

Statement by the President on the Departure of Special Presidential Envoy John Allen and Appointment of Brett McGurk

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The White House

Office of the Press Secretary

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I offer my profound gratitude to General John Allen as he prepares to depart his role of Special Presidential Envoy for the Global Coalition to Counter ISIL next month. Thirteen months ago, I asked General Allen once again to postpone his well-earned retirement from government service, including nearly 38 years in the Marines, where he served our country in the Balkans, Iraq, Afghanistan, and beyond. I gave him an enormously complex assignment: to build from conception a robust international coalition that would undertake a wide range of political, diplomatic, military, economic and other efforts to degrade and ultimately destroy ISIL.

General Allen has met that challenge with tremendous ability and courage. Thanks in large part to General Allen's tireless work, today the United States is leading a 65-member global coalition that is rolling back ISIL's territorial gains in Iraq and Syria, advising and assisting Iraqi Security Forces, constricting ISIL's financing, interdicting the flow of foreign fighters, helping stabilize liberated communities, and countering ISIL's heinous message. American leadership of this coalition is making the world a safer place, and we have been fortunate to have a great patriot like John Allen leading our efforts. I have very much relied on his counsel and leadership and am deeply grateful that he once again answered his nation's call to serve.

As I thank General Allen for his service, I am pleased to welcome his Deputy, Brett McGurk, as my new Special Presidential Envoy for the Counter ISIL campaign. Brett has been with General Allen at every key moment in this campaign and has long been one of my most trusted advisers on Iraq. Brett has my full support as he continues broadening and deepening our Coalition efforts to degrade and ultimately destroy ISIL. I have also asked him to work closely with my national security team to strengthen our partnership with Iraq and work intensively with regional partners to bring an end to the civil war in Syria, which continues to fuel ISIL and other extremist groups.