

SENATE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE

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

SENATE 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 ANSF 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 (OEF), and commenced its new mission, Operation Freedom's Sentinel (FS). Simultaneously, troops from over 40 nations, which comprise the new NATO mission, Resolute Support (RS), 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 Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF). U.S. forces are now carrying out two well-

defined missions: a Counter-Terrorism (CT) mission against the remnants of al Qaeda and the RS 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 ANSF 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 ANSF 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 RS 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 RS.

The new Afghan National Unity Government will have to overcome considerable political pressures and obstacles as President Ghani and CEO 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 ANSF 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 RS campaign will play a crucial role in cementing our gains. While we strive to improve ANSF 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 in 2016.

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

Our transition to RS represents the natural evolution of our maturing partnership with the increasingly capable ANSF. 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 only a few exceptions, 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 ANSF 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.

RS is not a continuation of the ISAF mission on a smaller scale. While RS 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 RS as a non-combat mission does not eliminate the fact that we will still operate in a combat 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 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 ANSF 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 RS and represents our unified effort to generate, employ, and sustain the ANSF and ASI. FBSFA encompasses all RS activities required to develop ANSF operational effectiveness and includes partnering, advising, and supporting the ANSF 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 spend 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 ANSF (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 RS 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 ANSF security operations.

II. Where We Are – State of the ANSF

2014 Fighting Season

In their second fighting season in the lead, the ANSF 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 ANSF fought tenaciously and demonstrated their increasing capabilities. They independently planned, led, and executed numerous combined-arms operations. Both ANA and ANP units demonstrated increased tactical flexibility and endurance as well.

Of note, ANSF operational tempo (OPTEMPO) was four times higher in 2014 than in 2013. Not surprisingly, and regrettably, ANSF 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 Afghan Local Police (ALP) who generally operates in isolated areas and are not as well equipped or trained as other ANSF. The

insurgents also target the ALP more frequently because the ALP are not centrally garrisoned and instead live in their villages, among the Afghan people. Therefore, they present the most immediate threat and challenge to insurgent efforts to control and intimidate the populace.

A high ANSF 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 ANSF 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 ANSF successfully maintained control of all key terrain and populated areas in 2014. The insurgents were only able to temporarily overrun four district centers in isolated portions of the country. Within 96 hours, the ANSF retook all of them. In sum, the insurgents could not hold ground anywhere when challenged by the ANSF in force. Today, the Afghan government remains firmly in control of its 34 provincial capitals and all of its major cities.

Perhaps most importantly, the ANSF 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 provided seamless 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 ANSF provided superior protection for nearly eight million Afghan citizens who courageously chose to defy insurgent intimidation

tactics and voted. ANSF 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 ANSF 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 executing unilateral direct action missions against insurgent leaders and facilitators. These are remarkable achievements, which reflect the maturation of their formidable capabilities.

While the conventional ANSF 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 ANSF would greatly benefit from improved leadership and increased confidence; ANSF 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 CEO Abdullah are the driving force behind meaningful transformation and merit-based appointments in the ASI and ANSF. However, both must navigate a political labyrinth as they move forward with their reform agenda.

On balance, after watching the ANSF 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 ANSF 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.

ANSF Capability Gaps

ANSF 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 emerging 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 ANSF planning capacity, command and control, and operational capabilities. Additionally, they are addressing developmental shortfalls in the areas of logistics, medical, and counter-IED. At all levels, our advisors continue to emphasize and enforce Afghan financial transparency and accountability of donor resources.

Although clear challenges exist, I believe the ANSF'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 ANSF 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 in Afghanistan. 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 times 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. 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 justifications for the Taliban armed struggle: to rid Afghanistan of “malevolent foreign influences.” Now they are fighting against and killing almost exclusively their fellow Afghans. They will certainly 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 ANSF 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 ANSF 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, ANSF 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. This 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 is most likely an attempt to attract media attention, solicit greater resources, and increase recruitment. The Taliban networks are well established, and significant ideological 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 only a low probability that ISIL can establish a large, credible presence in Afghanistan. Nonetheless, 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 ANSF 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 ANSF 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 ANSF in the security domain. Economic growth was similarly stymied by lack of investor confidence in the Afghan government and its prospects for the future.

The National Unity Government presents both significant promise and peril. 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 for 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 support them.

Despite myriad challenges, the fundamental partnership between the Coalition and the Afghan government, to include ASIs and ANSF, remains strong. The difference between the Ghani administration and its predecessor is night and day. 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, Afghan government, civil, and military leaders 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 Afghanistan-Pakistan 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 an important shift for bilateral relations. Senior Pakistani military officers have said that they can no longer discriminate between "good and bad" terrorists. It is important that their words are followed by action.

Taking advantage of this window of opportunity, RS plays a key facilitator role in pursuit of a constructive and effective relationship between the Afghan and Pakistan militaries. We continue to actively encourage 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/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 actors 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 true 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 within 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.

I would also like to commend to the Committee the sterling work of our Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan (CSTC-A). This subordinate command continues to implement a 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 ANSF and ASI processes. CSTC-A has placed conditional controls on U.S. funding provided to the Ministry of Defense and Ministry of Interior. These conditions are intended to ensure the proper implementation and integration of financial accounting, payroll, human resources, and real property systems; and provide mechanisms to prevent funds from being misappropriated or otherwise misused. CSTC-A directly supports an average of over 30 ongoing external and

internal audits of the Coalition, ASI, and ANSF at any given time throughout the year, and has already started to see positive results. It will continue working on implementing systems and processes for effective ASI/ANSF internal control programs that will not only identify corruption, but dissuade it.

I would specifically like to thank members of this Committee for their support of the Vendor Vetting Task Force, also known as Task Force 2010. This effort has proven to be very effective in preventing U.S. money from going to insurgents. I am convinced that this task force has saved American lives by identifying high risk vendors who support the enemy.

I also appreciate the Senate's support for U.S. efforts to improve the Afghan justice system. President Ghani and the Afghan government have recently made great 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. Our continued 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 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 ANSF capabilities. In order for the insurgents to reconsider their goals, the ANSF will need to demonstrate resilience and progress in 2015. If the ANSF are able to achieve this goal in their first year with full security responsibilities and with decreasing U.S. and Coalition enabler support, then the momentum should be considerable going into 2016 when the ANSF will be even more experienced and capable.

The following conditions are desired at the end of 2015:

- ASI/ANSF increasingly capable of protecting the population and securing a legitimate Afghan government with limited U.S. and Coalition support
- ASI/ANSF confidence is increased
- ASI/ANSF are increasingly sustainable excepting aviation and the intelligence enterprise
- ASI/ANSF 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/RS forces retain sufficient regional access, Freedom of Movement, and Freedom of Action ASI/PAKMIL relationship is constructive

If these conditions are achieved, then we will consider our campaign to be on track.

VI. Metrics of Progress

By almost all 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:

|  Societal Fundamentals: Then and Now (1 of 2) Updated on 11 Feb 15  | |
|---|------------------------------------|
| <u>Infrastructure/Communications</u> | |
| Roadways/Paved Roads | Taliban: 2001 Now |
| | 18,000km/60km 42,150km/12,350km |
| Access to Reliable Electricity | 6% 28% |
| TV/Radio Stations | None/3 50/150 |
| Internet Users | None 6,000,000+ |
| Cell Phone Subscribers | 25,000 22,000,000+ |
| <u>Education</u> | |
| Schools | 1,000 14,000+ |
| 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; internetstatistics.com/Asia; GiRoA Ministry of Communications & 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 11 Feb 15 | RS |
|---|-------------|---|-----|--|----|
| <u>Economy/Politics</u> | | Taliban: 2001 | Now | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Afghan economy continues to grow (albeit unevenly) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 2011: 6.1% - 2012: <u>14.4%</u> - 2013: 3.7% - 2014: 1.5% - 2015: <u>4.0%</u> Forecast | |
| Size of Economy | \$4 Billion | \$20.6+ Billion | | | |
| 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% | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health improvements have raised life expectancies by 21+ years • ~35.3 Million Afghans X 21 Years = <u>Gift of >741 Million Years of Life</u> | |
| <u>Population/Health</u> | | | | | |
| 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 (Continues): Afghanistan Mortality Survey; Ministry of Public Health; UNDP Human Development Index; World Bank; TOLO News Research; USAID Survey; Asia Foundation; MOBY Research-Yegheney.Torbati@moby-hq.com; UNICEF</small> | | | | | |

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It is important to emphasize that these extraordinary advances in Afghan society have stabilized the country, promoted popular support for the central government, and inspired confidence in the future.

| NATO OTAN | | Current Afghan Popular Opinions | | Updated on 11 Feb 15 | RS |
|--|--|---------------------------------|--|----------------------|----|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 77% of Afghans express confidence in their new government • 87% of Afghans approve the political agreement between President Ghani & CEO 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 ANSF, at least until the Afghan military and police can stand alone • <10% of the Afghan people support the Taliban <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <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 | | | | | |
| <small>Sources: Agence France-Presse; BBC; NBC; ABC; Asia Foundation-Afghan Survey 2014; Afghan Ministry of Communications Internal Report; MOBY Research-Yegheney.Torbati@moby-hq.com; Afghanistan Nationwide Quarterly Assessment Research (ANQAR) Survey Report, Wave 26; Afghan Center for Socio-Economic and Opinion Research (ACSOR)</small> | | | | | |
| <p>In general, Afghans are far more optimistic about their country's future than outsiders are.</p> | | | | | |

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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 assistance 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 own security and governance. 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 ANSF and ASIs will reinforce and deepen our strategic partnership with the Afghan government and shape conditions for a stable, secure, and prosperous Afghanistan. We could offer no greater tribute to the American people, our fallen, and their loved ones than by finishing this mission well.