

Casey discusses upcoming deployment with 1st Armored Division Soldiers during Christmas week visit in Wiesbaden

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WIESBADEN ARMY AIRFIELD, Germany – Army Chief of Staff Gen. George Casey Jr.

braved snow and bone-chilling wind Dec. 21 to speak 1st Armored Division Soldiers here about their role in their upcoming deployment to Iraq and how the Afghanistan troop surge will affect it.



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Army Chief of Staff Gen. George W. Casey Jr., prepares to give his holiday message to the Soldiers and families of U.S. Army Europe on Minue Field at Wiesbaden Army Airfield, Germany, Dec. 21. The visit to the airfield was the general's last stop during a tour of major Army commands overseas.

Casey emphasized that their role and that of other units under the leadership of Gen. Raymond Odierno, Multinational Force-Iraq commander, will assist and advise the Iraqis as they continue to secure their own nation.

“General Odierno will work

closely with 1st Armored Division as we help develop security programs and move into an assist and advisory role in Iraq,” Casey said. “The biggest challenge for the drawdown and transition will be the mindset of the Soldier. The Soldier will have to be ready for change, but I feel positive about this change. Casey has traveled around the world in the past couple of weeks,

including visits to troops in Iraq and Afghanistan. During one visit to Soldiers of 1st Cavalry Division, who 1st Armored Division will replace, he seemed pleased by what he saw.

“I was amazed with the commitment and zeal the Soldiers currently deployed to Iraq exhibited,” Casey said. “We have a seasoned Army that is committed to its mission.”

Casey assured the Iron Soldiers that though their transition will be challenging, they will soon settle into the mission and succeed.

“Transitions are never easy,” Casey said. “The first 30 days are always hard, but then you move in, take over and move into a normal duty day.”

The U.S. Army plans a surge in the number of Soldiers deployed to Afghanistan in the next year. Casey said he is confident the increase in deployed Soldiers would stir up a little bit of change.

“[The troop surge] will affect dwell time slightly,” said Casey. “It takes a long time to move troops into Afghanistan, but they have the resources they need to fill their mission. Furthermore, we have more troops in the Army than we ever had before.

“With more forces deployed now, we can execute this Afghan deployment without 15-month tours, stop loss, and we should see an increase in dwell time over time for all Army components. We succeed when [the Afghans] can secure their country. I am very positive in the direction the mission is going,” he said.

Casey acknowledged much media attention has shifted to Afghanistan and the surge, but said it is critical the 1AD Soldiers remain resolved and alert to accomplish their mission in Iraq.

“We have a lot invested in Iraq,” said Casey, “and it is critical that the mission is completed.”

