Dear Ala Talabani, ministers, Excellencies, honourable guests, dear friends of the Czech Republic.

28th October 1918 the independent Czechoslovakia was established. The Czechs and Slovaks stood up and created independent, self-confident state, which became industrial power in the central Europe. During last 100 years went through turbulent times but also through calm and prosperous period. 25 years ago the two nations democratically and freedomly decided to create two independent states. The Czech Republic is now a proud member to the EU, NATO and also anti-ISIL Coalition.

Allow me to welcome at this hall commanders of the Czech contingents – Czech police, military police, Czech Airforce, CBRN training unit and Coalition HQ Staff - all those are supporting ISF all around Iraq. Vítejte.

Czech Republic, same as Iraq is located in a crossroad between west and east, north and south.

These central locations have considerable meaning, we can be the bridge, but also we might be the playground for the others. Let´s believe we are the bridge.

I am honoured to be here with all of you at this marvellous hotel to commemorate the 100th years anniversary of the Czech Republic. This year we also commemorate 60th years anniversary of establishment of the diplomatic relations between Czech and Iraq Republics.

From a perspective of a human life the figures of 100 and 60 represent a retirement age, but serving here in this country more than two years, I can assure you, that the bilateral relations are perfectly fit, blood pressure is within limit and very low level of cholesterol. I believe it will stay unchanged for next decades.

Our bilateral relations are very busy ones. We achieved a lot together and I do believe that the spirit of cooperation will continue. We do provide wide range of humanitarian and stabilization support to affected areas by the war with ISIL via bilateral projects and also via EU and UN Agencies. Also business relations are growing up. I do welcome here representatives of leading Czech Companies Tatra, Aero vodochody, Technoexport.

Year 2018 is also very important for Iraq – it was a year of federal and regional elections, year of political changes, establishment of new Parliament and government. This represents a new chance for dialog, economic reforms - limiting the corruption, reconciliation and reconstitution of the society, further enhancement of human rights. There was enough of violence and bloodshed.

Czech Republic is and will be here to go with you through this pathway and ready to share our own experiences with transformation, building the state and democracy. We did many mistakes; let us learn out of them.

I still sincerely believe that education, culture, mutual respect and dialog is the only way forward for building better future for all of us and for our children.

Since this is my very last official event in Iraq, allow me to thank all Czech Embassy staff for support provided and all of you for friendship. IRAQ stays deep inside my heart.

Good health and long life to our beautiful countries and all of you.

Thank you, Shukran Dzaziran.