

STATEMENT OF

**MICHAEL J. DUMONT**  
**DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE**  
**AFGHANISTAN, PAKISTAN, AND CENTRAL ASIA**

BEFORE THE

**UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**  
**COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

“Afghanistan in 2014: The Year of Transition”

December 11, 2013

## **EMBARGOED UNTIL DELIVERY**

Chairman Royce, Ranking Member Engel, members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today and discuss the upcoming year of transition in Afghanistan. It is an honor to be here with Ambassador Dobbins and Mr. Sampler.

Before turning our attention to the upcoming year, I would like to first review the status of the security transition in Afghanistan. In June of this year, the Afghans reached a decisive milestone, assuming lead responsibility for security countrywide. This milestone also signaled a shift in the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) primary mission from combat to training, advising, and assisting the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF). The ANSF – a large, integrated force with an army, air force, and police force, composed of nearly 352,000 personnel – are now successfully providing security for the people of Afghanistan. This past summer fighting season was the first that was both planned and executed with the Afghans wholly in the lead. The ANSF proved to be capable and resilient, conducting nearly all combat operations across Afghanistan while taking the majority of the casualties. They successfully held the security gains of recent years, and the insurgency failed to achieve its stated objectives. The fact that the ANSF – a force in its infancy just four years ago – is increasingly able to maintain the gains made by a coalition of 49 nations is a significant accomplishment.

As we look toward the coming year, the Department of Defense will focus on four key areas: support for a successful political transition in Afghanistan; continuation of the train, advise, and assist (TAA) mission to develop the ANSF into sustainable force; a narrowly focused counter-terrorism mission; and the drawdown and realignment of U.S. forces in Afghanistan for a post-2014 TAA mission.

The presidential elections in Afghanistan, scheduled for April 5, 2014, will be the first constitutional transfer of power from one president to another in Afghanistan's history. For the first time, Afghans are solely responsible for administering the process and providing security, with international forces in a supporting role. We are encouraged by the effectiveness the Afghans have shown in conducting early and well-coordinated preparations for the elections. The success of voter registration efforts is a promising indication of Afghan planning and capacity.

Many Afghans see security as central to inclusive participation on election day. The Ministry of Interior – which is responsible for election security – has begun security planning and expects to finalize a comprehensive election support plan by early next year. In accordance with the overall security transition and respect for Afghan sovereignty, ISAF, including U.S. forces, will be prepared to provide security assistance if requested by the Afghan government. If requested, the U.S. is prepared to provide technical advice, logistics, and security support to assist Afghan efforts to ensure the elections are secure, credible, and inclusive. The United States does not support particular candidates or parties, nor

**EMBARGOED UNTIL DELIVERY**

## **EMBARGOED UNTIL DELIVERY**

will the United States interfere with the electoral process. A legitimate election process that enables a peaceful transition of power will be a key milestone in Afghan history.

In 2014, the TAA mission will continue to emphasize developing ANSF capabilities to conduct higher-level planning and execution of operations, as well as the capability to sustain and enable those operations. Our training mission focuses on improving the quality and professionalism of the ANSF, with particular emphasis on sustainment capacity and ministerial development. For the fielded ANSF, assistance will be based on five pillars key to long-term sustainability: training; leadership; command and control; sustainment and logistics; and combined arms integration. Ministerial-level assistance will continue to focus on institutionalizing the systems and capabilities necessary to organize, resource, train, and sustain the force. This includes: acquisition; contracting; strategy and policy development; human resources management; and financial and resource management. The ANSF can be a guarantor for a secure and democratic Afghanistan, but not without continued progress towards developing a sustainable and professional force.

As we draw down our presence, we will focus on improving accountability and increasing oversight of funding for the ANSF. This will ensure adequate capacity and measures of accountability are in place as we incrementally increase direct contributions to the Afghan government while their financial management capacity grows. Coalition forces are working with the Afghans to finish implementing automated systems that will increase transparency and accountability in the areas of pay, logistics, human resources, and financial management. The Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan is also focused on developing the technical expertise necessary in the Afghan security ministries to plan, program, budget, and execute financial transactions to sustain the ANSF. Capacity building and improved accountability will help instill sound financial management practices in daily operations while mitigating the risk of fraud, waste, and abuse.

Although the combat leadership shift from ISAF to the ANSF demonstrates first and foremost the capability and resolve of the Afghan security forces to secure their people and their nation, it also enables the United States and other coalition partners to reduce their forces. As President Obama announced in the State of the Union address in February 2013, the United States will reduce its force level to 34,000 personnel by February 12, 2014. This force level will generally be maintained through the election period to ensure we are able to provide support, if requested. The steady pace of force level reductions from now to February 2014, and after the election period, will allow our TAA effort to consolidate from lower to higher levels of command as the ANSF display greater capacity. This progression will enable effective assistance as Coalition forces draw-down and allow for a smooth transition of the ANSF to operate with reduced coalition support. The ANSF will exercise greater autonomy and leadership of security operations, while still having access to support from ISAF, as required and available.

**EMBARGOED UNTIL DELIVERY**

**EMBARGOED UNTIL DELIVERY**

With this process underway, NATO remains on track to bring the ISAF mission to a close by the end of 2014 and to transition to the NATO RESOLUTE SUPPORT train, advise, and assist mission. The mission for U.S. forces in Afghanistan is also shifting to a continued counter-terrorism mission against al'Qaeda and its affiliates, and training, advising and equipping Afghan forces as part of the NATO mission. As the President has made clear, however, the United States must secure an agreement that protects U.S. troops and must have an invitation from the Afghan government to fulfill the promise of the post-2014 partnership discussed at the 2012 Chicago NATO Summit. We welcome the Loya Jirga's strong endorsement of the Bilateral Security Agreement (BSA), and we are prepared to sign the agreement. Concluding the BSA promptly would be an important signal to the people of Afghanistan, to the Taliban, to our allies and partners, and to the world that we intend to continue our partnership in support of Afghanistan. The Bilateral Security Agreement is an opportunity to sustain the partnership between the United States and Afghanistan to support Afghans in achieving lasting peace, security, and development. We look forward to signing the agreement as soon as possible, and we will keep the Congress informed of any developments. NATO also needs to conclude a status of forces agreement with Afghanistan for the NATO mission to move forward post-2014.

After more than a decade of dedication and sacrifice by our forces, our coalition partners, and the Afghan people themselves, along multiple lines of effort – military, diplomatic, governance and development – we have seen a remarkable turnaround in Afghanistan. Today, the Afghan people have greater economic opportunity, greater access to health care, better and more education, and more freedoms and individual rights than in the past. This is a critical time for our shared effort in Afghanistan. The transition to a new train, advise, and assist mission and a narrowly focused counter-terrorism mission is in sight.

Thank you for your continued support to the mission in Afghanistan and our service men and women. I look forward to answering your questions.

**EMBARGOED UNTIL DELIVERY**