



OFFICE OF THE NATO SENIOR CIVILIAN REPRESENTATIVE TO AFGHANISTAN

Remarks of NATO SCR Spokesman

24 January 2012

I'd like to start this morning by repeating a few sentences from the NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen from Friday.

The Secretary General said that every day 130,000 ISAF troops from 50 nations fight and train with over 300,000 Afghan soldiers.

Across Afghanistan Afghan and ISAF soldiers live together, training and fighting as comrades with a shared goal of achieving peace and stability in Afghanistan.

Such tragic incidents like the murder of French soldiers last week will not be allowed to distort the high level of trust that exists between professional soldiers whether ISAF or Afghan National Security Forces.

NATO and Afghanistan have the same goal - An Afghanistan that is responsible for its own security.

That is what Afghans want and NATO remains committed to helping Afghans achieve that goal.

The NATO Senior Civilian Representative in Afghanistan, Ambassador Simon Gass was in London, Brussels and Berlin last week for a series of high level meetings.

In London Ambassador Gass presented a speech at a major British Defence and Security studies centre.

Ambassador Gass pointed out that the surge in forces in the last two years has allowed for big improvements in security in many parts of Afghanistan.

The insurgency has been rolled back in some key parts of the country, including in traditional Taliban heartlands, particularly in Helmand and in Kandahar.

That is because ISAF and the Afghan National Security Forces have a much better grip on security in those areas.

Another critical achievement has been the training and equipping of the Afghan National Army and the Afghan National Police.

Ambassador Gass said the progress in the Afghan National Security Forces can be measured in terms of quantity and quality, with more and more operations being led by Afghan forces.

This process continues with 70 per cent of training now being provided by Afghans themselves, which shows that transition is achievable.

As you know transition is well underway and soon it is expected that about 50 per cent of Afghans will live in areas under the control of their own National Security Forces.

That is a significant success says Ambassador Gass.

The Ambassador is confident that support for Afghanistan will be maintained, even in the light of the current, international economic problems.

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