices, to the current spread of COVID-19, we are well aware of, and sympathetic to, the challenges your government faces along with ordinary Iraqis of every sect and ethnicity. Yet we also believe that there is bipartisan support in Congress for a deeper partnership with Iraq that benefits both U.S. and Iraqi security and prosperity while continuing to respect Iraqi sovereignty.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "James E. Risch". The signature is stylized, with a large, sweeping initial "J" and "E" followed by the name "Risch".

James E. Risch
Chairman

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Robert Menendez". The signature is highly stylized and cursive, with a large, prominent "R" and "M".

Robert Menendez
Ranking Member