

Remarks As Delivered: MOU Ceremony
General John R Allen
AFG Ministry of Foreign Affairs
08 April 2012

Good afternoon. It is my honor to be here today with Minister Wardak, Minister Rasool, Dr Spanta, and Deputy NDS Director Esmudin — great leaders of the Afghan nation with whom my colleague AMB Ryan Crocker and I have worked so closely to forge this important Memorandum of Understanding.

The MOU that we will sign today marks the second major milestone in Afghan sovereignty in less than 30 days, along with the Detentions MOU that Minister Wardak and I signed just last month.

Together, these two Memorandums of Understanding mean that Afghan forces, not foreign forces, are now in the lead for two of the most critical aspects of maintaining Afghan security: capturing the terrorists that threaten innocent Afghan civilians and keeping those terrorists behind bars where they belong.

This MOU means that special operations will continue to be conducted, with full respect for Afghan law and the Afghan constitution.

The people of Afghanistan can be very proud to know that their special operations forces have taken the lead for the conduct of CT operations in Afghanistan. We and our Afghan partners have worked hard to make this happen as soon as possible, in keeping with the request of the Loya Jirga in November.

Now, I have seen the Afghan Special Forces in action. I have seen their courage. I have seen their capabilities and their commitment. I can tell you first-hand that Afghanistan is well on the way to fielding the very finest special operations forces in the region. Those who would set Afghanistan back to the darkness of the 1990s must know that the Afghan National Security Forces and Afghan special operators will not allow this to happen.

This is also a landmark day for the rule of law in Afghanistan. With this Memorandum of Understanding, the US has not only formalized the Afghan special forces' lead in special operations missions, but has also agreed to ensure that those missions are conducted in a manner fully consistent with the Afghan constitution and Afghan laws. This means that the Afghan security forces — operating under Afghan law — will now be responsible for capturing and detaining the terrorists who try to kill and wound the innocent people of Afghanistan every day. And Afghan saranwahl and Afghan judges will prosecute and try these terrorists in accordance with the rule of law.

The US is fully committed to an enduring strategic partnership with Afghanistan... and now that we have concluded these two critically important MOUs – one on detentions and one on special operations – we are ready to look forward to a successful summit in Chicago in the wake of the signing of the Strategic Partnership.

It is my distinct pleasure today to honor the great strides that our Afghan partners are making, to affirm the strength of the US-Afghan relationship, and to recognize the continued advancement of sovereignty for the nation and people of Afghanistan.

I applaud the efforts of President Karzai, Minister Wardak, Dr Spanta, Director Nabil, Deputy Foreign Minister Ludin, and all the other brave, noble, and wise leaders in this Government who give so much of themselves in service to the great people of Afghanistan.

Today, we are one step closer to the establishment of the US-Afghan Strategic Partnership. Most importantly, today we are one step closer to our shared goal and vision of a secure and sovereign Afghanistan. Together, we will realize that vision. Thank you.