

COMISAF Talking Points

General

- The insurgents will not win. Afghan people don't want the Taliban back or another substitute espousing extremist ideology.
- We are here to win
 - Winning is measured in Afghan terms – a real sense of security, viable governance with effective authorities and capabilities that meet the people's needs, and sustained socio-economic progress
 - Winning matters to the security of all the nations committed here. We are working together with Afghans as a team to defeat a common enemy. It is in our collective national security interests to bring stability to Afghanistan.
 - We are here for the long haul – for as long as it takes to secure the future of Afghanistan.
- We are dedicated to a comprehensive approach: improving security, extending good governance, improving social & economic development (well being).
- There is no purely military solution to the situation in Afghanistan. Ultimately, the solution must be a political one and a solution that is Afghan and Afghan-led.
- We are here in support of the legitimate GIRoA and partner with other coalition forces, UNAMA and the International Community (integrated approach) in all our efforts.

Progress

- There is progress, albeit uneven.
 - Afghans are now registering to vote in preparation for future national elections scheduled in 2009 / 2010
 - Over 3M Afghans have registered in a Voting Registration process to be completed by late February.
 - Roughly 5 million refugees (out of 8 who fled the country) have returned to Afghanistan seeking a better life.
 - 80% of Afghans have access to basic healthcare – up from 9% in 2003
 - 3 million Afghans have benefited from rural water and sanitation projects
 - Over 6 million children have enrolled in schools, 35% of which are girls, compared with 1 million in 2001 – very few of whom were girls
 - Over 13,000 km of roads have been built, improved or rehabilitated
 - GDP per capita has increased by 70% since 2002; grew 11.5% in 2007
 - Afghanistan has a National Army and Police numbering over 140,000, steadily increasing in competence and capability.

Security

- Violence overall increased in 2008 primarily due to:
 - The insurgents' change of tactics to more asymmetric attacks;

- Insurgents' freedom of action across the border from sanctuaries in the Pakistan tribal areas;
- The fact that the ANSF and ISAF increased in strength and are operating in new and more areas than in previous years.
- Contrary to perceptions attacks are down within the city and province of Kabul. **ANA and ANP deaths are down 61% in the city and province.**
 - Attacks in some of the provinces around Kabul are up, but so is ANSF and ISAF presence there.
- The major impediments to faster progress in security are militant sanctuaries in the Pakistan tribal areas, progress in extending good governance at all levels within Afghanistan, and defeating the narco-trafficking system linkage with the insurgency

The Insurgency

- The insurgency is a loosely connected syndicate composed of Taliban, other insurgent groups, AQ, drug traffickers, and criminal groups – each with different objectives and different motivations.
- Objectives range from overthrow of the national government to weakening local government influence in order to facilitate criminal or power-broker aims.
- Motivations range from extremist ideology to lack of employment, a culture of violence, intimidation, and historical opposition to any foreign presence
- There is evidence of increased Foreign Fighter presence in Southern & Eastern Afghanistan this year, but there is no clear evidence that AQ is shifting fighters and leadership from Iraq to Afghanistan.
- AQ provides financing; helps recruit fighters; helps with C2, logistics, intelligence and training
- The Taliban were unable to govern Afghanistan effectively when in power. They have no viable alternative to offer Afghans – they cannot bring progress or a better way of life.

ANSF

- The Afghan National Army is a significant success story.
 - It continues to grow in number, competence, and capabilities. **Five ANA Corps are supporting current combat operations.**
 - It has a great and ever increasing professional reputation.
 - Today **62%** of all operations are ANSF-led
- The Afghan National Police is growing in capability, competence and has an ever increasing professional reputation; **a program of Focused District Development supports reform of the police. FDD is complete or ongoing in 52 districts.**
- The Police are key to winning; they are the first line of defence for the Afghan people, the foundation of security and the bridge to a better future for the people of Afghanistan.
 - **They are the most visible extension of a central government.**
 - **Between March 2007 and March 2008 police casualties hit 1119, according to MOI. On average the ANP suffers three times the casualties as the ANA and ISAF.**

- ISAF and USFOR-A embedded mentors with the ANP prevent newly trained police from backsliding into old practices, and help protect them from corrupt officials.
- CSTC-A has trained over 25,000 police, almost one third of the force.
- Additional support from the International Community is needed for police reform and growth.
- Together, the Afghan National Security Forces and ISAF are making progress on the ground.
 - The insurgents do not and cannot hold ground where they are challenged by ANSF and ISAF.

Additional Forces

- We need additional resources to allow us to hold areas that we have cleared and to set the conditions for improved governance and social and economic progress. In this way we will achieve sustainable security.
- The ANSF are playing an increasing role in clearing and holding, but it will take time before they are able to do so across the country as a whole
- We need more troops for the mission over a sustained period of time – this is not a surge – until we get to a “tipping point” when Afghan National Security Forces and good governance can lead in providing security for the population.
- And it’s not just about more Soldiers: we need more aid in governance and rule of law, more economic aid, and more political assistance for the GIRoA.
- We need more than just extra boots on the ground – we need enablers: aviation, ISR, engineers, and logistics support.
- ISAF is here at the invitation of the Afghan government with a UN mandate, and under NATO command. All requests for additional US forces are made in full consultation with NATO and GIRoA leadership and key troop contributing nations.
- ISAF should reflect the commitment of the whole international community to Afghanistan’s future: it must not become a ‘two-tier’ force with the burden falling to only a few nations.

US Forces Afghanistan

- Designating COMISAF as Commander US Forces streamlines command and control of US Forces in Afghanistan and improves unity of effort.
- It will also enable the efficient management of all Title 10 tasks.
- It ensures unity of voice among US leaders on matters concerning US Forces operating in Afghanistan.
- Enables the employment of US Forces across Afghanistan.
- This is a US decision made in consultation with NATO and GIRoA leaders and key troop contributing nations.
- GIRoA supports this decision as does NATO and troop contributing nations.

Supply Route Security

- Shipments across the border are affected by many things: theft, weather, local labor, occasional earthquakes, and attacks on convoys. There is an inherent risk in these types of shipments in certain areas
- Our current logistical arrangements are sufficient to meet our needs. Recent attacks in Pakistan have done more to harm local civilians and the local economy and have limited effect on our ability to operate.
- We protect ourselves with a robust inventory of food and supplies.
- We are working with other countries in the region to develop a logistics network to support efforts in Afghanistan and are optimistic that necessary arrangements will be in place by early 2009. This will benefit the Afghan people in the long run.

The Narcotics-Insurgency Nexus

- There is a clear linkage between narcotics trade and financing of the insurgency
 - Each year, the insurgency benefits from an estimated \$100M-200M from the narcotics trade.
 - This money pays for the weapons, explosives and suicide bombers that kill civilians, Afghan security forces, ISAF and coalition forces.
- We consider the linkage between narcotics trafficking and the insurgency as a security and force protection threat and a legitimate target.
- We must break the major source of funding for the insurgents and do more to improve counter-narcotics efforts.
- There was some progress in counter-narcotics efforts in 2007-2008 and we are planning to support improved efforts by GIRoA in the year ahead.
 - The number of opium-free provinces increased by almost 50% (from 13 to 18).
 - 34 drug labs were destroyed in 2007; 64 so far in 2008.
 - The poppy cultivation in hectares dropped by 19% (from a historic high-water mark of 193,000 hectares to 157,000 hectares).
- New guidance from NATO directs ISAF to support the Afghanistan Government in taking action against drug labs and traffickers supporting the insurgents.
- While ISAF is not in the business of crop eradication, we are in the business of interdicting traffickers and closing down drug labs tied to the insurgency when asked by the Afghanistan Government.
- This will help counter the corrupting influence of drugs in Afghanistan and remove key funding support to the insurgents.
- ISAF is busy planning and conducting counter-narcotics operations. ISAF member nations are examining their respective legal and political authorities to determine how best to contribute to this effort.
- These additional authorities would not target the farmer, but would aim at breaking up the production of heroin and its undermining of governance, support to the insurgency, and debilitating effect on development.

Pakistan

- Winning in Afghanistan depends on addressing the militant sanctuaries across the border.
- We need an overall strategy for the Afghan/Pakistan border region.
 - Increasing numbers of foreign fighters are present in the tribal areas and supporting the insurgency
 - Al Qaeda, which remains a global threat, is active in the tribal areas and NWFP.
 - The Afghanistan-Pakistan border cannot be sealed off; however, improved mutual border security measures can be effective.
- Pakistan is achieving success in disrupting insurgent sanctuaries but more must be done along the length of the border.
- We welcome the ongoing Pakistan military operations in the tribal areas against extremist militants.
- ANSF and ISAF operations on the Afghan side of the border are complementary to those conducted by Pakistan's military in Bajaur and Mohmand Agencies.
- Sustained political will of the Pakistan Government and improved counterinsurgency capability of the Pakistan Army are keys to fighting the insurgents in the tribal areas.

Civilian Casualties

- Coalition Forces value Afghan lives and, unlike the insurgents, do all that they can to avoid civilian casualties.
- All credible allegations of casualties are promptly investigated with GIRoA representatives whenever possible.
- When we do inadvertently cause civilian casualties we take responsibility.
- COMISAF has issued a Tactical Directive to reduce the risk of civilian casualties and ensure respect for Afghan people, their customs and culture.
- Insurgent tactics deliberately cause civilian casualties. According to the Human Rights Watch Report (Apr 07):
 - "...insurgents have carried out increasing numbers of armed attacks that either target civilians or are launched without regard for the impact on civilian life..."
 - "...Many civilians have been specifically targeted by the insurgents, including aid workers, doctors, day labourers, mechanics, students, clerics, teachers and engineers..."
- Coalition Forces regularly provide emergency medical care for Afghan civilians caught up in Insurgent attacks

Governance

- ISAF is in support of the legitimately elected government of Afghanistan and UNAMA to extend good governance throughout Afghanistan.
 - Good Governance is required at every level: national, provincial, district, municipality and village.
 - ISAF partners with GIRoA at all these levels.

- One of the biggest problems is human capital. There are few qualified here to be mayors, police chiefs, run budgets, deliver services. Illiteracy is high. Poverty is high. Afghanistan is one of the poorest countries in the world (2008 CIA Fact Book – 211 of 229). The average life span is 45. Over 60% of the country is younger than 30 and this country has been in constant war for the past 30 years.
- Corruption is a major problem. It is a cancer that undermines public and international support, feeds criminality, undermines development aid, and provides direct and indirect support for the insurgency.
 - GIRoA must deal with it through the rule of law and help develop accountability at the local level through traditional shuras.
 - ISAF will expose it where it is identified.
- ISAF through its staff in Kabul, its Regional Commands, and the Provincial Reconstruction Teams is helping to build greater government capability to extend authority and improve GIRoA's ability to deliver services to the Afghan people.

Voter Registration / Elections

- Presidential / provincial elections in 2009 are important milestones marking democratic progress and the participation of Afghans in determining their own future.
- GIRoA and ANSF will lead the effort to ensure the people of Afghanistan have a safe and secure election. ISAF and UNAMA stand ready to provide any support requested.
 - The numbers registering to vote show that the Afghan people want their say in the democratic process.
 - Security for voter registration has been provided predominantly by the ANP, with support from the ANA; ISAF has provided some logistical support and supportive security operations.
- Successful registration sets the conditions for Elections in 2009 for Afghans to exercise their right to choose their government -- a choice not offered by the Insurgents.
- With 2 phases of 4 complete, GIRoA, ANSF and the Independent Electoral Commission have registered over 3 million voters accurately and securely; this is in addition to the over 10 million registered in 2004.
- ISAF stands beside the International Community in support of the GIRoA and the Afghan people to ensure the successful conduct of voter registration and elections.
 - Providing heightened security nationwide on election day to secure over 7000 voting sites will require a significant ANSF and ISAF commitment
 - To provide additional support to the ANSF and with the permission of the Afghan leadership, ISAF troop numbers will increase during the election period; this will ensure the fight against the insurgents is not diminished during the elections.
 - The end goal is to ensure to the best of our abilities a safe environment that allows for a free, fair, and legitimate election to occur.

Community Outreach Program

- Community Outreach Program is an Afghan led and Afghan decided initiative

- The initiative focuses on bringing security back to the local communities using traditional local leadership, knowledge and authorities. It is a bottom up program where local authorities agree to take responsibility for security in exchange for government support and services.
- The immediate benefit will be increased community-led security that coordinates with the ANP, ANA and ISAF forces in the area.
- Improved security from the community “public” guard force will lead to information sharing between villages and communities. This will build trust over time and connect to improved governance at the district and provincial level, will empower village leaders and build trust with the ANA, ANP and international forces.
- This is not a “tribal militia” program; it is a community (district) based program, organized bottom up and led by Afghans.

Reconciliation

- Ultimately, the solution in Afghanistan must be a political one. That political solution must be an Afghan one that is Afghan led.
- Virtually all successful counterinsurgencies have ended with some form of reconciliation between the parties in conflict.
- Reconciliation efforts are in the hands of the Afghan Government. We support those efforts if they contribute to better security and stability for Afghans.
- We're not going to run out of bad guys here that want to do bad things in Afghanistan. We support the idea that the government of Afghanistan will pursue reconciliation as an approach. We / ISAF will be there to provide support within our mandate
- We hope that many insurgents lay down their weapons and pledge support to the legal constitution of Afghanistan. The concept of reconciliation is likely to be very powerful at the local fighter level.
- ANSF and ISAF will deal with those irreconcilable insurgents who refuse to accept the Constitution and legitimate Government of Afghanistan.

Development

- Progress will follow stability, but it will take time.
- The insurgents are opposed to progress. The government builds – they destroy
- We are working with the GIRoA and the International Community to improve employment and economic opportunity along with improved services. We are working together with Afghans to build a better future for Afghanistan.
 - GIRoA, supported by ISAF and the International Community is building the dams, power stations and transmission lines that will bring electricity to local communities improving living conditions and opening up new opportunities for business.
 - GIRoA, supported by ISAF and the International Community is building the roads to connect communities, opening up new markets and economic opportunities.
- The new road through the Khowst-Gardez pass is a major project that will open up opportunities for Afghans and businesses across the region.

- GIRoA, supported by ISAF and the International Community is training teachers and healthcare workers, building schools and clinics.
- Development resources need to be distributed more evenly throughout the country so that the more secure areas of the north and west are able to realize economic progress. This will help deter future encroachment in these areas by the insurgency.

A Comprehensive and Integrated Approach

- GIRoA, UNAMA, ISAF and the international community work together to make progress in reconstruction and development, security and governance.
- We cannot be everywhere at once. ISAF works with GIRoA, UNAMA and other partners to agree where security efforts must be focused. Viable security allows for more reconstruction and development.
- Success won't be achieved overnight but the international community is in Afghanistan for the long haul.

OP TOLO / OP TOLO 2

- OP TOLO is a combined ISAF / ANSF operation, from planning through execution. MOD and MOI have been full participants since concept development and other partners are closely involved.
- OP TOLO aims at further separating insurgents from the population, extending GIRoA governance, and facilitating development.
- OP TOLO focuses ISAF efforts in conjunction with GIRoA, UNAMA, and coalition forces (CSTC-A, CJSOTF-A) to Shape, Clear, Hold, and Build in select focus areas where we can mass the appropriate resources and effects.
- Op TOLO 2 will consolidate successes from Op TOLO 1. Partners will use a comprehensive and integrated approach, committing to action plans for selected districts and staying for the long haul – until the community benefits from viable security and irreversible momentum on development and governance.