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16<sup>th</sup> Sustainment Brigade  
Public Affairs Office**

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## **Army's number two in Iraq spells out Security Agreement at Habur Gate**

LTFA

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16<sup>th</sup> SB Public Affairs

HABUR GATE, Iraq — Command Sgt. Maj. Lawrence Wilson, command sergeant major, Multi-National Force – Iraq, visited the 30 Soldiers at this remote convoy center, on the Turkish – Iraqi border Feb. 4.

At Habur Gate, a four-story building with a fenced-in yard for commercial trucks and their Army escorts, Wilson discussed the Security Agreement and Strategic Framework Agreement that went into effect Jan. 1 with Soldiers from Logistics Task Force – Alpha, 16<sup>th</sup> Sustainment Brigade, over dinner in the unit's "Habur Gate Café."

"The mission hasn't changed," Wilson told the junior enlisted Soldiers, "But how you operate within that mission has. We are now guests; we are not here in a combat role."

One of MNF-I's top priorities for Iraq now is building economic infrastructure and increasing foreign investment, Wilson said.

"[Saddam] Hussein didn't keep up infrastructure, and Iraq also got behind technologically," Wilson said. "It's like buying a car and never changing the oil—the

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engine's going to blow. We need to open up investments.”

The Army's most senior noncommissioned officer told the Soldiers that several corporations, including oil industry leaders and auto manufacturers, had recently approached MNF-I, and the Iraqi government.

Wilson thanked the 16<sup>th</sup> Sust. Bde. Soldiers for their contribution to improving Iraq's economy.

“Everything you guys have done here has helped us move into a strategic partnership with the Iraqi government,” Wilson said.

Wilson, escorted by Command Sgt. Maj. James Spencer, command sergeant major, 16<sup>th</sup> Sust. Bde., and Sgt. 1<sup>st</sup> Class Donald Davis, first sergeant, LTF – Alpha, also toured the nearby city of Zakhu and talked with local Kurdish citizens.

Yahya Sami Jamil, who manages a small store with his brother that caters to the Americans at Habur Gate, was grateful for the opportunity to meet Wilson and show him and Spencer around the Kurdish community. The town is a rarity in Iraq, in that Soldiers can drive through it in commercial vehicles, and walk the streets without wearing protective armor.

“Of course we are glad to meet any guests from the U.S. Army,” Jamil said. “The Kurdish people and government are friends of the Army and the U.S. Your guys here, we are going to protect them and open our houses to them, and we want to share in the U.S. policy for freedom.”

The Habur Gate facility pairs convoys from Turkey with convoy escorts from different

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units within the 16<sup>th</sup> Sustainment Brigade. The site is responsible for fueling and performing basic maintenance on vehicles, and for feeding and quartering Army transportation Soldiers. There is also a small aid station at the center. Habur Gate Soldiers facilitate about eight convoys a week, said 1<sup>st</sup> Sgt. Davis.

After leaving Habur Gate, Wilson visited Soldiers and leaders of the 18<sup>th</sup> Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 16<sup>th</sup> Sust. Bde., at Contingency Operating Site Marez-East, an important logistical site for convoys passing through Mosul.

The site, little more than 80 miles south of Habur Gate, offered a very different perspective of northern Iraq. Because of the poor security situation in the town, Mosul is one of a few towns in Iraq where the Army does not practice the new “share the road” policy called for in the Security Agreement.

Wilson reiterated the Army’s role in the Security Agreement during a luncheon with senior enlisted leaders of the 18<sup>th</sup> CSSB, including Army plans to reduce troop strength in Iraq by two brigades this year.

Wilson said there were some issues still being negotiated, like the 26 bridges in Iraq that the Army built and maintains, and the future of some of the units that, by request of the Iraqi government, might not be pulled out of cities by the June deadline called for in the Agreement.

But the Army will comply fully with the Security Agreement, and will work with the Iraqi government under the broader Strategic Framework Agreement in areas of education, culture, economics, technology, health and rule of law, he said.

Wilson pointed to the success of recent elections in Iraq, and the improving ability of

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Iraqi Security Forces, as cause for optimism.

“We want to work ourselves out of a job,” Wilson said.

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Command Sgt. Maj. Lawrence Wilson, command sergeant major, Multi-National Force – Iraq, shakes hands with a young Kurdish boy in the town of Zakhu, in northern Iraq near the Turkish border Feb. 4. Wilson was in the area to visit Habur Gate, an Army staging point for commercial convoys entering Iraq from Turkey. He visited the 30 Soldiers at the remote convoy center, managed by the 16<sup>th</sup> Sustainment Brigade, to outline the Security Agreement and Strategic Framework Agreement that took effect Jan. 1. (Photo by Sgt. Keith M. Anderson)