

HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE

STATEMENT OF  
GENERAL JOHN F CAMPBELL, USA  
COMMANDER  
U.S. FORCES—AFGHANISTAN  
BEFORE THE HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE  
ON  
THE SITUATION IN AFGHANISTAN  
4 MARCH 2015

HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE

## *Afghanistan: What We've Achieved*

### **I. Where We Are – State of the Campaign**

In the wake of the tragic 9/11 terrorist attacks against the U.S. homeland, U.S. military forces promptly deployed to Afghanistan with the objective to eliminate the international terrorist threat emanating from there. We were soon joined by our NATO allies and other international partners. Over thirteen years later, we have not forgotten the motivations for our mission in Afghanistan and why we remain. Our primary focus continues to be on preventing Afghanistan from becoming a safe haven again for al Qaeda and other international extremist groups. Since 2001, the extraordinary efforts of both our conventional and special operations forces have ensured that another terrorist attack originating from Afghanistan and directed against the U.S. homeland has not occurred. Today, U.S. special operations forces, alongside their Afghan counterparts, continue to impose considerable pressure on the remaining fragments of the terrorist networks that attacked us. Significantly, the Afghan National Defense & Security Forces (ANDSF) have also assumed full responsibility for securing the Afghan people. Our Afghan partners have proven that they can and will take the tactical fight from here. They are ready, and it is time.

On 1 January 2015, U.S. Forces-Afghanistan (USFOR-A) formally ended its combat mission, Operation Enduring Freedom, and commenced its new mission, Operation Freedom's Sentinel. Simultaneously, troops from 41 nations (26 Alliance & 15 partner nations), which comprise the new NATO mission, Resolute Support, began executing their Train, Advise, and Assist (TAA) mission in order to build the capabilities and long-term sustainability of the Afghan Security Institutions (ASI) and ANDSF. U.S. forces are now carrying out two well-defined missions: a

Counter-Terrorism (CT) mission against the remnants of al Qaeda and the Resolute Support TAA mission in support of Afghan security forces.

Our CT and TAA efforts are concurrent and complementary. While we continue to attack the remnants of al-Qaeda, we are also building the ANDSF so that they can secure the Afghan people and contribute to stability throughout the region. Both of these efforts will contribute to a more secure and productive Afghanistan and prevent the re-emergence of terrorist safe havens.

In spite of considerable progress, it is clear that our campaign will remain a challenging one. Last year's political impasse, delay in signing the Bilateral Security Agreement (BSA) and NATO Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA), and setbacks in forming a new cabinet, have created a period of comparative stagnation in ANDSF institutional development. In this environment of uncertainty, some incumbent Afghan leaders have been hesitant to make necessary decisions. Many Alliance members and operational partners understandably delayed fulfilling their Resolute Support force commitments until a new administration was installed and the BSA and SOFA were signed. Their deferrals resulted in advisors and other forces either arriving just in time or late for the start of Resolute Support.

The new Afghan National Unity Government will have to overcome considerable political pressures and obstacles as President Ghani and Chief Executive Abdullah determine how they will distribute power and responsibilities. Thus far, both leaders have demonstrated an admirable willingness to cooperate and address these challenges. Both have elevated the Afghan people's interests above their own.

The ANDSF will surely be tested in Fighting Season 2015 as well. It will also take time for us to evaluate the efficacy of our TAA efforts and our regional approach at the Train, Advise, & Assist Commands (TAACs). We will inevitably have to make adjustments. Additionally, we will need to balance our short and long-term efforts and weigh potential operational gains against U.S. strategic objectives in Afghanistan. We will do all of this as we manage considerable risks to our mission and force and contend with a myriad of lethal threats. Due to all of these factors, we must be prepared and adapt as needed. Likewise, we will need to evaluate and prioritize our efforts in light of restricted resources and the limited time available to accomplish our mission.

The next two years of the Resolute Support campaign will play a crucial role in cementing our gains. While we strive to improve ANDSF capabilities and sustainability, we will continue to re-posture our forces and adjust our footprint. As in the past, our drawdown will occur under enemy pressure. We will need to manage our efforts to maximize the effects of our TAACs and our continued consolidation toward a Kabul-centric posture.

#### *Historical Context & Framework for New USFOR-A/NATO Mission*

Our transition to Resolute Support represents the natural evolution of our maturing partnership with the increasingly capable ANDSF. Back in 2011, more than 140,000 Coalition troops were distributed over 800 sites. Our forces were then heavily engaged in combat and tactical-level advising. We have now reduced our forces and footprint to about 13,000 Coalition troops at 21 bases throughout Afghanistan. With the exception of our continued tactical advising of the Afghan Special Security Forces (ASSF), we are no longer engaged in brigade-level and below

advising. Instead, we are now mentoring our Afghan counterparts at the corps headquarters and security ministries. This significant shift in our mission focus has been complemented and driven by the rapid expansion and development of the ANDSF into a skilled and courageous force of approximately 350,000. During the past two fighting seasons, the Afghan National Army (ANA) and Afghan National Police (ANP) have repeatedly shown that they can win battles on their own. When they work together, they have also proven that they can overmatch the insurgents wherever and whenever they challenge them.

Resolute Support is not a continuation of the ISAF mission on a smaller scale. While Resolute Support shares some similarities, it represents a significant paradigm shift. In contrast to a few years ago, our Afghan partners are at the forefront of combat operations and they are now bearing the brunt of enemy attacks. Accordingly, U.S. and Coalition casualties have significantly dropped with combat fatalities in 2014 less than half of what they were in 2013.

The designation of Resolute Support as a non-combat mission does not eliminate the fact that we will still operate in a hostile environment—our personnel will be exposed to risks in 2015 and beyond. Afghanistan remains a dangerous place. Even though U.S. and NATO personnel will support combat operations indirectly, we can anticipate that we will be targeted, and we will suffer casualties. Therefore, force protection remains my priority concern, and we have the necessary authority to take adequate measures to protect our forces.

The tragic death of MG Harold Greene last August stands as a testament to the risks that our advisors continue to be exposed to every day. Although insider attacks against U.S. and

Coalition forces declined again in 2014, they remain a focus area of force protection.

Fortunately, these attacks have not significantly affected the strong relationship between Coalition and ANDSF personnel. We continue to implement mitigations to avoid patterns and prevent complacency. These measures have reduced, but not eliminated, the threat. We will remain vigilant to prevent future insider attacks.

Functionally-Based Security Force Assistance (FBSFA) will be the cornerstone of Resolute Support and represents our unified effort to generate, employ, and sustain the ANDSF and ASI. FBSFA encompasses all Resolute Support activities required to develop ANDSF operational effectiveness and includes partnering, advising, and supporting the ANDSF at the corps-level and above. The FBSFA framework concentrates on eight Essential Functions (EFs):

EF 1: Plan, Program, Budget, and Execute (PPBE): generate requirements, develop a resource informed budget, and execute a spending plan

EF 2: Internal controls to assure Transparency, Accountability, and Oversight (TAO)

EF 3: Civilian governance of the ASI, including adherence to the Rule of Law (RoL)

EF 4: Force generate: recruit, train, retain, manage, and develop professional ANDSF (FORGEN)

EF 5: Sustain the force through effective facilities management, maintenance, medical, and logistics systems (FORSUST)

EF 6: Plan, resource, and execute effective security campaigns and operations (C2):

Inter-ministerial and joint coordination

Command, control and employ Ground, Air, and Special Operations Forces (SOF)

EF 7: Sufficient Intelligence capabilities and processes (INT)

EF 8: Maintain internal and external strategic communications capabilities (STRATCOM)

The execution of Resolute Support is based on a limited regional TAA approach and located at the “four spokes” in Coalition TAACs in the north, south, east, and west, with one central “hub” in Kabul City. I view our TAACs as the critical component of our FBSFA efforts in 2015. They serve as our principal connection and touch point between the ministries and fielded forces. Hence, they play a central role in our ability to assess the efficacy of our ministerial efforts and how well they support ongoing ANDSF security operations.

## **II. Where We Are – State of the ANDSF**

### *Results of the 2014 Fighting Season & Preparations for the 2015 Fighting Season*

In their second fighting season in the lead, the ANDSF proved proficient at securing the Afghan people, fighting their own battles, and holding the gains achieved by ISAF over the last 13+ years. On the battlefield, the ANDSF fought tenaciously and demonstrated their increasing capabilities. They independently planned, led, and executed numerous combined-arms operations. Both ANA and ANP units showed increased tactical flexibility and endurance as well.

Determined to preempt insurgent aims for the 2015 Fighting Season, the ANDSF recently commenced Operation ZOLFIQAR, their cross-pillar and multi-corps operation in Northern Helmand Province. Significantly, this is the first large-scale operation that the ANDSF have independently planned and executed since they assumed full security responsibilities. Three

ANA Corps and numerous ANP units continue to clear historical areas of insurgent activity to include Sangin and the Upper Sangin Valley methodically and effectively. Simultaneously, they are conducting complementary operations in western districts of Kandahar Province to prevent the insurgents' reinforcement or escape. The ANDSF's initial progress has been encouraging and impressive. Their success in reducing several insurgent strongholds demonstrates what they can accomplish with deliberate planning, cross-pillar cooperation, and effective leadership.

Of note, ANDSF operational tempo (OPTEMPO) was four times higher in 2014 than in 2013. Not surprisingly, and regrettably, ANDSF casualty rates also increased last year. The combination of an increased OPTEMPO; assumption of greater security responsibilities; the drawdown of Coalition forces; and the aggressive pursuit of the enemy, all contributed to a moderate increase in casualty rates. This uptick was borne primarily by the ANP and Afghan Local Police (ALP). The latter operate in isolated areas and are not as well equipped or trained as other ANDSF. The insurgents also target the ALP more frequently because the ALP are not centrally garrisoned and instead live in villages among the Afghan people. Therefore, they present the most immediate threat and challenge to insurgent efforts to control and intimidate the populace. Overall, the ANP and ALP are the most frequently engaged elements of the ANDSF and they continue to suffer the majority of ANDSF casualties. They often represent the first line of defense and provide the most immediate connection between the Afghan government and Afghan people. The ANP and ALP's persistent courage and resilience in the face of considerable risks merit respect and commendation.



A high ANDSF attrition rate, which accounts for casualties and all other losses to the force, has had an impact on combat readiness. If present rates continue, it will pose challenges to force development over time. The main causes of ANDSF attrition are assessed as poor leadership; high operational tempo; inadequate soldier/police care; and poor force management. We continue to help the Afghans reduce combat casualties and address systemic causes of attrition in order to ensure the long-term viability of their forces.

The ANDSF successfully maintained control of all key terrain and populated areas in 2014. The insurgents were only able to overrun four district centers in isolated portions of the country temporarily. Within 96 hours, the ANDSF retook all of them. The ANDSF are actively taking the fight to the insurgents. Today, the Afghan government remains firmly in control of its 34 provincial capitals and all of its major cities.

Perhaps most importantly, the ANDSF stayed above the fray throughout the election dispute last summer. They maintained political neutrality and exhibited no evidence of fracturing along ethnic or tribal lines. They also provided effective security for two national elections and a lengthy Independent Election Commission audit process. In spite of expansive Taliban threats and determined efforts to disrupt the democratic process, the ANDSF provided superior protection for nearly eight million Afghan citizens who courageously chose to defy insurgent intimidation tactics and voted. ANDSF professionalism and non-partisanship stand in stark contrast to their Iraqi counterparts. Regular polling reveals the vast majority of Afghans hold a favorable view of their soldiers and police. The Afghan National Army (ANA) remains the most trusted institution in the country with an approval rating that regularly exceeds 85%.

The ASSF (or Afghan special operations forces), in particular, have demonstrated improved proficiency. Their commando units are now conducting night raids independently using their own intelligence to drive their operations. The Special Mission Wing (SMW) is also executing long-range, full-mission profiles in low illumination. Working together, the commando units and SMW are consistently running unilateral direct action missions against insurgent leaders and facilitators. These are remarkable achievements, which reflect the maturation of their formidable capabilities.

While the conventional ANDSF still have capability gaps and shortfalls, they do possess significant assets to fight the insurgents—e.g. heavy mortars, D-30s howitzers, armed Mi-17s, armored vehicles, etc.—and dedicated training with these platforms. The insurgents have none of these. However, the ANDSF would greatly benefit from improved leadership and increased confidence; ANDSF soldiers and police perform well when they are well led. “There are no bad soldiers, only bad leaders.” That is why our insistence on sound leadership and strict accountability remains our most important guiding principle. Fortunately, the Afghan senior leadership concurs. Change in Afghanistan comes from the top-down. President Ghani and CE Abdullah are the driving force behind meaningful transformation and merit-based appointments in the ASI and ANDSF. However, both must navigate a political labyrinth as they move forward with their reform agenda.

Of note, President Ghani’s recent retirement of 47 general officers reflects his significant involvement as the Commander-in-Chief of the ASI and ANDSF. By streamlining the top-heavy

command structure in both the ASI and ANDSF, he has removed generals who have long exceeded mandatory retirement age to make room for the next generation of leaders.

On balance, after watching the ANDSF respond to a variety of challenges over the past six months, I do not believe the Taliban-led insurgency represents an existential threat to the Government of Afghanistan. The ANDSF require less Coalition assistance to conduct security operations, but they still need support to develop the systems, processes, and institutions necessary to run a professional, self-sufficient, and self-sustaining army and police force.

#### *ANDSF Capability Gaps*

ANDSF performance in 2014 and early 2015 highlighted capability gaps and shortfalls that will likely persist for years. Their most critical gaps are found in aviation, intelligence, special operations, and the ASI's ability to conduct tasks such as planning, programming, budgeting, and human resource management. At the security ministries, our advisors are focusing on building ASI systems and processes. They are also working to improve integration between the different security pillars—army, police, and intelligence services. At the corps-level, our advisors are concentrating on developing ANDSF planning capacity, command and control, and operational capabilities. Additionally, they are addressing developmental shortfalls in the areas of medical and counter-IED measures. With limited exceptions, we have completed fielding of new equipment for the ANDSF and are now focused on sustaining that equipment and replenishing battle losses. For example, we have just received approval for a \$900M procurement of HMMWVs and light and medium tactical vehicles that will replace aged-out and destroyed vehicles. We are not, however, buying new variants of vehicles or other major end items to

expand authorized equipment levels. Reported shortages in operational units are most often the result of the ANDSF's underdeveloped logistics system rather than actual aggregate supply shortages. Because the ANDSF has had little involvement in ordering their supplies for their forces—the Coalition has done that for them—their logistics warehouse managers are often unaware of inbound shipments, and the units in the field do not have the information they need to place a requisition using the correct ordering number. The upshot is that supplies sit in warehouses unsorted and the demand and supply signals do not match. DoD sent teams to Afghanistan late last year that identified actions to improve the supply system and life cycle management of equipment and we are implementing those recommendations. I should note that a member of one of those teams, Mr. Stephen F. Byus from the Defense Logistics Agency, was killed in a vehicle-borne IED attack in Kabul in the performance of his duties. We are also working with the Afghans to break the culture of hoarding and eliminate false claims of shortages in order to garner more resources and assistance. At all levels, our advisors also continue to emphasize and enforce Afghan financial transparency and accountability of donor resources.

Although considerable challenges remain, I believe the ANDSF's capabilities, capacities, and morale will be sufficient with our advisory efforts and limited enabler support to provide for Afghanistan's long-term security. Our collective efforts are hardening the Afghan state and giving it needed time to develop and mature. By improving security conditions, we are also reducing the operating space for insurgents and incentivizing their participation in the reconciliation process.

It is important that we continue to exercise strategic patience with the ASI and ANSF. The U.S. Armed forces have contended with challenges such as force sustainment for 250 years. In contrast, the ANDSF have only existed for 13 years.

### **III. Where We Are – State of the Threat**

With security responsibilities fully transitioned to the ANSF, al Qaeda, its Affiliates, and Adherents (AQAA), Taliban, Haqqani Network (HQN), and other insurgent and extremist groups will undoubtedly attempt to reestablish their authority and prominence. Collectively, the enemy will continue to present a formidable challenge to the Afghan government, USFOR-A, and the Coalition in 2015. Nevertheless, it is important not to view the enemy as a monolithic entity. They represent disparate factions with different motivations and capabilities. At times they may collaborate, and at other occasions they may work against each other. One of our persistent challenges is to identify these fissures and exploit them.

In 2015, AQAA will likely attempt to rebuild its support networks and planning capabilities with the intention of reconstituting its strike capabilities against Western interests. AQAA activities are now more focused on survival than on planning and facilitating future attacks. It will be critical that, in coordination with our Afghan partners, our comprehensive CT efforts continue to apply pressure against the AQAA network in order to prevent its regeneration.

The Taliban are also in a period of transition. They begin 2015 weakened, but not yet defeated. Politically, they have become increasingly marginalized. However, the Taliban remain a resilient, lethal force in spite of the fact that they accomplished none of their major strategic or

operational objectives in 2014 and suffered considerable casualties. We see dissension within the movement. Mullah Omar has not been seen in years. Senior Taliban leaders disagree on how to prioritize their political and military efforts. Many Taliban tactical units also continue to suffer from acute resource shortfalls. Numerous junior Taliban fighters are becoming increasingly resentful towards their leadership as they continue to fight and die at high rates while their senior leaders remain in safe havens in Pakistan.

The absence of Coalition combat units on the battlefield has also weakened one of the principal propaganda lines for the Taliban armed struggle: that they seek to rid Afghanistan of “malevolent foreign influences.” Now they are fighting against and killing almost exclusively their fellow Afghans. They will indeed feel emboldened by the Coalition’s transition from direct combat operations to our TAA role and an accompanying reduction of our combat enablers. As a result, the Taliban will likely test the ANDSF aggressively in 2015 as they did in 2014. Taliban threats from indirect fire, insider attacks, and complex attacks are projected to increase in the next fighting season.

It is unlikely that the Taliban will be able to overmatch the ANDSF on the battlefield in 2015. Nonetheless, the Taliban will still endeavor to frame localized, tactical successes (albeit temporary) into strategic victories through the media. The Taliban will most likely be willing to absorb considerable casualties and physical losses in order to gain psychological victories. And they will maintain an adaptive propaganda apparatus, which they will leverage to influence the Afghan people, the international community, and their supporters. As we saw in 2014, the

Taliban will strive to shape perceptions in the information space, despite their mixed military performance and continued political failures.

The Taliban have recently shifted their tactics to High Profile Attacks against soft targets—especially in Kabul—in order to undermine popular perceptions of improved security and increased public confidence in the Afghan government. These strikes garner considerable media attention, while requiring minimal resources and entailing little risk. What is not captured in the media, however, is that these tactics reflect the bankruptcy of the enemy’s message and strategy. They continue to target innocent civilians and alienate the population with their indiscriminate attacks. These are not the tactics of an insurgent movement capable of overthrowing the Afghan government.

The HQN remains the most virulent strain of the insurgency. It presents one of the greatest risks to Coalition forces, and it continues to be a critical enabler of al Qaeda. HQN shares the Afghan Taliban goal of expelling Coalition forces, overthrowing the Afghan government, and re-establishing an extremist state. They lead the insurgency in several eastern Afghan provinces and have demonstrated the capability and intent to launch and support high profile and complex attacks against the Coalition. In response to several dangerous threat streams against Coalition and Afghan personnel—particularly in Kabul, ANDSF and U.S. special operations forces have stepped up security operations against HQN. These operations have successfully disrupted several dangerous threats streams that sought to inflict significant casualties on the force.

We are also keeping our eye on the potential emergence of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) in Afghanistan. ISIL has become one of my Priority Intelligence Requirements. Thus far, we have seen some evidence of limited recruiting efforts, and a few Taliban have rebranded themselves as ISIL. This rebranding is most likely an attempt to attract media attention, solicit greater resources, and increase recruitment. The Taliban networks are well established, and significant ideological, sectarian, and cultural differences exist between the movements. The Taliban have already declared that they will not allow ISIL in Afghanistan, but the potential emergence of ISIL has sharply focused the ANSF, National Directorate of Security (NDS), and political leadership. All are collaborating closely in order to prevent this threat from expanding. Additionally, the budding presence of ISIL in the Afghanistan-Pakistan border areas also offers another opportunity for both countries to work together. For now, we assess that there is a potential threat that ISIL can establish a credible presence in Afghanistan. We remain cognizant of this latent danger and we will continue to monitor it.

While insurgent and terrorist networks have proven to be resilient and adaptive, Coalition and ANDSF operations have kept these groups at bay. Continued pressure on core al Qaeda and its supporters will be required to prevent them from regenerating. Ultimately, the long-term solution to extremists remains a capable and sustainable ANDSF that can secure the nation.

#### **IV. Challenges and Opportunities**

##### ***Strategic Partnership with GIRoA***



All aspects of Afghan society remain in a state of flux as we start 2015. Political and security transitions continue to occur simultaneously. Last year's political uncertainty caused considerable anxiety and threatened to undermine the progress made by the ANDSF in the security domain. Economic growth was similarly stymied by a lack of investor confidence in the Afghan government and its prospects for the future.

The National Unity Government presents both significant promise and risk. On the positive side, President Ghani and CEO Abdullah have proven to be amenable to working with the International Community, NATO, and the United States. Both are also committed to addressing the challenges of corruption and nepotism. Both are supportive of women's rights and their empowerment in Afghan society, and most importantly, both are committed to achieving an enduring peace in Afghanistan and the region.

We now have a golden opportunity to deepen our partnership with Afghanistan. However, the forward momentum of our campaign continues to be stymied by delays in forming a new cabinet. We anticipate that President Ghani and CEO Abdullah will contend with a few challenges as they delineate their respective responsibilities. We will need to weather any resulting uncertainty in the ensuing months as the two resolve how they will address their respective supporters while still promoting meritocratic governance. However, the very characteristics that threaten gridlock in the current Afghan government also promise that, when policies are set, the vast majority of legitimate Afghan political interests will be committed to supporting them.

Despite myriad challenges, the fundamental partnership between the Coalition and the Afghan government, to include ASI and ANDSF, remains strong. I have personally developed close professional relationships with nearly all senior Afghan leaders. At all levels, Coalition and Afghan leaders continue to work together in pursuit of shared strategic objectives. Moreover, the Afghan government, civil leaders, and military commanders demonstrate a growing appreciation for the Coalition's efforts. Afghan leaders are genuine in their gratitude for our shared sacrifice. I have also seen our Afghan partners develop a sense of ownership and pride in their army and police force. Afghans realize and appreciate that they now have credible, professional security forces that can protect them.

#### *Afghanistan-Pakistan Military to Military Relationship*

The role of Pakistan remains critical to stability in Afghanistan. Suspicions and competing interests have historically characterized Afghan-Pakistani relations, and these are most likely to persist in 2015. However, recent high-level engagements between Afghan and Pakistani leaders since President Ghani's election represent one promising sign for regional security. The common threat of violent extremism may serve as a catalyst for improved cooperation between the two countries, and we have already seen progress in the Afghanistan-Pakistan military-to-military relationship. Pakistan, just like Afghanistan, has suffered greatly at the hands of terrorists and violent extremists. The recent Pakistani Taliban attack on a school in Peshawar could mark a significant shift in bilateral relations. Senior Pakistani military officers have said that they can no longer discriminate between "good and bad" terrorists. They appear to be taking meaningful actions to back up their words. Aggressive Pakistan Army operations in the last several months have applied considerable pressure on extremists operating in the border region.

Pointedly, General Raheel, Chief of the Pakistan Army Staff, stated during his recent visit to Kabul, “The enemies of Afghanistan are the enemies of Pakistan.” This sentiment had never been expressed publically before and left a meaningful impact upon the Afghan senior leadership. General Raheel’s efforts are being matched by President Ghani’s initiatives to encourage rapprochement between both countries. Encouragingly, both appear to be pushing for an eventual political reconciliation with the Taliban.

Taking advantage of this window of opportunity, Resolute Support plays a key facilitator role in the pursuit of a constructive and effective relationship between the Afghan and Pakistan militaries. We continue to encourage actively and enable the Afghan and Pakistani officers to meet and coordinate their security efforts. Recent consultations between Afghan and Pakistani corps commanders showed great promise. However, it will take considerable time and effort to convince the Afghan and Pakistani people to support this new spirit of accommodation. Afghan and Pakistani political and military relations are likely to improve incrementally and on a transactional basis. Ultimately, we will still need to manage our expectations.

#### *Other Regional Actors*

Other regional players such as Iran, India, China, Russia, and the Central Asian States have a shared interest in supporting the continued security and increased stability of Afghanistan.

President Ghani has shown real leadership and vision by engaging with regional leadership and on the wider global stage. While many of these countries will continue to compete both openly and covertly with one another for increased influence in Afghanistan, all will benefit from a

more secure and stable country. President Ghani appreciates that Afghanistan needs regional support in order to realize his vision of transforming Afghanistan into a vital transportation and commercial hub in Central Asia.

### Stewardship of U.S. Resources

Stewardship of U.S. taxpayer dollars remains a top priority for USFOR-A. It is our obligation to protect the trust and confidence of the American people. Yet, war is an inherently inefficient and challenging endeavor, and despite the dedicated efforts of many, cases have unfortunately occurred over the years in which American resources were not spent as efficiently as possible. We are working hard to ensure both prudent spending and the identification of areas for cost savings. USFOR-A has also welcomed and incorporated into our processes the recommendations of independent agencies and various inspectors general, which have proven most helpful when released in time to effect change. USFOR-A will continue to scrutinize every dollar spent to ensure it is necessary to mission success.

All components of Resolute Support are committed to achieving dramatic results through increased fiscal discipline, financial oversight, and policy adherence. In the last year, we have placed stringent financial controls on U.S. taxpayer dollars and international donors' contributions. We have done so through a series of financial commitment letters with the Ministries of Defense and Interior. These letters establish performance expectations for the responsible management of the Afghanistan Security Forces Fund (ASFF), the NATO ANA Trust Fund, and the Law and Order Trust Fund for Afghanistan. If the criteria spelled out in the commitment letters are not met, funding can be withdrawn or withheld until steps are taken to

course-correct. These enforcement mechanisms underpin our messaging to Afghan leadership they must demonstrate greater accountability and transparency in the spending of donor funds. To retain both the U.S. and international support, Afghans must alter the behaviours and attitudes that have resulted in fiscal mismanagement and the tacit acceptance of waste, fraud, and corruption.

We recognize that we will continue to operate in an increasingly constrained resource environment. Accordingly, we have steadily reduced budgetary requirements since 2012 when the U.S. and international contributions to the ANDSF exceeded \$12.3 billion. Today, we are no longer building the ANDSF as they are almost fully manned and equipped. Consequently, we have shifted our financial support to improving their readiness and sustainment. We continue to find ways to reduce this amount and make the ANDSF more efficient.

I would like to commend to the Committee the sterling work of our Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan (CSTC-A). This subordinate command continues to implement our comprehensive financial strategy to build Afghan fiscal discipline through budget compliance. CSTC-A has, and continues to play, an outsized role in our campaign. In spite of their small numbers, these highly talented individuals have provided rigorous oversight of billions in expenditures. Their enforcement of greater financial transparency continues to build international donor confidence and encourage sustained foreign investment in Afghanistan.

CSTC-A has also implemented several initiatives, many based on Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction recommendations, to establish greater accountability in ANDSF and

ASI processes. CSTC-A has placed additional conditional controls on U.S. and NATO funding. These conditions are intended to ensure the proper implementation and integration of financial accounting, payroll, human resources, and real property systems within the ASI. In this manner, CSTC-A prevents funds from being misappropriated or otherwise misused.

CSTC-A also directly supports an average of over 30 ongoing external and internal audits of the Coalition, ASI, and ANDSF at any given time throughout the year. It will continue working on implementing systems and processes for effective ASI/ANDSF internal control programs that will not only identify corruption, but dissuade it. Of note, CSTC-A has doubled the number of financial and acquisition advisors over the past six months and has established an integration cell to ensure that ANDSF financial and personnel pay systems are adequately developed and integrated.

Our Vendor Vetting Task Force, also known as Task Force 2010, has also achieved notable results. Their efforts have proven to be very effective in stopping U.S. money from going to insurgents. Since its inception, we estimate that the Task Force 2010 has prevented over \$30M in taxpayer money from falling into enemy hands. I am also convinced that this task force has saved American lives by identifying high-risk vendors who support the enemy.

President Ghani and the Afghan government have recently made significant strides in improving their processes to detain, investigate, prosecute, and incarcerate insurgents and extremists. The Afghans are also in the process of developing legal statutes that will ensure thorough investigations and trials for suspected terrorists, in order to uphold the rule of law and promote

greater legitimacy for the Afghan judicial branch. Through our mentorship, the Afghans are now taking the initiative to centralize the detention and incarceration of all national security threats at the Parwan Detention Facility, which is now run entirely by the Afghans. Continued U.S. support for the Afghan justice system and responsible application of Afghan laws will greatly enhance efforts to defeat the insurgency and reinforce the legitimacy and credibility of the Afghan government.

#### **V. Desired Conditions & Assessment for the End of 2015**

Considering the dynamism of the operational environment and the players within it, we will not pursue, nor hope to achieve, a static “endstate” for 2015. Our campaign will evolve and adapt. What we will pursue, however, is a general improvement in security conditions and ANDSF capabilities. In order for the insurgents to reconsider their goals, the ANDSF will need to demonstrate resilience and progress in 2015. If the ANDSF can achieve this objective in their first year with full security responsibilities and with decreasing U.S. and Coalition enabler support, then their momentum should be considerable going into 2016 when the ANDSF will be even more experienced and capable.

The following are some of our objectives for 2015:

- ASI/ANDSF increasingly capable of protecting the population and securing a legitimate Afghan government with limited U.S. and Coalition support
- ASI/ANDSF confidence is increased
- ASI/ANDSF are increasingly self-sustaining excepting aviation and the intelligence enterprise

- ASI/ANDSF increasingly capable of neutralizing terrorist networks and denying terrorist safe havens with limited U.S. and Coalition support
- ASI progress promotes continued U.S. and international funding commitments
- USFOR-A/Resolute Support forces retain sufficient regional access, Freedom of Movement, and Freedom of Action
- ASI/PAKMIL relationship is constructive

If achieved, then we will consider our campaign to be on track. We will continuously assess the progress of the mission and the efficacy of our efforts.

In recent weeks, President Ghani has asked for additional flexibility in the NATO and U.S. mission to account for the fact that his government remains in transition. He acknowledged that while the ANDSF are better equipped than ever, work remains to build their bureaucratic processes and systems, and his administration would require considerable time and effort to address the challenges of systemic corruption. Moreover, he believes a sustained U.S. and Coalition presence provides actual and psychological stability to the country as the new government solidifies.

I have provided various options and my recommendations through my chain of command.

## **VI. Metrics of Progress**

Across most metrics, societal progress in Afghanistan has been significant in the last 13+ years. U.S. and Coalition forces, along with an increasingly capable ANSF, have provided the



necessary security to enable these improvements. Much of this progress has been paid with American blood and treasure. The following two charts highlight the tremendous improvements made since the fall of the Taliban regime in 2001:

NATO OTAN		Societal Fundamentals: Then and Now (1 of 2)		Updated on 3 Mar 15	RS
<b>Infrastructure/Communications</b>		Taliban: 2001	Now		
Roadways/Paved Roads		18,000km/60km	42,150km/12,350km		
Access to Reliable Electricity		6%	28%		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2,000,000+ Afghans use Facebook</li> <li>• 100% of the country will have cell phone coverage within 3 years</li> </ul>
TV/Radio Stations		None/3	50/150		
Internet Users		None	6,000,000+		
Cell Phone Subscribers		25,000	22,000,000+		
<b>Education</b>					
Schools		1,000	14,000+		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Afghan literacy rate is predicted to reach 90% by 2040</li> </ul>
Teachers		20,000	186,000+		
Students Enrolled in Primary & Secondary Schools		<900,000	8,000,000+		
% Who Are Females		Almost None	36%		
Students Enrolled in Universities		UNK	150,000+		
Literacy Rate		12%	39%		
<small>Sources: CIA World Fact Book 2014; GIROA Ministry of Communications &amp; Information Technology; Afghan Central Statistics Organization 2014; World Bank Development Indicators; Afghan Energy Information Center; International Airline Industry Directory; 2014 UNHCR Country Profile-Afghanistan 2014; UNICEF; "Realizing Self-Reliance"-GIROA Publication: 20 Nov 14</small>					
By almost all metrics, progress in Afghanistan has been <i>significant</i> in the last 13 years; the Coalition and ANSF have provided the necessary security to enable these advancements					
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NATO OTAN		Societal Fundamentals: Then and Now (2 of 2)		Updated on 3 Mar 15	RS
<b>Economy/Politics</b>		Taliban: 2001	Now		
Size of Economy		\$4 Billion	\$20.6+ Billion		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Afghan economy continues to grow (albeit unevenly)</li> <li>- 2011: 6.1%</li> <li>- 2012: <u>14.4%</u></li> <li>- 2013: 3.7%</li> <li>- 2014: 1.5%</li> <li>- 2015: <u>4.0%</u> Forecast</li> </ul>
GDP (USD per Capita)		\$186.00	\$688.00+		
Access to Clean Water		22%	64%		
Passenger Cars (per 1,000 people)		0.5	20		
Commercial Overflights & Landings (Daily)		None	756		
% of Women in Labor Force		UNK	24.4%		
% of Women in National Parliament		None	28%		
<b>Population/Health</b>					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Health improvements have raised life expectancies by 21+ years</li> <li>• ~35.3 Million Afghans X 21 Years = <u>Gift of &gt;741 Million Years of Life</u></li> </ul>
Refugees		>3,500,000	<2,700,000		
Population of Kabul		<500,000	>3.5 Million		
Infant Mortality (Children Dying Before Age 5)		26%	9.7%		
Maternal Mortality (Women Dying from Childbirth)		1.6%	0.33%		
Healthcare Access/Facilities		9%/498	60%/2,507		
Life Expectancy		43	64		
<small>Sources (Continued): Afghanistan Mortality Survey; Ministry of Public Health; UNDP Human Development Index; World Bank; TOLD News Research; USAID Survey; Asia Foundation; MOBY Research; UNICEF</small>					
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It is important to emphasize that these extraordinary advances in Afghan society have stabilized the country, promoted widespread support for the central government, and inspired confidence in the future. Of note, 77% of Afghans desire that the Coalition remains to assist the Afghan security forces, at least until the Afghan National Army (ANA) and Afghan National Police (ANP) can stand alone.

**Current Afghan Popular Opinions** Updated on 3 Mar 15 RS

- 77% of Afghans express confidence in their new government
- 87% of Afghans approve the political agreement between President Ghani & CE Abdullah
- 78% of Afghans believe the security situation in their district has improved or remained steady in the last 6 months (since June 2014)
- 81% of Afghans say their government has more influence in their district than the insurgents do
- 87% of Afghans express confidence in the Afghan National Army (ANA)
- 59% of Afghans believe that the ANA is capable of defeating the insurgents
- 76% of Afghans express confidence in the Afghan National Police (ANP)
- 82% of Afghans believe that GIROA is leading the effort to improve security (vs. the Coalition)
- 77% of Afghans want the Coalition to remain in the country to assist the ANDSF, at least until the Afghan military and police can stand alone
- <10% of the Afghan people support the Taliban
  - <30% of Afghans in Kandahar Province (the heartland of the Taliban) support the insurgents
  - <2% of Afghan women desire a return to Taliban rule
- 64% of Afghans believe that it is unlikely that the Taliban will return to power
- 55% of Afghans believe that their country is heading in the right direction

Sources: Agence France-Presse; BBC; NBC; ABC; Asia Foundation-Afghan Survey 2014; Afghan Ministry of Communications Internal Report; MOBY Research; Afghanistan Nationwide Quarterly Assessment Research (ANQAR) Survey Report, Wave 26; Afghan Center for Socio-Economic and Opinion Research (ACSOR)

**In general, Afghans are far more optimistic about their country's future than outsiders are.**

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Dramatic, but fragile developmental advancements in Afghan society have also directly contributed to an improved security environment. The fragility of these gains reinforces the need for both our continued security efforts and civilian assistance programs. While sustained U.S. security and development aid to Afghanistan is intrinsically beneficial to the Afghans, it also contributes substantively to U.S. national security by ensuring that Afghanistan never again becomes a safe haven for terrorists.

## **VII. Conclusion**

The hard work and significant sacrifices of countless U.S. and Coalition military personnel and civilians over the last 13+ years have created the conditions where Afghans can now take responsibility for their security and governance. The Afghans welcome the opportunity to shape their destiny, but they still desire and need our assistance.

The Ghani administration offers us an extraordinary opportunity to develop a meaningful strategic partnership that will stabilize Afghanistan, and in turn, offer greater security for the U.S. homeland. Political progress in Kabul demonstrates the return on U.S. and international investments in the future of Afghanistan and the Afghan people. President Ghani recently remarked at the NATO Foreign Ministerial, “Compelled by tragedy and cemented by mutual sacrifice, the partnership between Afghanistan, NATO, and the U.S. has entered a new phase.”

I firmly believe that our combined CT and TAA efforts in support of the ANDSF and ASI will reinforce and deepen our strategic partnership with the Afghan government. We could offer no greater tribute to the American people, our fallen, and their loved ones than to maintain our commitment to the long-term stability and security of Afghanistan to ensure we accomplish the national security objectives for which our fallen so valiantly fought.