

**As Prepared Remarks by  
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***“Getting to Transition and Making it Last”***

Mike—thanks for that kind introduction---and Good afternoon to everyone. I appreciate this opportunity to share with you the progress of the Afghan National Security Force, or “ANSF,” and the road to achieving transition for security lead in Afghanistan.

Overall, I can tell you that there has been significant progress in the growth and quality of the ANSF, but these gains are not yet irreversible and significant challenges still remain. But despite these challenges, we are witnessing a transformation occurring within the ANSF... a momentum is building in their force, there is a growing sense of national pride, professionalism, and confidence that is emerging throughout the ranks of the Afghan National Army and Police. Afghans are beginning to take the lead in key areas for security and are increasingly becoming more self-sufficient and independent.

Today, the ANSF is entering into a critical period of its development, a time of uncertainty when it will be tested by the enemy, challenged internally by old propensities, and striving to stand on its own feet. It’s during this time that our partnership with the ANSF is more important than ever. What we do today to assist their force to achieve the lead for security will have lasting implications for the future of their nation.



**Transition: An Aspiration of the Afghan People**

Recently, I attended the 3<sup>rd</sup> graduation ceremony for the National Military Academy of Afghanistan—a place where we as a coalition with our Afghan partners – educate and train Afghanistan’s next generation of leaders. These young, newly graduated lieutenants of that institution will play a key role in

paving a path towards Afghanistan’s future.

On that day in March, President Karzai addressed the graduates and spoke about *security transition*, the process of turning over responsibility for Afghanistan’s security from the

international community to the Afghan government and people. What struck me at that ceremony, after serving nearly 20 months in Afghanistan, is just how much transition really means to the Afghan people.

There's a very real desire on their part to take responsibility for their own security. For Afghans, *transition is a matter of national pride and personal honor*, two characteristics that resonate strongly within their culture. I can tell you that the Afghan people *want to take responsibility* for defending their families, their communities, and their nation. I see it in the motivated young recruits in our training centers across Afghanistan. Today the ANSF is in the fight and are fighting and dying alongside their Coalition partners.

I've visited with some of the wounded Afghan service members in hospitals across the country, and their desire to rejoin their brothers in arms, despite their grievous injuries, is inspiring and deeply humbling. The ANSF is working towards the day that the defense of Afghanistan and the security of its populace are provided by (only) Afghan men and women. This transition is an *aspiration of the Afghan people*, and thousands of Afghans each month have responded -- and continue to -- answer the call to serve their nation and achieve their own security.

## Vision



Our vision, in keeping with goals set by President Karzai during the Kabul Conference in June of last year and reaffirmed by the international community at Lisbon this past November, is to set the conditions for the transition of national security responsibility to the Afghan government (in all 34 provinces of Afghanistan) by the end of 2014.

Achieving security transition in Afghanistan is a major undertaking – it requires cooperation and partnership by the International Community and the Afghan government, from the Ministries of Defense and Interior to the individual Army and Police unit on the ground. But achieving transition is only part of the challenge. We have an equally important responsibility to ensure

that when we transition security in Afghanistan it will be enduring and will last long ... long after the last U.S. AND Coalition combat forces leave their country.

### Echoes of the Past



During my time in Afghanistan, I've been constantly reminded of a previous effort by a major power to build an Afghan government and security force. Wherever you go in Afghanistan, there are echoes of a previous effort that had succeeded in building a government and robust security force in Afghanistan, but the effort failed to make it last. All that remains today of that major effort are echoes of the past. To me, these serve as daily reminders of our responsibility to help the Afghan people achieve an *enduring transition... one that lasts*.

Today, I want to share with you what NATO Training Mission- Afghanistan or NTM-A is doing in partnership with the Afghan government and its National Security Force to achieve an enduring security transition that places the Afghans in the lead for security by the end of 2014. As part of this presentation, I hope to provide you with an appreciation of the investment in the ANSF by the United States and International Community's is setting the conditions for security transition and help you to better understand our strategy to *achieve this critical milestone... and most importantly how we intend to make it last*.

### Growing the Force



With an Afghan population of 30 million, it's clear that the ANSF must be of sufficient size and strength to achieve security across their nation. Add to this the extreme terrain of Afghanistan and one gets a better sense for the magnitude of the security challenge there. Anyone who has stood at the foot of the Hindu Kush or

looked out across the deserts of Kandahar will understand that to protect the people, to defeat the insurgency, and to provide security across 405,000 square miles of rugged land mass, the size of Afghanistan's security force is important.



Over the past 20 months, NTM-A and the security ministries have focused on building Afghan formations in significant numbers. We produce individual soldiers and policeman and entire units that are ready to deploy and contribute to the fight. We are, to put it plainly, producing an Army and Police force *at an industrial scale*.

Since November 2009, when NTM-A was established, the ANSF has grown by nearly 100,000 soldiers and police -- to just over 296,000 -- a true "Afghan surge". Today, the ANSF is now less than 10,000 soldiers and policeman away from its October 2011 goal of 305,000, set by the international community at the London Conference in 2009. This remarkable growth has been enabled by the significant investment of the United States and International Community in the training mission. Increases in Congressional funding and a surge of American and NATO forces -- to include trainers and advisors and the assignment of talented leaders to the mission -- have directly enabled the expansion of Police and Army training capacity -- and quality -- across Afghanistan.



However, increasing the size of the force does have its associated challenges, and we take these very seriously. One such challenge is attrition, or the unexpected loss of soldiers and police due to desertion and combat losses. Attrition in the Army -- if left unchecked -- could undo much of the progress made to date. Through partnership at ministerial and unit levels, attrition rates have declined, but are still a matter of attention and concern. Ultimately, attrition in the ANSF is an *Afghan problem that requires an acceptable Afghan solution*. We can't impose Western solutions onto Afghan problems, but must help them find effective solutions that work within an Afghan context.

Another challenge associated with the growth of the force is the insider threat. To safeguard against infiltration and cooption, NTM-A and the ministries have developed an active and continuous multilayered defense, consisting of an 8-step vetting process, the addition of Afghan and Coalition counterintelligence personnel, and increased awareness through education and training. Additionally, we are working with the security ministries to complete Personnel Asset Inventories to physically account for every Afghan soldier and policeman and to ensure that each is enrolled in our biometric databases. Recent incidents of violence between Afghan and Coalition forces erode the hard-earned trust that is required for effective partnership—but we cannot allow these isolated incidents to detract from our efforts. Active vigilance, training, and planning on the part of Coalition Forces and our ANSF partners are important measures to combat this threat—we and our Afghan partners take this very seriously.

### **Training**



Today, we are training the Afghan Army, Police, and Air Force at 70 training sites in 21 provinces across Afghanistan.

We believe that high quality, realistic, and challenging training is key to the transformation of the ANSF into the professional, highly-skilled, and trusted institution that meets their nation needs. We have partnered with the security ministries to expand training capacity and improve the quality of training across their nation. We've standardized disparate programs of instruction and created national standards for Army and Police training, which we – and more importantly our Afghan partners - - enforce at all of our training centers. Recently we achieved a longstanding objective for the training of Afghan Uniform Police, by increasing Police basic training from 6 weeks to 8 weeks. This addition allows for increased training in key areas such as human rights and gender issues, transparency and accountability, and intelligence led policing.



Improving the quality of training is a continuous process. In addition to resources, the U.S. and International Community have

provided thousands of military, police and civil servants who partner with the ANSF. These trainers and advisors are having a transformative effect on individual Afghan security force members who are now emulating the dedication to duty and professional values of their Coalition counterparts.

While it's important to train Afghan soldiers and police, it is also essential to train Afghan instructors to take over the responsibility to train their force. Towards this end, we've partnered with the ANSF to build Afghan instructor training programs, which are producing a steady growth of fully-certified Afghan trainers. These trainers have already begun to take the training lead at some training centers. We've also helped to build permanent Army and Police training commands, which now oversee the entire training system within each ministry. Both of these training commands are developing the knowledge, expertise, and systems required to make ANSF training an Afghan-led responsibility... that will endure.



In addition to training individual soldiers and policeman and collectively training the units, we also train Afghan leaders. Leader development has been and continues to be our #1 priority. As we all know, good leadership provides the foundation upon which any organization develops and improves.

In our leader development courses we train and educate officers and non-commissioned officers in professional values and inculcate a spirit of service, pride and national patriotism.



However, despite our increases in leader training capacity, there are still leader shortfalls across the ANSF. It's relatively easy to train a new soldier or patrolman, but it takes much more time and effort to train, educate, and develop leaders. We are working to close these critical shortfalls and provide trained small unit

leaders, while still continuing to grow the force. We believe that trained, effective Afghan leaders at all levels are the key to solving some of the most difficult challenges that face the ANSF.

## Ministerial Development



While we are building capable and professional military and police units, *we are simultaneously creating the mechanisms that ensure civilian control of these forces.* The subordination of security forces to the government is a hallmark of a properly functioning democracy, and our ministerial development programs play a key

role in this process. To achieve security transition, the Ministries must be fully capable of managing the growth, training, sustainment, and employment of their force.

Over the past two years, there's been significant progress in ministerial development... both of the security ministries are growing more capable and efficient. Each day over 500 NTM-A advisors work within the Ministries of Interior and Defense to advise and mentor ministry officials to better manage their force, build capacity, and develop systems that will enable ministerial control of the ANSF. Our advisors consist of military, law enforcement, and civil servants from multiple nations that bring unique talents and knowledge to the mission. In support of the US government's civilian surge, the Department of Defense has deployed 33 career civil servants to help build civilian capacity in the two security Ministries. Plans are underway to increase that number to 100 by this fall. Our first 17 civilian advisors to participate in this Ministry of Defense Advisor Program are nearing a year deployed in Kabul, and 8 of this group have signed on for a second year of service in Afghanistan.

Afghan leaders in the ministries are increasingly taking the lead in executing critical ministerial functions. Minister of Interior Mohammadi and Minister of Defense Wardak have instituted significant leadership changes and reformed policy development. Ministerial progress is evident in the enactment of a number of important policies and development of strategic guidance documents that have enhanced training and increased the effectiveness of their security force.

All of this progress, however, is threatened by corruption in the ANSF. Corruption in the force constitutes a very complex problem with no easy solutions. It undermines the legitimacy of the government and nullifies efforts to build the trust and confidence of the Afghan people.

Corruption weakens the government, strengthens the insurgency, wastes national resources, and alienates the people. At NTM-A, our anti-corruption strategy is to create open and transparent systems and to establish policies and procedures that remove opportunities for corrupt behavior. We are also helping the Afghans foster a professional organizational culture, consistent with Afghan values, in which corruption is unacceptable. Our combined efforts to reduce ANSF corruption will take time, but reforms are possible and we continue to work with Afghan leaders to build a more transparent and accountable system.

### Equipment and Infrastructure



While developing quantity and quality in the force is essential, it is equally important to ensure that the ANSF have the equipment and infrastructure to meet and defeat the current threats and protect their population. We've made great strides in providing the ANSF with *capable*, *affordable*, and *sustainable* weapons, vehicles, equipment, and infrastructure. These three interconnected criteria form the basis of our procurement and sustainment efforts—

...it is **capable** if it meets the requirement to defeat the threat and protect the people;

...it is **affordable** if it provides best value over time; and

...it is **sustainable** if it is durable to withstand the harsh environment and is able to be maintained in by the ANSF.



The United States and our partners in the international community have invested heavily in equipment that meets these criteria. This equipment is providing the ANSF the necessary mobility, protection, and firepower it needs to defeat the insurgency and protect their populace.

Additionally, we've also made a significant investment in ANSF infrastructure—such as police stations, training centers, and depots, as well as headquarters, barracks and other permanent facilities required of a security force at war.



However, equipping the ANSF and building its facilities is only part of the solution. There is also obligation to enable them to sustain and maintain this equipment and infrastructure so that the echoes of the past are not heard in the future.

### Support Forces



As you know, we deliberately built an Infantry-centric, counterinsurgency enabled force first, and that this force is dependent on Coalition support forces.

Today, there are certain specialty duties that are being exclusively performed by Coalition Forces because of the planned shortfalls in current ANSF capability. For example, the Coalition provides artillery support, route clearance, combat and construction engineering, and other critical specialties that the ANSF currently lacks. However, today with the establishment of 12 Branch or Vocational Schools over the past year we are now beginning to train the skills and building the units that will enable Afghan forces to perform these critical functions themselves—part of a phased development effort. This includes advanced training in Logistics, Finance, Communications, Human Resources, Intelligence, Artillery, engineering, and others important functions.





As we continue the fielding of these support units and specialists for the Army and Police, we will carefully and deliberately balance the force with increased capabilities that will give them the ability to support and sustain themselves which will lead to independent operations. This is a critical pillar in our strategy to achieve security transition. But as I stated earlier, achieving transition is only part of the challenge... *making it last is what really counts and is the more difficult part of the equation.* To achieve an enduring transition in Afghanistan we must ensure that as U.S. and Coalition combat troops begin to depart, the force we've helped to build will be able to stand on its own. During the remainder of the presentation, I'd like to describe our strategy for *how we will make it last.*

### Professionalization



While the size of the ANSF is critical...it is quality of the force that is imperative. Injecting quality into the force at all levels is a priority at NTM-A. The centerpiece of our efforts to build lasting quality is the professionalization of the ANSF.

Professionalization encompasses developing leaders, ensuring stewardship, building systems and institutions, and creating an organizational ethos. This leads to unit cohesion, reduced corruption, and greater pride. Professionalism is a defining characteristic of any effective military or police organization.



We achieve quality in the force in part through training and leader development. Building leaders and great training programs requires four critical components: people, resources, strategy, and time. The U.S. and international investments in the ANSF have provided the resources, people, and strategy. Time, however, is more elusive. If we want a fully trained and quality force-that can last.... we must have the patience to develop one. We did not build the United States Army overnight. Building quality into the ANSF requires strategic patience and an enduring commitment.



Professionalization of their force also helps to close the credibility gap between the ANSF and the Afghan people. A fact of geography is that in many areas of Afghanistan, including the hundreds of isolated valley communities and other remote locations, the Army and Police provide the only visible and ...real connection between the people and their central government. We recognize the ANSF as a foundation for building trust between the government and the people. This greatly reinforces the need to build a professional force that is accountable to the people and dedicated to an ethos of selfless service.

### **Systems and Institutions**



Our efforts to train Afghan soldiers and policeman and to train Afghan trainers to train Afghans are setting the foundations for transition— but there is a third aspect that must also be developed--building permanent systems and enduring institutions. The soldiers and police that make up the force serve for finite periods of time...but systems and institutions last generations... they are key to making it last.

Clearly systems like recruiting and personnel, training and education, and logistics and medical are required to ensure self-sustainment. But, these types of systems are just now in their initial stage of development--eventually; these will grow into a national network capable of sustaining the force. Today, I hear critics who argue that the ANSF's logistics and medical systems are completely broken. I could not completely disagree but I would also respond, "how can something be broken that hasn't even been fully built yet?" The truth is that building the systems that the ANSF needs for an enduring security transition will take time. But the process has started and it's an important step along the road towards transition.



Institutions are equally critical to long term development and professionalization. Institutions such as National Military Academy of Afghanistan, the Combined Sergeants Major course, the Police Academy, NCO leader developments course are currently all individual institutions but soon will be part of a broader institution called the Afghan National Security University. This will be a consolidated system of training and professional education that will transform their force for generations. In fact, if we are successful, it could be a model of true inter-governmental professional education.



### **Investing in Afghan Human Capital**



As we all know, Afghanistan has been degraded by decades of war, yet, one thing that endures and is in abundance is the potential of the Afghan people. We believe that an investment in Afghanistan's human capital is key to that nation realizing its potential and the ANSF becoming an effective and truly professional force. The human potential of Afghanistan is like the strategic minerals that are believed to be hidden in huge deposits under its soil. It is hidden, covered up by years of war, difficult to access, but priceless and abundant if one has the tools and patience to uncover it. *Such is the great potential of the Afghan people.* We believe that Investing in this human capital is critical to make Afghanistan's security transition last.

To develop this potential we're building critical specialty and vocational skills in the ANSF.



A modern, self-sufficient security force requires specialists, like engineers, medical professionals, communications experts, maintenance and repair technicians, and many other skill sets that will give it enduring capacity and self sufficiency.



As part of developing the Afghan human capital we are helping the ANSF to address gender integration within their force. This is a complex problem with deeply rooted social and cultural nuances, and ultimately it will require an Afghan solution. It is a fact that women are significantly under-represented in the force,

accounting for less than 1% of all personnel in the Army or Police. We are working to help the Afghans leverage the potential of women in the ANSF, but it will take time especially if we want to make it last.

### Literacy



Widespread illiteracy in the ANSF is another major challenge to our mission. Our entry level testing shows that only about 14% of new police and army recruits are able to read and write.... this means 9 out of 10 are totally illiterate and innumerate—at the most basic level this means that 9 of 10 policeman can't take a

simple report or 9 of 10 soldiers can't read a map. They just simply can't write their own names or even count to 10. It's hard for most of us to grasp the implications of this challenge; I certainly didn't when I first took command 20 months ago. The Afghans are intelligent—they just have not had the opportunity for education. These soldiers and police recruits make up the lost generation of Afghanistan – because of the civil war or the Taliban, education was not

available or permitted. Literacy just might be the single most important issue facing the ANSF today... but it's also one of the greatest success stories of ANSF development over the past year.



The late Ambassador Holbrooke urged me in the first months of my command to take on the challenge of literacy in the force, but I was reluctant to do so, believing that function was a responsibility of the State Department or some other organization... but not the military. Of course, very quickly I learned that Holbrooke was right... that literacy is the essential enabler for the professionalization of their force and the key to unlocking the potential of our Afghan service members. Since then, literacy training has become one of NTM-A's top priorities and is now an integral part of to every Afghan policeman or soldier's training. To put this in perspective, we have over 32,000 Afghans in training programs across Afghanistan today—and everyone is taking literacy classes every day.



In the last year alone, nearly 90,000 Afghans have completed some level of literacy training—which represents nearly one-third of their force. Our program employs over 2,600 Afghan teachers and as you can imagine is one of the largest employers of teachers in the nation. Today, the goal of our ANSF literacy program is to educate every member of their force to a functional level of literacy This program is literally beginning to have a transformative effect on the ANSF and its impact is just now starting to be realized.



It's hard to describe how meaningful this learning is to the Afghans. Soldiers and Police that complete the training proudly wear a pen in their shirt pocket, a sign that signifies their ability to read and write... and this pen is more meaningful to them than any medal or other commendation.. Literacy is a tremendously empowering force. It is a lifelong skill that cannot be taken away. It gives individuals self-reliance and allows them to make their own informed decisions... It is the *essential enabler* and a key to an enduring security transition in Afghanistan.



As part of unlocking the human potential of this nation...we are also working to help the Afghans develop a indigenous capability to provide for their force. NTM-A's "Afghan First Program" was designed to enable Afghan businesses to equip the ANSF with *quality goods made in Afghanistan by Afghans*. Previously, all ANSF equipment was foreign made. Today, through Afghan First, 100% of all Afghan uniforms are made in Afghanistan by Afghan companies along with other clothing items and boots.



This program has created over 15,000 jobs and provided an economic impact of nearly a billion dollars. Afghan First also supports women-owned business, helping women to reclaim a role in Afghanistan's business sector. Additionally, it's helped Afghan business to expand the variety of goods they provide to now include textiles, tents, furniture, transformers, and other quality equipment. The Afghan First Program has also helped connect the Army and Police to Afghan business and has created a growing interdependence between the security force and its local economy.

### **A Lasting Multinational Commitment**



There's a proverb that is often heard in Afghanistan that states, "If you want to go fast, you go alone... If you want to go far, you go with others." The United States is not alone in this effort to build an enduring Afghan-led security apparatus. The American flag at Camp Eggers flies alongside those of 32 other nations, one-sixth of the world's countries, all dedicated to seeing this mission and the Afghan people succeed in building a better future. Just a decade ago, some of these nations were themselves recipients of security assistance from the international community, and today are contributing to the effort to build security in Afghanistan. It is within the realm of the possible that Afghanistan could one day go from being a recipient of security assistance to being a security donor.



Until then...an enduring commitment by the international community is critical to develop the ANSF...critical to enable security transition...and critical to make it last.



Today, NATO plays a key role in the international effort to build security in Afghanistan.

NATO is the only alliance in the world that has the leadership, organization, and capacity to accomplish this vital mission.



The fact is that *no single nation could accomplish this mission alone.*

Our progress and that of the ANSF has been enabled by a multinational approach, consisting of a partnership of nations committed to the training and development of the ANSF.



**The Investment**



Though we and the International Community have invested heavily in this mission—it requires strategic patience and strong national will to bring that investment to maturity.

***Echoes from the past remind us that we must achieve a transition that lasts.***



On this day 67 years ago, we should not forget that a Coalition of nations achieved something extraordinary, a feat of courage and sacrifice that we will honor forever. Today in Afghanistan a new coalition is demonstrating similar courage and sacrifice—it's purpose is to build an ANSF that is dedicated to protecting and serving the people of Afghanistan... an ANSF that is capable of taking the lead for security so that Afghans are securing Afghans..and an ANSF that is self-sustaining with enduring systems and institutions that will last!



Thank you for this opportunity and I look forward to your questions....

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