

Summit Declaration on Afghanistan

Issued by the Heads of State and Government participating in the meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Strasbourg / Kehl on 4 April 2009

In Afghanistan we are helping build security for the Afghan people, protecting our citizens and defending the values of freedom, democracy and human rights. Our common security is closely tied to the stability and security of Afghanistan and the region: an area of the world from where extremists planned attacks against civilian populations and democratic governments and continue to plot today. Through our UN-mandated mission, supported by our International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) partners, and working closely with the Afghan government, we remain committed for the long-run to supporting a democratic Afghanistan that does not become, once more, a base for terror attacks or a haven for violent extremism that destabilises the region and threatens the entire International Community. For this reason Afghanistan remains the Alliance's key priority.

At the Bucharest Summit last April, we set out our strategic vision based on four guiding principles: long-term commitment, Afghan leadership, a comprehensive approach and regional engagement. These principles remain the foundation of our political-military plan which we have today updated. Afghan ownership remains crucial. Success requires a stronger regional approach that involves all Afghanistan's neighbours and, as this is not a purely military endeavour, greater civilian resources.

We welcome the outcome of the International Conference on Afghanistan in the Netherlands on 31 March 2009, which demonstrated the re-energized commitment and focus of the international community. We share the emphasis placed on balancing civil and military efforts in further contributing to security and stability in Afghanistan.

We continue to make progress. The Government of Afghanistan is taking on greater responsibility and increasing its capabilities. Since Bucharest, we have transferred the lead on security in Kabul into Afghan hands. An ever more capable Afghan National Army now participates in over 80% of ISAF operations, taking the lead in half of them. We recognise the UN's coordinating role over international civilian activities and the need to further improve the coherence of all civilian and military efforts. UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), ISAF and the Afghan government are therefore implementing an Integrated Approach to focus our collective efforts. We are boosting our efforts to coordinate the contribution of Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRT) to build stability and further align their work with Afghan Government priorities. We have improved our measures, in concert with Afghan authorities, to prevent civilian casualties and to respond appropriately when they regrettably do occur. We will continue our efforts in this regard. We are increasing operations in support of Afghan Counter Narcotics activities.

We recognize that extremists in Pakistan especially in western areas and insurgency in Afghanistan undermine security and stability in both countries and that the problems are deeply intertwined. Since Bucharest, we have supported enhanced military-to-military coordination and improved high-level engagement with both governments. We have reinvigorated dialogue to address cross-border security. We welcome the continuation of the Ankara Process including the recent trilateral summit, and the G-8 initiative aimed at further intensifying cooperation and dialogue between the two countries.

Serious challenges remain. Despite significant improvements, insecurity, persistent corruption and the uneven provision of good governance need to be addressed together. We face a ruthless opponent that has a reckless disregard for human life and directly targets civilians. ISAF will do its part to help tackle these threats to Afghanistan's long-term stability. We will address urgently ISAF's remaining shortfalls and provide our commanders with the maximum possible operational flexibility for the use of our forces. We must continue, with the Afghan government, to counter extremist propaganda and better communicate our goals, challenges and achievements. As an expression of our commitment to Afghanistan, we have agreed to:

- establish a NATO Training Mission – Afghanistan (NTM-A) within ISAF to oversee higher level training for the Afghan National Army, and training and mentoring for the Afghan National Police, capitalising on existing structures and synergies in close coordination with the International Police Coordination Board.
We welcome current initiatives in support of the shared objective of training and mentoring the Afghan National Police. The European Gendarmerie Force (EGF) could play an active role in this regard;

- provide more trainers and mentors in support of the Afghan National Police. In this regard we underline the importance of other efforts in this field such as the training activities conducted by the European Union police mission in Afghanistan (EUPOL);
- assist and support the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) secure the upcoming electoral process by temporarily deploying the necessary election support forces;
- provide operational mentoring and liaison teams (OMLT) in support of the progressive enlargement of the Afghan National Army to its current target of 134,000;
- expand the role of the Afghan National Army Trust Fund to include sustainment costs. We welcome initial contributions offered and encourage new contributions from the International Community;
- further develop the evolving long term relationship between NATO and Afghanistan;
- encourage and support the strengthening of Afghan and Pakistani government cooperation; and build a broader political and practical relationship between NATO and Pakistan;
- further support the Government of Afghanistan and the UN in the development of the Integrated Approach to strengthen synchronised civil-military efforts across Afghanistan;
- encourage all nations to contribute to the UN election support fund; and
- further develop our engagement with all Afghanistan's neighbours in support of long term regional security and good relations.

The broader international community and the Afghan government must also play their roles in meeting the challenges as part of a genuine comprehensive approach. In this regard, we welcome the renewal of UNAMA's mandate. Looking ahead, presidential and provincial council electoral processes must ensure that every Afghan vote counts and that the elections deliver the population the leadership of their choosing. To help the Government expand its reach and effectiveness, greater civilian assistance is required. Greater and coordinated efforts, including at the provincial and district level, are needed to accelerate the development of Afghan capacity to deliver justice, basic services and employment opportunities, especially in the agricultural sector, for ordinary Afghans. Implementation of anti-corruption measures must be enhanced. We stress the importance of the protection of women's rights. The broader International Community should continue to work with the Government of Afghanistan to support Afghan National Development priorities and Afghan-led efforts to reconcile with those who renounce violence, accept the Constitution, and have no links to Al-Qaeda.

We pay tribute to those who have lost their lives or been injured working for Afghanistan and for our own security. We salute the courage and dedication of the Afghan people and the tens of thousands of men and women, military and civilian from NATO and ISAF partner nations and the broader International Community supporting this important endeavour. Our mission is strengthened by the important contribution of all ISAF nations. To achieve our goals, we will work with Afghanistan and its people in true and long-term partnership. As Afghan capacity increases, our part in providing security will evolve to focus increasingly on mentoring and training. We remain resolute in our commitment to help the Afghan people build a better future.