

Statement by Foreign Ministers on Afghanistan

27 April 2018

1. As the Afghan Government of National Unity takes steps to uphold stability and security, and to promote peace, NATO reaffirms its commitment to the development of the Afghan security and defence forces through a conditions-based approach for our Resolute Support Mission. We recognise and highly appreciate the essential contributions that the men and women in uniform from Allied nations, and from our Resolute Support Mission (RSM) operational partners, have provided over many years of NATO presence in Afghanistan.
2. At the second Kabul Conference of 28 February, President Ashraf Ghani took a decisive step toward Afghan reconciliation by proposing peace talks between the Government of National Unity and the Taliban, without preconditions. NATO Allies are united in their support for this proposal of an Afghan-led and Afghan-owned process. We will respect and support a negotiated political settlement led by the Afghan Government which ends violence, cuts ties to terrorism and protects the human rights of all Afghan citizens. We also support the Afghan Government's intention to address all contested issues between the parties, including those relating to the future role of the international community in Afghanistan.
3. We urge the Taliban to respond favourably to this opportunity and participate in an Afghan-owned and Afghan-led peace process. The responsibility to bring an end to a long era of conflict is now in the Taliban's hands.
4. We welcome the support for this proposal that was provided by countries within the region at the 27 March Tashkent Conference on Afghanistan. Regional actors have a significant role to play in support of peace and stabilization in Afghanistan. Pakistan facilitates important logistical supply lines for the Resolute Support Mission. We believe Pakistan's role will be important to a peace process, including in encouraging the Taliban to change their calculus. We encourage Pakistan to act on its stated support for a political solution to the Afghan conflict, to close terrorist sanctuaries and to work to prevent terrorist financial flows and cross-border attacks, including by working with its neighbours. We echo President Ghani's call on regional actors to cooperate more closely on fighting terrorism and to support the Afghan government's peace and reconciliation efforts. In this regard, we also encourage Iran and Russia to contribute to regional stability by fully supporting an Afghan-led and Afghan-owned peace process.
5. Fair, inclusive and timely parliamentary and presidential elections due in 2018 and 2019 respectively are essential for peace, stability, and the consolidation of democracy. NATO therefore welcomes the recent announcement by the Afghan Independent

Election Commission in setting the date for parliamentary elections on 20 October 2018. More broadly, we encourage Afghanistan to continue on the path to wider reform. The Government of National Unity will remain fully accountable for the commitments it made in this respect during the Brussels Conference on Afghanistan held on 4-5 October 2016, including the promotion of human rights, good governance, and combatting corruption in Afghanistan.

6. Allies are committed to strengthening Afghan security capabilities to tackle both internal security threats and terrorists who seek to use Afghanistan as a safe haven from which to plot attacks on other nations. NATO also supports the Afghan Government's determination to eliminate the threat of terrorism in all its forms, including that posed by ISIS/Daesh affiliates in Afghanistan.
7. There should be no doubt about NATO's position: NATO will continue to provide the support that the Afghan Government has requested so we can help Afghanistan fully provide for its own security.

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