

《奥巴马：八年半的伊拉克战争已经结束》

美国总统奥巴马周三访问了军队，标志着伊拉克战争的结束。他说，美国军队撤离伊拉克的最后工作已经完成，最后一批军队将于几天后着手撤离伊拉克。



Visiting troops at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, Obama marked the end of the eight and a half years of war in a speech to members of the 82nd Airborne and Army Special Ops, saying although the country the United States left behind is "not a perfect place," but is nevertheless "a sovereign, stable, and self-reliant Iraq."

"We are building a new partnership between our nations. And we are ending a war not with a final battle, but with a final march toward home," said the president, noting the United States has done "the best" it could in Iraq.

Reflecting on the heavy cost of war, Obama noted nearly 4,500 US service members died in Iraq, including 202 troops from Fort Bragg. He acknowledged the war "was a source of great controversy here at home, with patriots on both sides of the debate," saying "it is harder to end a war than to begin one."

As a presidential candidate, Obama campaigned on the pledge to end the Iraq war, and according to an agreement with the Iraqi government, US forces are pulling out of that country by year-end. The White House initially wanted to retain some troops in Iraq as military trainers, but failed to agree with Iraqis on the terms.

Hosting Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki in the White House on Monday, Obama said during a press conference with the Iraqi leader that as the war ends this month, it was time to "begin a new chapter in the history between our

countries. A normal relationship between sovereign nations. An equal partnership based on mutual interests and mutual respect."

However, as the war ends, soldiers are coming home to an uncertain future, as the economy yet to bounce back from the worst recession in decades, and unemployment rate stood high. Unemployment rate for post 9/11 veterans was at 11.1 percent in November, even higher than the general public.

As the federal government struggles in red ink, the Pentagon is also threatened by drastic defense cuts, and personnel costs could be on the chopping board. In the speech, Obama said that the government will keep its promise of taking care of military members and families through the post 9/11 G.I. Bill as well as new measures to spur hiring of veterans.

