



For Immediate Release
Office of the Press Secretary
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Joint Declaration of the United States-Afghanistan Strategic Partnership

Since the fall of the Taliban regime in December 2001, the United States and Afghanistan have made great progress in the pursuit of common strategic objectives. Together we have disrupted international terrorist networks and worked to ensure that Afghanistan will never again be a safe haven for terrorists. The United States has supported the Afghan people as they have established a moderate, representative government. During this time, the U.S. Government and the American people have demonstrated a commitment to an Afghanistan that is democratic, free, and able to provide for its own security.

Afghanistan expresses the profound gratitude of the Afghan people to the people of the United States of America. Thanks to the generosity of the American people and U.S. leadership, this extraordinary effort has enabled the Afghan people to regain hope and confidence and to renew their vision for achieving prosperity and peace.

Afghanistan confronts important challenges to its security and its efforts to build a government based on democratic principles, respect for human rights, and a market economy. To address these challenges, Afghanistan proposed that the United States join in a strategic partnership and establish close cooperation, including regular, high-level exchanges on the political, security, and economic issues contained herein and other issues of mutual interest. The United States and Afghanistan plan to work together to develop appropriate arrangements and agreements to implement their strategic partnership.

This shared effort will be based on a number of key principles, including a dedication to the rule of law, protection of the human rights and civil liberties of all individuals regardless of ethnic affiliations or gender, support for democratic governance, and reliance on the free market as the best means to further Afghanistan's economic progress. The strategic partnership's primary goal will be to strengthen U.S.-Afghan ties to help ensure Afghanistan's long-term security, democracy, and prosperity. It should contribute to peaceful and productive relations between Afghanistan and its neighbors. It is not directed against any third country.

This partnership will serve as the basis for our common efforts to cooperate in the war against international terror and the struggle against violent extremism, to promote stability and prosperity in the region, and to remain steadfast in supporting Afghanistan's campaign to eradicate poppy cultivation, provide alternate livelihoods assistance, and fight the production and trafficking of drugs. The partnership will be anchored in the constitutions of our two countries, and will be guided by the United States and Afghanistan's respective obligations under the United Nations Charter and other international agreements and conventions.

Decades of civil war, political violence, and interference in Afghanistan's internal affairs make Afghanistan's security, sovereignty, independence, and territorial integrity particularly crucial areas for U.S.-Afghan cooperation. To enhance Afghanistan's long-term democracy, prosperity, and security, we intend to work closely together:

FOR DEMOCRACY AND GOVERNANCE

\$ Support democratic good governance and the development of civil society based on the rule of law and human rights and encourage broad-based political participation in Afghanistan.

\$ Help build strong, lasting Afghan Government and civic institutions and support political traditions that are efficient and responsive to the needs of the Afghan people.

\$ Encourage the advancement of freedom and democracy in the wider region.

\$ Support Afghanistan's initiative to restore the country's historic role as a land bridge connecting Central and South Asia and to shift the pattern of regional relations from rivalry to economic and political cooperation.

\$ Foster cooperation between Afghanistan and its neighbors and deter meddling in its internal affairs.

\$ Support people-to-people exchanges and partnerships to strengthen ties between American and Afghan society, thereby fostering common outlooks and collaboration on the challenges and opportunities before us.

FOR PROSPERITY

\$ Facilitate and support Afghanistan's integration into regional and world economies and appropriate international organizations.

\$ Help develop a legal and institutional framework for a thriving private sector and an environment favorable to international investment in Afghanistan.

\$ Encourage and facilitate involvement of U.S. businesses in ventures that accelerate the development of Afghan firms and the private sector.

\$ Continue the reconstruction of Afghanistan and investments in the people of Afghanistan and encourage other nations to do so.

FOR SECURITY

\$ Help organize, train, equip, and sustain Afghan security forces as Afghanistan develops the capacity to undertake this responsibility.

\$ Consult with respect to taking appropriate measures in the event that Afghanistan perceives that its territorial integrity, independence, or security is threatened or at risk.

- \$ Assist the Afghan Government in security sector reform.
- \$ Continue to conduct counter-terrorism operations in cooperation with Afghan forces.
- \$ Support Coalition assistance to the Afghan Government's counter-narcotics programs.
- \$ Continue intelligence sharing.
- \$ Strengthen Afghanistan's ties with NATO.
- \$ Support border security initiatives.

It is understood that in order to achieve the objectives contained herein, U.S. military forces operating in Afghanistan will continue to have access to Bagram Air Base and its facilities, and facilities at other locations as may be mutually determined and that the U.S. and Coalition forces are to continue to have the freedom of action required to conduct appropriate military operations based on consultations and pre-agreed procedures.

As Afghan Government capabilities increase, Afghanistan will continue to cooperate against terrorism, to promote regional security, and to combat the drug trade; the Afghan Government, over time, will move to assume Afghan security force sustainment costs; and the Afghan Government intends to maintain capabilities for the detention, as appropriate, of persons apprehended in the War on Terror.

As Afghanistan develops its political system, the United States looks to Afghanistan to respect human rights and develop a just and inclusive society. Regular, free, and fair democratic elections, a free press, and the active implementation of Afghanistan's constitution are hallmarks of the necessary commitment to these principles. The United States relies on the Government of Afghanistan to maintain its firm commitment against the production, processing, and trafficking of narcotics and to assume responsibility for countering narcotics as police, prosecutorial, and prison capacity is developed and enhanced. Finally, the United States relies on Afghanistan's commitment to create a legal framework and an environment favorable to private sector and domestic and international investment that offers economic opportunities to all Afghan people.

The Afghan people have made tremendous sacrifices and shown great courage in the pursuit of freedom. The United States shares their vision of a country that is democratic, at peace, and working to improve the lives of all Afghans and that plays an important and positive role in the affairs of the region and the world. We are confident that the U.S.-Afghan strategic partnership will play a central role in helping Afghanistan achieve these goals.

GEORGE W. BUSH HAMID KARZAI PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES PRESIDENT OF THE ISLAMIC

REPUBLIC OF AFGHANISTAN

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