



NEWS RELEASE

Head Quarters
International Security Assistance Force – Afghanistan



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GENERAL PETRAEUS ISSUES UPDATED TACTICAL DIRECTIVE *Emphasizes "Disciplined Use of Force"*

KABUL, Afghanistan (Aug. 4) – International Security Assistance Force Commander, General David Petraeus has issued his updated Tactical Directive, providing guidance and intent for the use of force by ISAF and USFOR-A units operating in Afghanistan.

The Tactical Directive reinforces the concept of "disciplined use of force" in our partnership with Afghan Security Forces to defeat the insurgency in Afghanistan.

The updated directive is classified; unclassified portions of the document are included below.

"This directive applies to all ISAF and US Forces-Afghanistan (USFOR-A) forces operating under operational or tactical control ... Subordinate commanders are not authorized to further restrict this guidance without my approval.

Our counterinsurgency strategy is achieving progress in the face of tough enemies and a number of other challenges. Concentrating our efforts on protecting the population is having a significant effect. We have increased security in some key areas, and we have reduced the number of civilian casualties caused by coalition forces.

The Afghan population is, in a number of areas, increasingly supportive of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and of coalition forces. We have also seen support for the insurgency decrease in various areas as the number of insurgent-caused civilian casualties has risen dramatically. We must build on this momentum.

This effort is a contest of wills. Our enemies will do all that they can to shake our confidence and the confidence of the Afghan people. In turn, we must continue to demonstrate our resolve to the enemy. We will do so through our relentless pursuit of the Taliban and others who mean Afghanistan harm, through our compassion for the Afghan people, and through the example we provide to our Afghan partners.

We must continue – indeed, redouble – our efforts to reduce the loss of innocent civilian life to an absolute minimum. Every Afghan civilian death diminishes our cause. If we use excessive force or operate contrary to our counterinsurgency principles, tactical victories may prove to be strategic setbacks.

We must never forget that the center of gravity in this struggle is the Afghan people; it is they who will ultimately determine the future of Afghanistan ...

Prior to the use of fires, the commander approving the strike must determine that no civilians are present. If unable to assess the risk of civilian presence, fires are prohibited, except under of the following two conditions (specific conditions deleted due to operational security; however, they have to do with the risk to ISAF and Afghan forces).

(NOTE) This directive, as with the previous version, does not prevent commanders from protecting the lives of their men and women as a matter of self-defense where it is determined no other options are available to effectively counter the threat.

... Protecting the Afghan people does require killing, capturing, or turning the insurgents. Indeed, as I noted earlier, we must pursue the Taliban tenaciously. But we must fight with great discipline and tactical patience.

We must balance our pursuit of the enemy with our efforts to minimize loss of innocent civilian life, and with our obligation to protect our troops. Our forces have been striving to do that, and we will continue to do so.

In so doing, however, we must remember that it is a moral imperative both to protect Afghan civilians and to bring all assets to bear to protect our men and women in uniform and the Afghan security forces with whom we are fighting shoulder-to-shoulder when they are in a tough spot.

We must be consistent throughout the force in our application of this directive and our rules of engagement. All commanders must reinforce the right and obligation of self-defense of coalition forces, of our Afghan partners, and of others as authorized by the rules of engagement.

We must train our forces to know and understand the rules of engagement and the intent of the tactical directive. We must give our troopers the confidence to take all necessary actions when it matters most, while understanding the strategic consequences of civilian casualties. Indeed, I expect our troopers to exert their best judgment according to the situation on the ground. Beyond

that, every Soldier, Sailor, Airman, and Marine has my full support as we take the fight to the enemy.

... Partnering is how we operate. Some civilian casualties result from a misunderstanding or ignorance of local customs and behaviors. No individuals are more attuned to the Afghan culture than our Afghan partners. Accordingly, it is essential that all operations be partnered with an ANSF unit and that our Afghan partners be part of the planning and execution phases. Their presence will ensure greater situational awareness. It will also serve to alleviate anxiety on the part of the local population and build confidence in Afghan security forces.

I expect every operation and patrol to be partnered. If there are operational reasons why partnership is not possible for a particular operation, the CONOP approval authority must be informed ...

Partnership is an essential aspect of our counterinsurgency strategy. It is also an indispensable element of the transition of security responsibility to ANSF.

Again, we need to build on the momentum we are achieving. I expect every trooper and commander to use force judiciously, especially in situations where civilians may be present. At the same time, we must employ all assets to ensure our troopers' safety, keeping in mind the importance of protecting the Afghan people as we do.

This is a critical challenge at a critical time; but we must and will succeed. I expect that everyone under my command, operational and tactical, will not only adhere to the letter of this directive, but – more importantly – to its intent.

Strategic and operational commanders cannot anticipate every engagement. We have no desire to undermine the judgment of tactical commanders. However, that judgment should always be guided by my intent. Take the fight to the enemy. And protect the Afghan people and help our Afghan partners defeat the insurgency."

The directive was issued on August 1, 2010, replacing the July 1, 2009 version.

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