

Joint Statement on New Partnership Between U.S. and Afghanistan

Joint Statement by President George W. Bush and Chairman Hamid Karzai on a New Partnership Between the United States and Afghanistan

President Bush and Chairman Karzai commit to build a lasting partnership for the 21st century, determined to fight terrorism, and ensure security, stability and reconstruction for Afghanistan, and foster representative and accountable government for all Afghan women and men.

We stand together for a new and better future for Afghanistan -- a future free from terror, war, and want. We pledge our respect for the culture and traditions of the different peoples of Afghanistan, and for the great religion of Islam, which has been tragically distorted and misused by the Taliban.

We reaffirm our commitment to continue to work together to rout out the remnants of the Taliban and Al Qaida network. The United States and Afghanistan stand united in our determination that Afghanistan will never again become a training ground for global terror. We are equally determined that Afghanistan's tragic experience -- where terrorists were allowed to hold an entire nation hostage -- will not be repeated or replicated anywhere in the world.

The United States and Afghanistan share the belief that a secure, stable Afghanistan, at peace with its neighbors, is critical to achieving our shared goals. We agree that a lasting, permanent solution for Afghanistan's security needs must be based on strengthening Afghanistan's own capacities.

We agree that the United States will work with Afghanistan's friends in the international community to help Afghanistan stand up and train a national military and police, as well as address Afghanistan's short-term security needs, including through demining assistance.

We further agree to continue to support the mission of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) to help promote security in Afghanistan. Chairman Karzai asked President Bush, on behalf of the Afghan people to consider supporting an extension and expansion of the ISAF.

Recognizing that representative and accountable national government is vital for Afghanistan to achieve stability, national reconciliation, and reconstruction, we reaffirm our shared determination to support the Bonn Agreement for a political transition process in Afghanistan over the next two years. Both sides recognize the importance of adhering strictly to the agreement's timetable.

We agree to support collaborative programs to strengthen Afghan civic institutions, working through Afghan and American NGOs to build and strengthen political structures, independent media, human rights protections, labor unions, accountability and anti-corruption initiatives.

We also agree to launch a joint U.S.-Afghanistan Women's Council to promote private/public partnerships and mobilize resources to ensure women can gain the skills and education deprived them under years of Taliban mis-rule.

The United States and Afghanistan further agree that the Voice of America will expand its broadcast of Afghan news throughout Afghanistan as VOA and international partners work with Afghanistan to develop its own media capacity.

We both welcome the role of the United States in helping with Afghanistan's reconstruction, including the initial American contribution of nearly \$297 million for Afghanistan's critical reconstruction and the transfer of \$223 million in previously frozen Afghan assets.

We affirm our determination to move quickly to help Afghanistan create jobs and start rebuilding Afghanistan's agricultural sector, its health care and educational systems.

Concrete examples of programs, in addition to our current humanitarian aid program and contributions to large infrastructure projects, that will have immediate impact are to:

- print and distribute nearly 10 million textbooks in Dari and Pashtu, focused on math, reading and science, in time for the official start of the Afghan school year in March;
- provide basic training for 4,000 teachers, at least half of whom are women;
- vaccinate 2.2 million Afghan children against measles and set up primary care community health clinics; and
- use \$45 million in food-related programs to, in part, promote recovery by providing food directly to teachers and students at school and food to workers at project sites.

Our joint commitment to the development of Afghanistan's private sector will be bolstered by an initial U.S. Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC) \$50 million line of credit to finance qualified U.S. private sector projects.

We are pleased to announce that in February OPIC, the Export-Import Bank, and the U.S. Trade Development Agency, will conduct an investment assessment mission to Afghanistan and that the Commerce Department will lead a private sector mission to Afghanistan to help identify Afghanistan's investment needs and opportunities for U.S. private sector participation in reconstruction.

We welcome a U.S. Department of Labor initiative to fund job generation and training programs for ex-combatants and women.

Finally, we pledge to enhance understanding between the citizens of our two countries by promoting people-to-people exchanges and cultural initiatives, including through the Fulbright, International Visitor and Humphrey programs, as well as through non-governmental organizations.

Recognizing that the Taliban destroyed several of Afghanistan's great historic statues and cultural sites, we agreed to work together to help restore and preserve Afghanistan's heritage.

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