

OFFICIAL USE ONLY  
UNTIL RELEASED BY THE  
SENATE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE

STATEMENT OF GENERAL DAVID H. PETRAEUS, U.S. ARMY

COMMANDER

U.S. CENTRAL COMMAND

BEFORE THE SENATE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE

ON

THE SITUATION IN AFGHANISTAN

15 JUN 2010

FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY  
UNTIL RELEASED BY THE  
SENATE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE

Mr. Chairman, Senator McCain, members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide an update on the situation in Afghanistan. Today, I will describe our ongoing efforts in support of the comprehensive civil-military campaign that is being conducted in Afghanistan.

I'll begin by setting my remarks in context. As you will recall, soon after the 9/11 attacks, an international coalition led by the United States conducted an impressive campaign to defeat the Taliban, al-Qaeda, and other associated extremist groups in Afghanistan. In the years that followed, however, members of the Taliban and the other extremist elements gradually reconnected in Afghanistan's and Pakistan's border regions and rebuilt the structures necessary to communicate, plan, and carry out operations.

In recent years, these groups have engaged in an increasingly violent campaign against the Afghan people, their government, and ISAF forces, and they have developed symbiotic relationships that pose threats not just to Afghanistan and the region, but to countries throughout the world.

In response to the threat posed by these extremists, coalition forces and their Afghan partners are now engaged in a comprehensive civil-military campaign intended, above all, to prevent reestablishment of trans-national extremist sanctuaries in Afghanistan like the ones al-Qaeda enjoyed there when the Taliban ruled Afghanistan prior to 9/11.

To achieve our objectives, we are working with our ISAF and Afghan partners to wrest the initiative from the Taliban and other insurgent elements, to improve security for the

Afghan people, to increase the quantity and quality of the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF), and to support establishment of Afghan governance that is seen as legitimate in the eyes of the people.

Over the past year or so, we and our ISAF partners have worked hard to get the “inputs” right in Afghanistan: to build organizations, command and control structures, and relationships needed to carry out a comprehensive civil-military campaign. We and our international partners have put the best possible civilian and military leaders in charge of those organizations. We have refined and, where necessary, developed the civil-military plans and concepts needed to guide the conduct of a comprehensive counterinsurgency effort. And we have deployed the substantial additional resources – military, civilian, funding, and so on – needed to implement the plans that have been developed. And I note here that the deployment of the 30,000 additional US troopers announced by President Obama last December and their equipment is slightly ahead of schedule. By the end of August, all the additional US forces will be on the ground except for a division headquarters that is not required until a month or so later. Meanwhile, the efforts to increase the size and capability of the Afghan National Army and Police are also on track, though there clearly is considerable work to be done in that critical area.

Even as we continue the effort to get all the inputs in place, the actions taken over the last 18 months, which include tripling the US force contribution and increasing similarly the US civilian component, have enabled the initiation of comprehensive civil-military counterinsurgency operations in key districts in Afghanistan.

The initial main operational effort has been in the Central Helmand River Valley, and progress has been made there, though, predictably, the enemy has fought back as we have taken away his sanctuaries in Marjah, Nad-i-Ali, and elsewhere.

The focus is now shifting to Kandahar Province, and the effort there features an integrated civil-military approach to security, governance, and development. Over the course of the month ahead, we will see an additional US brigade – from the great 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne Division – deploy into the districts around Kandahar City, together with an additional Afghan Army brigade. There will also be the introduction of additional Afghan police and US military police into the city, together with other US forces and civilians who will work together with the impressive Canadian PRT that has been working in the city. As you've heard General McChrystal explain, the concept is to provide the Kandaharis “a rising tide of security” that will expand incrementally over time and establish the foundation of improved security on which local Afghan governance can be built, that will enable improvements in the provision of basic services, and so on. There will be nothing easy about any of this, to be sure, and as I noted during my annual posture hearing, the going is likely to get harder before it gets easier. But it is essential to make progress in the critical southern part of the country, the part where, in fact, the 9/11 attacks were planned by al-Qaeda during the period when the Taliban controlled it and much of the rest of the country.

Central to achieving progress in Afghanistan – and to setting the conditions necessary to transition security tasks from the international community to the Afghan government – is increasing the size and capability of ANSF. To that end, with the assistance of the Afghan Security Forces Fund, the security forces are on track to meet their targeted end strength objectives by the end of this year. In January 2009, the ANSF numbered 156,000; today, there are over 231,000 ANSF members. Additionally, General Stan McChrystal has placed a premium on comprehensive partnering with the ANSF, an emphasis that is on display daily in operations throughout Afghanistan. Clearly, there is need for improvement in quality, not just quantity. And considerable progress has been made in getting the concepts right for developing the ANSF and also in developing the structures needed to implement the concepts.

Improving the ANSF is facilitated considerably by the establishment last November of the NATO Training Mission-Afghanistan (NTM-A), the organization created to help the ANSF expand and professionalize so that they can answer their country's security needs. It is worth noting that the NTM-A Commander, LTG Bill Caldwell, assessed that in NTM-A's first six months, NATO and Afghan security leadership have made "progress in reversing adverse trends in the growth and professionalization of the ANSF." Nevertheless, as LTG Caldwell has also observed, there is much work remaining to reduce attrition and to develop effective leaders through considerably augmented partnering, training, and recruiting.

In all of our efforts, we continue to emphasize the importance of inclusivity and

transparency on the part of the Afghan government and leadership, especially in linking nascent local governing institutions to the decision-making and financial resources in Kabul. Needless to say, innumerable challenges exist in all areas of governance, and much more needs to be done to help the Afghan government assume full responsibility for addressing the concerns of ordinary Afghan citizens. The National Consultative Peace Jirga held in Kabul earlier this month represents a constructive first step in this effort, providing an opportunity for President Karzai to build consensus, to address some of the political tensions that fuel the insurgency, and to promote reconciliation and local reintegration as means that can contribute to a political resolution of some of the issues that exist.

Another critically important part of our joint civil-military campaign in Afghanistan is promoting broad-based economic and infrastructure development. We have seen that improvements in the Afghan government's ability to deliver basic services such as electricity and water have positive effects in other areas, including public perception, security, and economic well-being. We have worked closely with the international community and the Afghan government to develop robust overarching strategies for water, governance, energy, and road programs. We are now embarking on a project jointly developed by the government of Afghanistan and various US government agencies to dramatically increase production of electricity to the Kandahar area. To complement this effort, we support and promote viable agricultural and economic alternatives to help Afghans bring licit products to market, rather than continuing to grow the poppy.

Again, none of this is easy or without considerable challenges. However, the mission is, as the members of this committee clearly recognize, hugely important to the security of the region and our country. And we are obviously doing all that we can to achieve progress toward achieving our important objectives in Afghanistan.

In closing, I thank the members of this committee for your unwavering support and abiding concern for the more than 215,000 troopers deployed throughout the CENTCOM AOR – and for their families, as well. Thank you.