



## The Situation in Afghanistan

**John D. Negroponte, U.S. Permanent Representative to the United Nations**

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I am pleased to join you and the other delegates in welcoming Ambassador Brahimi back with us in the Security Council. I would like to express my personal respect and admiration for what he has accomplished since he was last here. I think the work he has done is truly remarkable, and I think that the progress that has been achieved in Afghanistan is due in large measure to his efforts and excellent judgment.

Having said that and despite how far we have come, I think we all agree that there is much to accomplish still before us. The United States focus in Afghanistan continues to be centered on the conduct of the war on terrorism, and the roughly 8,000 coalition troops in Afghanistan are focused on the destruction of the al-Qaida remnants. We, together with our coalition partners, succeeded in defeating a vicious regime that harbored the al-Qaida network and we have succeeded in killing or capturing somewhat less than half of the top 30 or so leaders of the al-Qaida organization. Many are on the run. Military successes in Afghanistan have contributed to a larger success in finding terrorists elsewhere in the world.

However, while these developments are encouraging, we must recall that al-Qaida is still dangerous and active and still poses a threat. Afghanistan's long term stability is the best guarantee that that country does not once again become an outlaw country that provides sanctuary for terrorists.

To make concrete the vision of a stable Afghanistan, the United States has also focused on the challenges of building an accountable and effective security apparatus in that country, of fostering Afghanistan's internal governance, and of providing humanitarian and development assistance.

The backbone of Afghanistan's security apparatus must ultimately be the Afghan National Army. We have more than 250 U.S. and French military trainers working closely with the Afghans to train the army. The first and second battalions are progressing through their basic training; the first battalion is about to graduate next week; and the third battalion begins training before the end of July.

In this context, I would like to express our thanks to those states which have committed to donations for the Afghan National Army Trust Fund. We very much appreciate the significant contribution made by Luxembourg, as well as Finland's pledge to that fund. In addition, the United Kingdom, Turkey, Bulgaria, Poland, Korea, India, and Romania are assisting the training effort with personnel or funding or equipment.

But the efforts of the international community to train and equip a new army cannot stand alone. As this Council has said many times, the core solution to the Afghan security problem lies with the Afghans themselves and, to that end, certain reforms are critical. The Transitional Authority must create a representative, multi-ethnic and apolitical Ministry of Defense and National Army that works on behalf of all Afghans. The Afghans must work together to prevent a recurrence of the recent violence in the North and to end the tolerance for violence reflected in the shocking assassination of Vice President Haji Qadir. The United States strongly supports President Karzai's efforts to develop a National Defense Council, encompassing all key ministries, which will provide integrated national security leadership.

The development of a comprehensive plan for demobilization of regional militias and the absorption of some of those soldiers into a national army is a critical step. We applaud Japan's very positive contributions in establishing a Register for Peace demobilization program aimed at reducing regional militias.

We continue to strongly support the efforts of UN agencies to provide humanitarian and reconstruction assistance. The reconstruction effort needs to strengthen and legitimize the Transitional Authority. Concurrently, we need to strengthen the Transitional Authority's capacity to absorb and administer assistance in a transparent manner.

As we move from acute humanitarian crisis into the long-term project of reconstruction of the Transitional Authority, the U.S. and the international community are exploring ways to better prioritize and coordinate assistance. We have discussed how better to coordinate international programs last week at meetings in Paris and Geneva. I might take this opportunity to note that total United States humanitarian assistance in 2001 and 2002 amounts to more than 633 million dollars.

Finally, I would like to again commend Special Representative Brahimi and his colleagues at UNAMA for their dedication and successes. They have helped launch an extraordinary process in Afghanistan and they deserve great credit for the good work that they have done.

Thank you very much, Mr. President.

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