

U.S. Central Command

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Remarks by GEN David Petraeus

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INTRODUCTION

Well, good afternoon. Madame, Messieurs, Bonjour. And merci beaucoup for that warm welcome. It's great to be back in Canada and it's a true privilege to be able to address you today in the capital of "The True North Strong and Free" – and to do so during the Centennial Year of the great Canadian Navy!

On that note, in fact, I should highlight our appreciation that the Canadian Naval Task Force has been in the Gulf continuously since 9/11. Indeed, I'm told that nearly every major ship in the Canadian Navy has deployed to the Gulf at least one time or another during that period. So, again, to all our shipmates associated with the Maritime Command, happy anniversary and well done!

General Evraire, thanks for such a kind introduction and for adding this special session to the program. Much more importantly, thank you for all that you did during your more than four decades in uniform, and for all that you have done since taking the final pass in review, especially at the helm of the Canadian Defence Associations. Well done! Thanks for all of that, we appreciate it. And it is great to see the sheikhs of all the Association tribes here with us this afternoon as well.

General Natynczyk, Walt, it's great to see you again. [SALUTATIONS] I should note to the audience, by the way, Walt, that I only recently found out about your previous life as a hard-hitting Rugby football player and as a Defensive End in Canadian Football. I now know where you got your reputation for strength and toughness -- to say nothing of your ability to punch well above your weight class. Those are attributes that have served you, and by extension the Canadian Forces, very well indeed. And it's been great to have you as a partner in all that we've done in recent years. Thanks, mon ami!

In fact, having served with your forces in Haiti, in the Balkans, and in various locations in the Central Command Area of Responsibility, and even having a few intrepid souls with us in Iraq, I can affirm the enormous respect that your fellow North Americans have for those who wear the uniform of your country. Indeed, Canada is always among the handful of countries with which those of us in the US military most want to soldier when the going is tough. For those of us who wear my country's uniform feel a very special

kinship for those who wear your country's uniform. In fact, I thought I'd show you the display that sits behind my desk at CENTCOM HQs in Tampa – as you can see, it's your country's flag with a plaque on it that reads, "Presented by Commander, Canadian Expeditionary Force Command to COMUSCENTCOM, Flown at Strong Point Balanday, Afghanistan, 'To those with whom we share a battlefield'." I thank you for all that this plaque represents and, I can assure you, what it represents means a great deal to all of us.

Well, again, it's an honor to be with you today and wonderful to see so many distinguished guests in the audience. Indeed, I'd be remiss if I didn't also recognize a few others here today, including Ambassador David Jacobson, our man in Ottawa and the kind of intrepid Ambassador who, of course, traveled to Afghanistan with General Natynczyk over Christmas to see first hand our forces working together; LGEN Marc Lessard, who is, of course, guiding the Canadian Expeditionary Forces Command with a steady hand and an impressive vision; and LGEN Andrew Leslie, a longtime partner and the Chief of your Land Forces Staff. To each of you, the other Chiefs, and to all the other distinguished Ambassadors, panelists and guests here, my thanks for a very warm reception and this opportunity to address you.

But, before going further, I obviously have to congratulate your country on hosting yet another successful Winter Olympics and on winning more than a few gold medals in the process. The truth is, your Olympic Team embarked on a very impressive and record-setting Gold Rush that clearly was of even greater significance than that earlier Gold Rush that took place in the Yukon! On that score, the Canadian women's team was especially impressive, with gold in hockey and a number of other events. And, needless to say, we all watched with considerable emotion when, in the midst of a family tragedy, your Joannie Rochette competed with such grace in ice skating to win a medal for Canada and, in so doing, delivered joy to all of those who watched her and to those who have rallied behind her and her family at a very difficult time.

Your men's team had an impressive number of medalists as well, capping it all off with that truly thrilling, furious, hockey game – albeit one that was a good bit more thrilling in the end for those up here than it was for your fellow North Americans to your south. But, I do I want to assure you that I support and applaud the many accomplishments of your Olympic team...and, in fact, I brought my Canadian jersey along to prove it! This was given to me, by the way, by the then Canadian Liaison Officer to the Combined Arms Center at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, the great Colonel Rob Kearney, an individual who represented your country in that position exceedingly well.

Again, congratulations on hosting the Olympics in such impressive fashion, and well done in passing off the torch with such style during Sunday's closing ceremonies.

[SALUTATIONS]

Well, the real reason I'm here this morning, besides noting how privileged our troopers feel to serve alongside yours, is to discuss the work that is being done in the place

where we are most significantly serving together, that being, of course, in Afghanistan. Specifically, I'd like to discuss the changes made there over the course of the past year in a variety of areas – and to explain what we hope to achieve over the course of this year and into 2011. Because ISAF spent the past year in Afghanistan trying to get the “inputs” right, making important changes and adjustments in four key areas – organizational structures, people, concepts, and resources – each of which I'll address in turn.

It is these inputs, of course, that have enabled the recent conduct of the operations in Central Helmand Province, the initial operation of COMISAF's campaign plan for the next 12 to 18 months – all as part of a civilian-military campaign plan that was one of the achievements of the past year.

STRATEGIC CONTEXT

Let me set the stage by recalling briefly the situation in Afghanistan in recent years. Soon after the attacks on 9/11, of course, an international coalition including the United States and Canada conducted an impressive campaign to defeat the Taliban, Al Qaeda, and other associated extremist groups in Afghanistan. In the years that followed, however, members of the Taliban and the other extremist elements gradually reconnected, re-established the sanctuaries and infrastructure in Afghanistan and the border regions with Pakistan, and rebuilt the structures necessary to communicate, plan, and carry out operations. And for what it's worth, the cover story in the 5 October 2009 issue of Newsweek magazine explains what took place during that period better than any other description I've seen.

As a result of the reestablishment of the Taliban and the other elements of the so-called extremist syndicate, and despite continued achievements in certain areas by ISAF and the Afghan government, we have seen increasing violence in many areas of the country in the past three years, in particular. Indeed, the numbers of attacks reached record highs in the peak-fighting season in late summer and fall last year, particularly during the period around last fall's elections. Rising levels of violence, in turn, undermined the capacity of the Afghan government as it attempted to overcome varying degrees of corruption, an inability to provide adequate basic services for the people, and the general challenges in terms of the human capital needed to establish the kind of governance that can achieve legitimacy in the eyes of the Afghan people – though I hasten to note that there are many wonderful Afghan leaders who demonstrate impressive character, courage, and resolve in seeking to provide a better life for their fellow Afghan citizens – and we're privileged to work with many of those.

For many of us, the reemergence of the Taliban and other insurgent groups and the necessity to reverse the downward trend in security underscored the need for ISAF to posture for a robust, sustained, comprehensive civil-military counterinsurgency campaign. Indeed, preventing transnational extremists from reestablishing sanctuaries in Afghanistan requires more than just counter-terrorism forces, though those are important elements of the overall campaign. It also requires that we increase the levels

of security for the Afghan people, help increase the size and capability of the Afghan security forces, support the growth of Afghan governance, help create basic economic opportunity for Afghan citizens, support reintegration of reconcilables, help replace the illegal narcotics industry that finances the insurgency with licit activities, and so on.

Now, achieving progress in each of these areas depends on getting the inputs right -- putting in place the right organizations, bringing in the right people to lead them, developing the right concepts, and supporting the effort with an adequate level of resources. And it is the actions taken in those four areas that I'd like to describe to you this afternoon.

ORGANIZATIONS

First, as I said, the structural, the organizational piece.

During our operations in Iraq, we learned what structures and organizations are needed to carry out a comprehensive civil-military campaign. This included the capabilities for the planning and conduct of an operational-level campaign plan, for targeting of the insurgents' resources and finances, for supporting the development of the rule of law, for ministerial capacity building, for border coordination, for information operations and strategic communications, for the fusion of intelligence, and for the conduct of reintegration of reconcilable elements of the insurgency.

And over the past year ISAF has set about to ensure similar structures and organizations are in place in Afghanistan. This began, in fact, by ensuring the ISAF Commander was dual-hatted as both a NATO Commander and the commander of U.S. forces -- which we was not initially -- and thereby ensuring unity of effort between ISAF and OEF forces and operations, something we have now achieved. In the past year, as well, we -- and when I say we, I mean the entire coalition -- we helped establish the ISAF Joint Command (IJC), a 3-star headquarters responsible for planning and executing the operational level of the counterinsurgency campaign -- a capability which, frankly, was long overdue in Afghanistan and which was a big part of our effort in Iraq, especially during the surge. We established a Joint Task Force to help develop rule of law capacity within the Afghan government. We developed a Force Reconciliation and Integration Cell within the ISAF headquarters that supports the reintegration and reconciliation processes at various levels. And we also established an interagency threat finance cell, intelligence fusion cells, and a full-fledged Joint Information Operations Task Force to conduct the kind of information operations campaign necessary in an endeavor like the one on which we're embarked in Afghanistan.

We also, of course, created the NATO Training Mission-Afghanistan and made other command and control adjustments, such as the integration of mentoring teams under battle space commanders. And the restructuring of the US Army and Marine Corps brigades has gradually and now greatly improved our ability to train, advise, and assist Afghan security forces as well.

In short, we have developed the full complement of structures necessary to conduct a complex counterinsurgency campaign in Afghanistan. This is already enabling the conduct of the operations recently begun in Helmand and it will also enable the conduct of follow-on operations elsewhere in southern Afghanistan and throughout Afghanistan writ large, all, of course, in concert with various civilian partners and our Afghan counterparts.

PEOPLE

While it was imperative to put in place the right organizations, we also needed the right people to be in charge of them. And, as a result of the changes made over the course of the past year, we now have an all-star team of the finest, most talented military and civilian officials in critical leadership positions in Afghanistan.

On the military side, much has already been said of the leadership qualities of the ISAF Commander, General Stan McChrystal. Stan is, of course, the NATO and USFOR-A commander – and someone many of us have known for years, particularly in his role as the commander of the Joint Special Operations Command. He is an exceptional officer who brings to our endeavor an enormous amount of experience in Afghanistan and the benefit of a number of lessons learned in Iraq, as well, in addition to extraordinary energy, vision, drive, professional competence, and sheer leadership ability.

Indeed, all of the nations involved in ISAF operations have sent their most talented military officers to Afghanistan. To name a few more from the United States, the great General Dave Rodriguez oversees operational-level responsibilities at the helm of the ISAF Joint Headquarters, relieving Stan of many of the day-to-day operational responsibilities that used to be performed by COMISAF and ISAF HQs. And right on down the line, from VADM Robert Harward, who leads JTF-435 to promote the rule of law, to LTG Bill Caldwell, who leads NATO Training Mission-Afghanistan, to RADM Greg Smith, who leads the Joint Information Operations Task Force, the quality of leaders heading key formations is absolutely superb. I note with great appreciation, as well, the strength of the Canadian leaders serving in Afghanistan, including Major General Michael Ward, who is serving as LTG Caldwell's Deputy Commander for Police, and Brigadier General Paul Wynnyk (WIN-ik) serving as Assistant Commanding General for Afghan Army Development, among many others who wear the Canadian flag with justifiable pride on their shoulder.

The diplomatic counterparts in Afghanistan are equally impressive. NATO and the UN just recently appointed Ambassador Mark Sedwill as the NATO Senior Civilian Representative and Steffan de Mistura as the United Nations Special Representative of the Secretary General, someone well known to many of us from his time in Iraq. For the United States, Ambassador Richard Holbrooke, the Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan helps coordinate a regional approach to Afghanistan and Pakistan with Ambassadors Karl Eikenberry and Anne Patterson in Kabul and Islamabad, respectively, and they are all working closely together with your own Ambassador to Afghanistan William Crosbie, and your High Commissioner to Pakistan

Randolph Mank, needless to say, as well as with your Ms Greta Bossenmaier, your Deputy Minister and Afghanistan Task Force lead.

Each of these leaders has experience in the region and the kind of operational experience that is necessary to carry out operations there. And, thus the decisions that are made in Afghanistan are informed by a deep understanding of counterinsurgency principles, a growing, granular understanding of the situation on the ground, and increasingly strong relationships with Afghan leaders at all levels, from local tribal leaders to ministers at the highest levels of the Afghan government. Notable in this respect has been the ability of Canadian soldiers and civilians to adapt to the evolving challenges in Kandahar, and the extent to which these troopers have worked to maintain the goodwill of the Afghan people. Indeed, a number of your troopers have made multiple deployments to the same districts and this has been invaluable to the efforts there, and it is yet another example of the importance of continuity and key people to the mission in Afghanistan.

CONCEPTS AND APPROACH

Well, with the appropriate organizations in place and the best people we have in charge of them, the next task was getting the overarching concepts and plans right.

On the military side, General McChrystal and the ISAF team have now published superb counterinsurgency guidance, have pushed to achieve greater unity of effort among all elements, civil as well as military, aggressively pursued the mission of partnering with the Afghan security forces, and issued appropriate guidance on the use of close air support and indirect fires, as well as on reintegration, joint night raids, and even tactical driving. In addition, General McChrystal has taken an innovative and effective approach to local security initiatives intended to empower Afghans to play a role in securing their own towns and villages.

Those of us at CENTCOM and those in the Pentagon and elsewhere around the world of contributing nations have worked hard to enable General McChrystal's efforts to clarify operational control lines and to achieve greater unity of effort. In fact, this past week, I ordered, on the U.S. side – after considerable discussion with “tribes” within the U.S. Department of Defense – that all U.S. forces, less a handful, be placed under General McChrystal's operational, not just tactical, control and preparing to transfer authority of all those forces to NATO, as well. Indeed, this is a significant development; and, for what it's worth, it will provide General McChrystal authorities that I never had as the commander in Iraq – though I wished I had them – and that his predecessors never had in Afghanistan either.

In tandem with the military side, there is, of course, an important civil component to implementing counterinsurgency concepts, as well. Together, ISAF and its civilian partners have produced and refined a Civil-Military Campaign Plan designed to bring in civilians alongside the security forces – not sequentially, as sometimes is the case, but as close as possible on the heels of military operations to help establish greater security

for the people. In this way, everyone works together in an integrated structure to achieve the kind of cooperation and fusion that is necessary to conduct comprehensive civil-military operations.

And that is, of course, exactly what is required in a this kind of campaign. Thus we are not just conducting so-called “kinetic” operations, we are also carrying out nonkinetic activities to help our Afghan partners foster reintegration of reconcilable elements of the insurgency, build governmental capacity, promote economic development, and support all-important anti-corruption, rule of law, and community outreach programs.

RESOURCES

Now, to enable the organizations, leaders, and strategies put in place over the past year, there was also a need for additional resources. And as a result of various national decisions, we are now seeing those resources beginning to flow. The additional U.S. and coalition military and civilian forces, resources, and funding that were committed by President Obama and the other NATO and non-NATO leaders will enable us to carry out the concepts I just described more effectively and more rapidly than we otherwise would have been able to do.

In terms of American forces, there are now some 75,000 US troopers on the ground in Afghanistan, with some of them having recently launched the Central Helmand operation with our UK, Canadian, and Afghan partners among others to wrest the initiative from the Taliban there. And more US and NATO forces are deploying every day.

We might recall that, at the start of 2009, we had 30,000 U.S. troopers on the ground. By the end of 2009, with reinforcements ordered first by President Bush before he left office and then by President Obama after he took office, we had about 68,000 troopers in Afghanistan. Now, there are 30,000 more U.S. forces flowing to Afghanistan, with nearly 6,000 of these additional troops already operating in country, and we anticipate that all those required by the end of August – about 99 percent of that 30,000 – will be in place by then.

As important, of course, are the commitments from other NATO and coalition partners of some 9,000 more troopers, bringing the number of non-U.S. forces in Afghanistan to over 40,000 when they are all deployed – a considerable force, needless to say. As all of you know very well, some 2,800 of these troopers are Canadian forces deployed in the heart of Regional Command-South, helping to secure and stabilize Kandahar province and to develop the ANSF, local governance, and ultimately a better future for the Kandaharis.

The most critical elements for the long term, though, are those that comprise the Afghan security forces. And we’re seeing further growth and professionalization of the Afghan National Army and Police. Coalition and Afghan leaders have authorized an additional 100,000 Afghan national security force members between now and the fall of 2011, and

Afghan leaders are also taking steps to improve the quality of those forces as well as increasing their quantity, with ISAF elements helping through considerably augmented partnering, training, and recruiting, though it is clear that there are still shortfalls in the numbers of partner and advisor elements and trainers, and I know that NATO authorities are working on addressing those shortfalls.

Financial resources to fund these additional forces and organizations have increased as well. The U.S. Afghan National Security Force Fund will rise from \$5.6B in 2009 to \$6.6B this year, with a request for even more next year. The U.S. Defense Department Commander's Emergency Response Program for Afghanistan, which has been instrumental in enabling the kind of quick response in the reconstruction arena that is necessary as the situation unfolds on the ground, will rise to \$1B this year – with \$100M of that authorized directly for reintegration and reconciliation.

Augmenting that along with all of the other coalition partners, Canada has invested \$50M into the first phase of the Arghandab Irrigation Rehabilitation Project, which promises to help resurrect the agricultural breadbasket that Kandahar province had been before the wars of the past 30 years. Tens of millions more Canadian dollars are helping to create a belt of development activity around Kandahar City, with initiatives ranging from microfinance facilities to helping Afghan women establish poultry and livestock businesses, all tremendously important to the overall effort in Afghanistan. And Canada has also committed some \$60M to an effort to eliminate polio and another \$12M to help build capacity in the Afghan Ministry of Education, among many other contributions.

Of course, it is not enough to simply have the right resources. You have to apply the right resources in the right places and in the right ways. And the campaign plan developed by ISAF seeks to do just that. First and foremost, ISAF will concentrate additional forces and resources on key population centers and essential road networks, as, again, the idea is to increase security for the population.

OUTPUTS

Having worked hard this past year to get the inputs right – the right organizations, people, concepts, and adequate levels of resources – now ISAF and its Afghan partners can start to see the progress that is possible when and where those inputs are applied. The intent, again, is to regain the initiative from the insurgency, to improve security, and to establish over time the conditions necessary to begin to transition security tasks to the Afghan government and security forces, so that they can be the ones to ensure a safer and more prosperous future for the Afghan people. We all recognize, I think, that an enormous amount of hard work and tough fighting lie ahead in Afghanistan. As was the case in Iraq, the reality in Afghanistan is that everything is hard, and it's hard all the time. In fact, as General Natynczyk noted this morning, 2010 will be a tough year. And I expect that the endeavor in Afghanistan will, as was the case in Iraq when we conducted the surge there, get harder before it gets easier.

That said, the organizational, leadership, strategy, and resource inputs we have worked to put in place this past year have already begun to change the dynamics in important ways. The loss of innocent civilian life, for example, has been dramatically reduced since General McKiernan first issued a tactical directive and General McChrystal then refined and implemented it in a very determined fashion. We know there will always be the possibility of tragic mistakes in war, but the vast majority of civilian casualties in Afghanistan are now caused by the insurgents, by the Taliban and the other members of the extremist syndicate, not by ISAF. And in fact, the numbers of civilian casualties attributed to ISAF have continued to go down even as our operations have expanded, though there continue to be tragic events and we must reinforce our efforts to eliminate them.

CONCLUSION

Well, that lays out what we've tried to do to get the inputs right so that we can start to see the outputs this year in the execution of General McChrystal's campaign plan.

I'd like to conclude by once again expressing my appreciation for the many contributions that Canada has made and continues to make in Afghanistan and elsewhere in the Central Command region and around the world. As you all know very well, the operations in Afghanistan, in particular, have been very difficult. Canadians have borne a considerable burden and made tremendous sacrifices in some very tough areas. Without any gaps since the fall of the Taliban in 2001, Canadian forces have stood shoulder-to-shoulder with the other forces of the coalition on the ground in Afghanistan.

The phrase "shoulder-to-shoulder" is more than an expression, of course. Some in this audience might know that LTG Caldwell, the Commander of the NATO Training Mission-Afghanistan, directed those under his command to add the words "shoulder-to-shoulder" to the signature blocks of their email messages. In Pashtu, the phrase reads, "shohna ba shohna." In Dari, "ooga pa ooga." Since we're in Canada, in French, we might even try "épaule a épaule!" Or, some might say that "coude a coude" is better idiomatically!

Regardless, in any language, "shoulder-to-shoulder" symbolizes the close relationships essential to the execution of a comprehensive coalition counterinsurgency campaign. Last year, I was privileged to visit your great Brigadier General Jon Vance as he commanded Task Force Kandahar, another of the great leaders you've assigned to ISAF, which included an American battalion under his operational control. The assignment of US forces under Canadian leadership represented the enormous respect we have for the skill and professionalism of all of the Canadian Forces, including the current Commander of Task Force Kandahar, Brigadier General Dan Ménard, who has even more US units under his operational command than did his predecessor. Standing next to Dan's shoulder, of course, is Ben Rowsell, the senior civilian, and I quote, "Representative of Canada in Kandahar," otherwise known by his official designation as the "RoCK." This is, of course, not to be confused with the nickname of the American Ambassador I mentioned earlier, Ambassador Richard Holbrooke, known

to some of his counterparts as “the Bulldozer.” I think it’s every General’s dream to have diplomatic wing-men with muscular nicknames!

As I mentioned, though, in all seriousness, putting US forces under Task Force Kandahar is just the latest example of the mutual respect and confidence that have long characterized the relationship between US and Canadian forces. Indeed, near the Memorial Amphitheater at Arlington National Cemetery in my nation’s capital, a granite cross honors U.S. citizens who served in the Canadian Forces in the First and Second World Wars and in Korea. It offers a solemn reminder of the sacrifices our troopers have made together when our countries have joined in a common military cause. The inscription on that monument captures the sentiments of those of us who, like me, in fact, who have been privileged to have served with your forces on contingency operations. “Few countries,” the inscription on the monument states, “enjoy the bonds of goodwill and friendship that the United States and Canada share. Our common border remains the longest unguarded frontier on earth, and our nations have shared triumphs and tragedies throughout history.”

The bonds of goodwill and friendship between our two countries are, indeed, unique. And for all of this, I’d like to pass along my deepest thanks to all of you here, to all of your magnificent troopers, and indeed to the Canadian people as well. Because it is a great privilege to work with Canada’s finest in the CENTCOM area of responsibility, and I can assure you that all engaged in Afghanistan, in particular, are enormously grateful for the opportunity to soldier shoulder-to-shoulder in a mission of enormous importance to both our countries. Thank you very much. Merci beaucoup!