



HEADQUARTERS
International Security Assistance Force/
United States Forces-Afghanistan
Kabul, Afghanistan
APO AE 09356



COMISAF/CDR USFOR-A

18 July 2011

To the Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines, Coast Guardsmen, and Civilians of NATO's International Security Assistance Force (ISAF):

It is my sincere honor and privilege to serve alongside you and our Afghan partners as we work together to secure Afghanistan's future and eliminate violent extremists throughout this land. Each of you has performed courageously under the most challenging conditions while achieving significant gains in thwarting the momentum of a resilient and determined, but overconfident enemy. While many have sacrificed to bring us to this point, there is still much more to do.

As your Commander, I have four broad priorities to guide our unified action as we begin our service together:

We will continue the momentum of our campaign by relentlessly pressuring the enemy. We will accelerate our efforts to protect the population and to attack and degrade insurgent networks. As we support the overall effort, we will continue to capture and kill the enemy and remove him from the field of battle through reintegration. We will continue to coordinate and employ our forces in direct attacks that further degrade insurgent networks. Through complementary operations, we will promote emerging opportunities for village stability operations and establishment of the Afghan Local Police. Reintegration is a logical outcome in any counterinsurgency campaign and will flow directly from unrelenting pressure on the insurgency writ large. Using Afghan mechanisms to support reintegration, we will seek every opportunity to permit insurgents to cease fighting and join the peace process. Working in concert with our civilian partners, we will seek to help build capacity for governance, economic development, and support the re-emergence of the rule of law. Our partnership with the NATO Senior Civilian Representative, embassies, and the United Nations should maintain a unity of effort and will be crucial to the outcomes of these endeavors.

We will accelerate the tremendous work of the NATO Training Mission-Afghanistan (NTM-A) and the ISAF Joint Command (IJC) in the continued development and fielding of the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF). In the field, ANSF formations are growing in size and in confidence. Afghans are fighting for their country, and we must facilitate this everywhere we can, seeking opportunities for Afghan leadership to step forward in their institutions and in the field. Moving the ANSF to the lead at every level is crucial to success. We know our recruiting, development, and fielding plans remain sound, and in the field, the ANSF want to fight for their Afghanistan. As time goes on, we will adapt our partnership and mentorship arrangements. The requirement for trainers and advisors will continue to grow in importance and evolve over time.

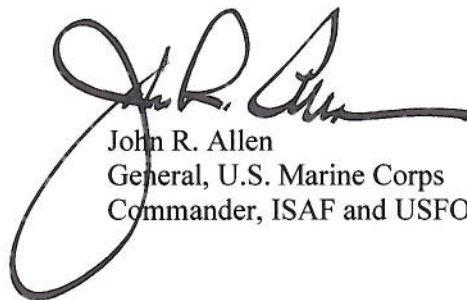
We will coordinate and cooperate closely with our Afghan partners—both government and security forces—to set the conditions to support the process of Transition. In a very real sense, ISAF and the ANSF will be the "covering force" for successful completion of the Transition process, which has already begun. When we have completed the work of this campaign, Afghans will be in the lead in security across the country, securing the final phase of Transition in 2014. They will be postured not only to prevent the return of extremism and terrorism in Afghanistan, but also to achieve Afghanistan's long-term security requirements. Taking responsibility for their population and territory is a positive and complex change for the Afghans, and support of their efforts will be required.

We will remain an innovative, agile, and responsive security force as the campaign evolves. We should constantly review and assess our progress by challenging previous assumptions, measuring progress, and adapting our campaign and force to confront an ever-changing environment. Thus, we will be a learning organization. We must all assess our individual actions to ensure we are dedicating our full energy and strength to this campaign. Now is the time for us to be "all in" as we support the prosecution of the campaign, the development and fielding of the ANSF, and the process of Transition. To that end, we must be good stewards of the resources our respective nations have entrusted to us to achieve our mission. Our actions must be carefully considered to address waste, corruption, and any inefficient business practices that inadvertently undermine ongoing work to strengthen Afghan institutions. This is the responsibility of every member of ISAF.

The Afghan people welcomed ISAF and its members into this ancient and historic land ten years ago to help them remove a ruthless and implacable enemy while promoting conditions for a stable and peaceful future. Indeed, we are here to protect the population as we subdue the insurgency, and I expect every member of ISAF to be seized with the intent to eliminate civilian casualties caused by ISAF. I further expect all members of ISAF to read, understand, and comply with the contents of the Tactical Directive, Tactical Driving Directive, and other such directives currently in effect.

Without question, tough days remain, and the challenges will be many. At the end of the day, I take heart in the determination and endurance of the free men and women of the forty-nine nations of ISAF, who stand shoulder to shoulder—Shohna ba Shohna—with our Afghan partners to see this great endeavor through to its successful completion. With courage and honor, together we will prevail.

*It will be my
honor to serve with
you all.*



John R. Allen
General, U.S. Marine Corps
Commander, ISAF and USFOR-A