



CHAIRMAN OF THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20318-9999

INDEPENDENCE DAY 2008

Seldom in our Nation's history has this anniversary fallen at so critical and dangerous a time.

Al Qaeda has been beaten back in Iraq, but it is not defeated. The Taliban still claws for power in Afghanistan. Extremists of all kinds all over the world still plot against us, our fellow citizens, and our allies and friends.

Those of you who serve and your families know this danger well. You live with it -- defend against it -- everyday. You have been touched by it in one way or another for each of the last six years, some irrevocably so.

And yet still you serve. Still you sacrifice. Still you carry on.

Americans everywhere will celebrate this 4th of July with fireworks and parades, but they will do so grateful for that service and sacrifice. They will do so knowing that in a very real sense, you are observing the holiday in perhaps the truest and most noble manner, by laboring to keep alive our independence one more year.

The Joint Chiefs and I share their gratitude and salute you all, wherever you are, whatever you are doing. Thank you for your service -- and that of your families -- at this critical time. Thank you for the gift of our freedom.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "M.G. Mullen", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

M.G. MULLEN
Admiral, U.S. Navy