MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS  
Senator the Hon. Bob Carr  
MINISTER FOR DEFENCE  
The Hon. Stephen Smith MP  

JOINT STATEMENT ON AFGHANISTAN:  
AUSTRALIAN INTERVENTION AT NATO/ISAF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND  
DEFENCE MINISTERS’ MEETING IN BRUSSELS  

April 19, 2012  

(Check against delivery)  

Australia is committed to seeing through our mission in support of transition - as set  
out in the Lisbon strategy - and to providing support to Afghanistan beyond 2014.  

Beyond 2014, we are committed to supporting and sustaining the Afghan National  
Security Forces, (ANSF).  

This is precisely what Australia’s Prime Minister, Julia Gillard said on Tuesday.  

Australia believes the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) transition, as  
agreed in Lisbon, is the right strategy.  

Australia believes ISAF transition is working.  

Progress on the ground in Uruzgan Province continues to be made.  

It shows that transition is achievable by the end of 2014 – possibly earlier.  

Uruzgan is ready for transition in Tranche 3.  

There we see an increasingly capable ANSF: the ANSF is beginning to plan and  
execute complex operations. They are doing so with support from Australia’s  
Mentoring Task Force.  

All of us, however, must continue to be present in support of the ANSF and be  
combat ready to do so until transition is finally complete at the end of 2014.  

Security gains have to be supported by improvements in governance and  
development, delivered increasingly by Afghan authorities.  

In her speech in Canberra on Tuesday, Prime Minister Gillard identified three  
objectives for the Chicago Summit:  

- To review progress on transition and map the way forward to 2014
- To ensure sustainment to fund, train and support the ANSF beyond 2014
- To recommit to the long term stability of Afghanistan.

A capable ANSF is critical to the success of our international mission and a stable Afghanistan.

The ANSF must be of a size and structure required to consolidate and build on the security gains we have made.

The ANSF must be maintained at a size sufficient for the critical tasks ahead, at least until 2015.

The ANSF will need long term funding, training and support from the international community.

Australia is prepared to give this support, beyond 2014, both financial and in kind.

Beyond 2014, Australia will provide training to the ANSF.

We are already involved in institutional training through the Artillery Training School.

We support and will contribute 25 personnel to the proposed United Kingdom-led Afghan National Army Officer Academy.

Beyond 2014 we are also prepared, under the right mandate, to make a Special Forces contribution for counter terrorism and to train the ANSF to conduct counter terrorism operations.

Prime Minister Gillard will attend the Chicago Summit and confirm that when it comes to ANSF sustainment, Australia will pay its fair share.

Funding the ANSF is also a task for the broader international community beyond NATO and ISAF.

Australia’s support for the ANSF sits alongside our broader commitment to support Afghanistan’s social and economic development.

By the Chicago Summit, we hope to finalise with Afghanistan a long term partnership for the future of our bilateral relationship.

This partnership will complement the other national partnerships that Afghanistan has with the United Kingdom, France, Italy and we trust soon with the United States.

This will send a signal to the people of Afghanistan, the Taliban and the region that the international community will not walk away from Afghanistan at the end of 2014.

It will complement the institutional partnerships – such as NATO’s enduring partnership – that demonstrate in very concrete ways our collective long-term commitment to Afghanistan.