

**Oral Testimony Before the House Armed Services Committee  
Hearing on “Transition in Afghanistan: Views of Outside Experts”**

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***“The Uncertain Role of the ANSF in Transition: Establishing Real World Criteria  
and Metrics”***

**Chairman McKeon, Ranking member Smith, and members of the Committee**

I have seven minutes in which to deal with an extremely complex and controversial set of issues that will determine whether the ANSF can support an effective Transition.

I’ve submitted a written analysis that explains what I am about to say in depth, using official sources and reporting. I realize how busy Members and their staffs are, but I hope that some of you will still be able to turn to it for the details I can’t set forth in a short statement and I request that it be put into the record.

Let me quickly summarize my key points:

1. **The ANSF cannot be effective without effective Afghan leadership and national unity.** This a high risk issue, as President Karzai continues to demonstrate by creating more and more barriers to effective military action. . There is no clear replacement for Karzai, an all too real risk that Afghanistan will revert rule by “Kabulstan: and regional power brokers after 2014. Our policy cannot focus on the legitimacy of the election, it must focus on the effectiveness and unity and the government.

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2. **The steady flow of money to the right elements of the ANSF will be an equally critical metric.** In the last two years we have set a series of largely arbitrary annual figures for funding the ANSF that have gone from some \$9 billion to \$6.7 billion to \$4.1 billion a year with no real explanation and justification. Unless we have more realistic plans, goals, costs, and funding, the rest of the debate over the ANSF will be moot.

3. **A focus on reaching a total of 352,000 and downsizing to a level of 228,500 is meaningless.** Total manpower is an almost meaningless measure of military capability. This is particularly true when it the 352,000 men total is absurd enough to lump together a steadily more effective army, an uncertain air force, and a competent paramilitary police force called the Afghan Civil Order Police or ANCOP – *that make up only 55% of the current force goal* – with the remaining forces at best having limited value.

We need to focus on the Afghan forces that actually make a difference, on shaping them to meet the condition that emerge as Transition proceeds, and having the patience to provide the necessary outside support well beyond 2014.

4. **Success will not depend on largely corrupt and incapable forces like the AUP Afghan Uniformed Police (AUP) and Afghan Border Police (ABP),** which make up the other half of the force, lack the support of effective governance and the other elements of a justice system in much of the country, and are likely to revert to local power broker control or influence as US and allied forces leave. National polls, DoD reporting, SIGAR, and the GAO has all written reports that warn about the problems involved in these forces, as did the quick collapse of much of the effectiveness of similar police forces after we left Iraq.

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5. **The future success of Transition will also depend heavily on the effectiveness and loyal of local forces like the Afghan Local Police and militias**, plus security forces like the APPF. These forces have goals that total at least another 30,000 men not even included in the present 352,000 man force goal. Moreover, Afghan history shows they are critical to an all Afghan force and that they will present major risks in terms of future loyalty and capability.
6. **Current DoD and SIGAR reporting shows that we have steadily rushed the development of all of these forces without provide adequate trainers and partners, and we have no clear plans for our presence after the end of 2014.** We still have serious shortages in partners, trainers, and enablers. The key elements of the ANSF cannot succeed without effective outside support including air power, enablers, trainers, and partners if the insurgents persist.
7. **The current focus on the Capability Milestone (CM) and Commanders Unit Assessment Tool (CUAT) scoring system, and on which are said to be “in the lead,” is as unreal as focusing on total manpower.** These are useful measures for force generation, but DoD has already announced they will be replaced with a new Afghan system.

In any case, what counts is the ability of the ANA, AAF, ANCOPS, the best elements of the regular police, and forces like the ALP to actually secure key districts and provinces after almost all allied forces leave. This must be measured in net assessment terms and on the basis of actual performance both in combat and in providing the ability to hold and build.

8. **At present, ISAF is not providing meaningful unclassified reporting on any aspect of ANSF success in the field, or any other aspect of progress in a counter insurgency that has become a war of political attrition.**

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It is meaningless to talk about units being “in the lead” when there is no sign they are “in the lead” where it counts, and when we transfer responsibility without any metrics of Taliban and other insurgent influence and control.

- We are getting misleading and meaningless statistical data on enemy initiated attacks or EIA, where there has been no meaningful progress since 2009.
- We see no progress in SIGACT, which were the key metric used in the Iraq War.
- We see no meaningful progress in the number of IED attacks and the UN reports a 700% increase in the number of attack on Afghan officials over the last year.
- The latest DoD semi annual report shows serious enemy activity is still going on in Helmand and Kandahar in south where UN and US reporting shows a major increase in the area of narcotic cultivation – an area still heavily under Taliban influence.
- We have dropped all report on progress in the 81 critical districts and more 40 districts of interest that were the key to our strategy through mid 2011, and our recent force cuts have forced us to largely abandon our plans for an offensive in the East.

Let me again stress that the test for the ANSF is not the cosmetics of total manning. units “in the lead,” or rushing towards the exit by formally transferring responsibility. It is how the key element of the ANA, AAF, ANCOP and local forces perform in the field. It is how they relate to the relative influence of the central government in “Kabulstan,” the loyalty of given local factions and power brokers, and the relative combat strength and influence of the Taliban and other insurgents once we are gone.

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At present, we lack clear plans for force development, meaningful estimates of cost and resources, and anything approaching an honest public picture of the progress we are making and the challenges that we and the critical elements of Afghan forces face. We have less than two years in which to help prepare the elements of the ANSF that matter, and we need far clearer and *public* plans to show what level of support we must provide before and after the end of 2014 and persuade the American people and our allies that this effort is practical and necessary.