



NATO TRAINING MISSION - AFGHANISTAN
COMBINED SECURITY TRANSITION COMMAND – AFGHANISTAN
KABUL, AFGHANISTAN
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MEMORANDUM FOR Staff, Trainers, Instructors of NATO Training Mission – Afghanistan/
Combined Security Transition Command - Afghanistan

SUBJECT: A Call to Action: Command Philosophy

1. A few years ago, during a different surge, I visited a small Reconnaissance Squadron in the Diyala Province of Iraq. In their operations center was a sign that said, “What would you do differently today if you could not leave until the war was won?” Recently, the Secretary of the Army signed the approval for a Presidential Unit Citation for the combat action and valor of this unit. It is this mindset, this culture, that compelled them to decisive action. They were committed to not just leave their area of operations better than they found it, but to leave the area in the capable hands of a host nation force. It is this spirit, this commitment, and this urgency that will make us successful in our current endeavor. And so I ask you, “What would you do differently today if you had to stay until your responsibilities were transitioned to a capable Afghan counterpart that you trained?”

2. This is not to say that a professional Afghanistan National Security Force (ANSF) can be built overnight. However, dedication to the mission and a desire to achieve tangible results each day – to produce a product, an outcome, should drive each and every one of us every day. We cannot be satisfied with merely getting “first downs” and moving the ball down the field. We are here to win! Winning in this context means getting an Afghan partner to stand on their own – underpinned by the sustainable systems for an enduring security institution.

3. The three imperatives that exemplify our commitment and urgency to this mission are: “Team, Transparency, and Transition.” To change the dynamics in Afghanistan we must team with the Afghan Ministries and security forces to develop their capabilities to provide security. We must develop transparent, enduring, and self-sustaining processes to generate, educate, train, and employ professional and effective security forces. By teaming with the Afghans, we will develop their capabilities and thereby transition the security responsibility for Afghanistan to national security forces that can protect the population and safeguard their nation.

4. The critical nature of our mission to the enduring security and stability of Afghanistan requires us to have a new focus. The reforms we must achieve will take years to produce results and will therefore require an increased dedication by the personnel of NTM-A. We are not here to hand over our efforts to the next rotation of NATO forces. We are here to set the conditions to complete the full transition of security to the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. Central to this is a mature capability within the Afghan government to generate, sustain, and employ their security forces without our assistance.

5. Too often people say, “Pace yourself, this is a marathon not a sprint.” That is not a philosophy to which we will subscribe. In order to shift from a “marathon” paradigm, NTM-A is taking two

bold steps. First, we are placing command emphasis on energetic and consistent output from service members and civilians of all our nations toward transitioning their responsibilities to Afghans. It is not enough to make incremental progress and gains – each person in our command must be dedicated to making a demonstrable and positive difference. Whether here for six months, a year, or longer, you must know what you will accomplish. What is your goal? Where is your goal line and what have you done today to get there?

6. Second, by teaming every element of NTM-A with Afghans, we create a combined effort in each section and at all levels. Teaming creates a new mentality that allows our troops to personally develop the Afghan that will replace them upon transition of responsibilities. It forces our team to develop Afghan leaders that have the knowledge and capability to take over responsibility as soon as possible. At a higher level, we are teaming with the Ministries of Defense and Interior to ensure that the programs that are put into place are transparent to the Afghan people and match the government's ability to sustain them. We are also sending a powerful signal to their organizations that our confidence in them is growing.

7. We are also unveiling several high impact initiatives that denote a new way of operating. These initiatives will establish increased urgency across our organization, accelerate progress, and focus resources in a dramatically different manner. As stated in the lead article, this year is the year that NTM-A “builds the foundation” upon which a professional ANSF is developed and sustained. Completing a foundation this year is essential to beginning a true transition by mid-2011. Key areas of focus include reducing attrition, concentration on quality, and developing the systems to grow capable leaders. Transparent and measurable improvement in these areas will result in increased effectiveness of the fielded force. This effectiveness will increase the Afghan peoples' confidence in *their* Afghan National Security Forces. Driving positive, enduring, and sustainable change in Afghan institutions to provide security pushes us closer to the full transition of responsibility. These high impact initiatives build a base for broader reform across the command now and into next year.

8. By employing our three imperatives of “Team, Transparency, and Transition” in every aspect of our organization, we are creating a new approach with a new commitment. To accomplish this, we need your energy, your passion, and your dedication. We need you to ask yourself every day, “What would I do differently today if I had to stay until my responsibilities were transitioned to a capable Afghan counterpart that I trained?” Your answer must be, “Everything I can.”

WILLIAM B. CALDWELL, IV
Lieutenant General, US Army
Commanding

“Shohna Ba Shohna”