



Afghanistan Policy Page

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A one-page brief from the [Afghanistan Congressional Communications Hub](#) on a major issue concerning U.S. policy and engagement in Afghanistan.

Key Points from DOD News Briefing with Gen. McChrystal and Ambassador Sedwill from Afghanistan (17th March 2010)

Gen. Stanley A. McChrystal is Commander, International Security Assistance Force (ISAF). Ambassador Mark Sedwill (UK) is NATO Representative in Afghanistan. All points are from Gen. McChrystal unless otherwise stated.

Training Afghan Security Forces

- There's a shortage of trainers. And we have been very unequivocal in our statement of that, both to Washington, D.C., and of course, more appropriately, to NATO. **We think that is a critical component of the development of the force.** The bottom line is, for us to grow quality trainees - produce quality trainees at the rate we want - we need additional trainers.
- Given the fact we've set ourselves a high bar in terms of growing the Afghan national security forces and having them take ownership of this fight rapidly, I think **it's important that I stress we should fully resource the trainer requirement.**

The Role of Afghans

- The longer-term phases [of the campaign], which are the hold and build that we call it...is where we've got to establish credible Afghan governance, and that means **the government of Afghanistan has got to do that** is a significant task in front of us...it's going to be a long process.
- We need to find out what [the Afghan people] think the right answer is and help shape that, because they will do the shaping. This won't be -- **the political part won't physically be shaped by the coalition...**We will help support the government, as they shape a future power structure there that is acceptable to the people. And that takes away one of the major reasons why people would support the insurgency.

July 2011 Deadline

- President Obama made it clear to me that there is going to be a point in time in which he expects to direct us to reduce forces. **I anticipate that will be the decision, but the scope will and the rate will be based upon conditions.** I believe that at that point we will have grown Afghan national security forces enough so that we can, instead of showing decreasing security for Afghans, they will still see increasing security where they are and progress around the country.
- **There is a perception challenge, because everybody wants to define that [deadline] announcement differently,** but that's how I view it, and that's how we are communicating that to our Afghan partners.

Afghan Needs and Expectations

- After eight years, [Afghans I spoke to] thought that they had not received much from their own government, and they thought they had not received much from what they expected the coalition to provide either....there were frustrations that we all know about...**but instead of saying that they were going to join the insurgency over it, they looked us in the eye and they said, "You have to help fix it."**
- **It's the real basic functions of government that people expect.** They want to see schools and hospitals, but that isn't what in the end will turn their allegiance from being willing to accept Taliban governance and preferring to accept the legitimate forces of Afghanistan. **Those boil down to security and justice.** (Amb. Sedwill).
- The most important thing is to understand that before we do a military operation in Afghanistan, **we really have got to get the consent of the people** who are going to be [sic] affected by that operation...we've got to operate in a way that they find acceptable.

Civilian Components Critical

- I just urge you to remember the complexity of this campaign. We've tended to focus on the military elements of it, but **the military elements of it are not going to deliver success here unless we get the political elements right** and indeed the other part of it, the development of governance and so on...I urge you, as you think about this campaign...you set it into context, and that we give as much emphasis [to those issues] -- in explaining this to the American people and to people elsewhere. (Amb. Sedwill)

Operations in Kandahar

- We are going to increase security in the area of Kandahar City and the districts that are important to Kandahar City...that process has already begun...It's going to involve a number of military things to increase security, along with police, but **it will also involve a lot of political activities.**
- **What you are going to see in the months ahead is a number of activities to shape the political relationships...**Kandahar is a complex grouping of tribes and then other relationships that define how power is shared....
- **So one of the things we'll be doing in the shaping is working with political leaders to try to get an outcome that makes sense. That would then be supported by security operations,** and that will, in some cases, mean increased partnering inside the city with the Afghan National Police.

Intelligence Needs

- [Gen. Flynn's report] was absolutely on target. And it's not a case of us not getting enough intelligence...in many cases, commanders haven't been asking for the right intelligence...**we need to recalibrate and refocus our effort so that we really understand the environment** in which the insurgents operate.

Reconciliation and Reintegration

- We are seeing indicators [of more Taliban willingness to take part]. We are hearing talk, but in many cases, it's tough to separate what is real and what is supposition...the arrest of Mullah Baradar seems to have shaken the confidence of some of the Afghan Taliban leadership...I'm not comfortable that they have stated their position either as a group or individually clearly yet, but **we certainly see more than I have ever seen before.**
- This is going to be a **real poker game** with these guys over the next few months. (Amb. Sedwill)

Importance of Roads and Transport

- We need to have freedom of movement, but not just for coalition forces. It's for Afghans, for their own sense of security and for all the things that make life normal. **If we can't get that, then they will have a difficult time believing their government can secure them overall.**

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