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Salaam-a aleikum. Welcome to all of you.

I would first like to offer my condolences to the families of the ISAF troops that we lost this week to a helicopter crash and from a shooting by an Afghan National Army soldier. Investigations into both incidents are still ongoing. We should all be reminded of the dangers men and women face as they serve Afghanistan and their country, coalition and Afghan alike, and we should be grateful for their service.

I would like to focus today on what ISAF has accomplished in the past year here. 2011 was a remarkably successful year for Afghan Security Forces and ISAF in terms of offensive operations against insurgents in Afghanistan and the remarkable improvements in ANSF capacity development. Our goals were to increase Afghan lead of security responsibilities, target key insurgent leaders, retain and expand secure areas, and help ANSF earn the support of the people through improved security capacity and capability.

In the North, Afghan and ISAF forces secured key terrain and created improved security conditions in Kunduz and Baghlan specifically through increased freedom

of movement, between the Shir Khan Border Crossing and Highway One. Additionally, we have made significant security gains in Maimanah, Bala Murghab and Qal'Ve Now districts with ANSF forces clearly leading security progress in those areas.

In the central-region we have seen Kabul become a thriving commercial capital, able to absorb and respond to spectacular attempts to disrupt security with resolute response to insurgent attacks, leaving the insurgents largely in a state of failure. Kabul City security is clearly under the professional control of the ANSF, clearly demonstrated both in the response to the attack on a few coalition installations in September and most recently during the remarkably well-protected Loya Jirga as well as the reopening of Ghazni Stadium in Kabul. Coalition forces have made additional security gains in Logar, eastern Wardak provinces and the Sarobi district.

In the East, ANSF and coalition forces have significantly disrupted the Haqqani Network through Operations Shamshir and Knife Edge, where coalition forces captured or eliminated over 500 insurgent leaders and fighters last fall.

The border region remains a key focus for ISAF and the ANSF, and we will continue to apply maximum pressure to eliminate insurgent networks and disrupt their logistical capabilities throughout the winter months into the spring.

In the South, coalition forces and ANSF have made considerable advances in terms of securing Kandahar and its environs, like Maiwand. The success has been

so great that insurgents have largely lost control of the area and now rely on IEDs as their primary method of attack, while local Afghan government and security forces created the conditions for Afghans to exert control over many of the major routes and towns in the south.

In the Southwest, coalition forces with ANSF in the lead have reopened Route 611 all the way to Kajaki Dam, increasing the flow of commerce and freedom of movement to an area that was once the core of the Taliban Insurgency.

In terms of local security development, the ANA is now almost 180,000 strong, and the ANP has nearly 144,000 men and women in uniform, serving local communities. In 2011, there were over 175,000 teachers in Afghanistan as compared to only 20,000 in 2002. There are over 10,000 km of paved roads now in Afghanistan with over 80% of the population making use of them. In Afghanistan over 8 million children are in school as compared to less than one million in 2002. By spring of 2012, security responsibilities for over 50% of Afghanistan will be under Afghan control, and we have every expectation that this will increase to 66 percent in the very near future.

2011 was also an outstanding year in narcotics seizures in Afghanistan. Over 160,500 kg of poppy seed, 97,975 kg of opium, 8,823 kg of heroin, 61,168 kg of marijuana, and 148,875 kg of hashish was seized during counter narcotic operations in Afghanistan last year.

The insurgents had a tough year. They lost key ground and resources in 2011. They were not able to accomplish any of their stated goals for Afghanistan, whilst their leadership continues to hide across the border in Pakistan. One thing that is crystal clear is that insurgent leaders have lost much ability to command and control their troops. They continue to use IEDs, which often harm Afghan adults and children despite orders from Mullah Omar to quit harming civilians.

2012 is off to a very rough start for the insurgency, and the outlook continues to be bright for the Afghan Security Forces and ISAF in their combined fight against the enemies of the Afghan people.

Is there a chance we will still see attempts at notable events by the insurgency to grab instant media attention?

Yes, that possibility still exists, but these acts of desperation should not fool anyone. I believe the insurgency is starting to understand that they cannot continue their terrorists' acts of the past against the Afghan people and the only clear solution is reintegration into a peaceful Afghan society. This year offers an opportunity to turn a corner and I hope, that when we will look back at 2012, we will continue to see incredible progress for the people of this proud nation on their path to a well deserved peace.