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HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE**

STATEMENT OF

**DAVID SEDNEY
DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
AFGHANISTAN, PAKISTAN AND CENTRAL ASIA**

BEFORE THE

**UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES
SUBCOMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND INVESTIGATIONS**

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Mr. Chairman, members of the Sub-Committee, thank you for the opportunity to update you on the ongoing efforts towards accountability and reform at Dawood National Military Hospital in Kabul, Afghanistan.

The United States, together with our Coalition Allies and Afghan partners, remains on track to accomplish our core objectives in Afghanistan: to disrupt, dismantle, and defeat al-Qaeda and its extremist affiliates and deny them safe haven from which they can launch attacks against the United States and to deny the Taliban the ability to overthrow the Afghan government. Thanks to the more than ten years of dedication and sacrifice of our forces, our Coalition partners, and the Afghan people themselves, we have taken enormous strides towards achieving those objectives, particularly over the last three years.

The key objective underpinning this strategy is the development of the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) into a sustainable and capable force. Their growth in confidence and demonstrated capability to provide suitable security against internal and external threats are essential for the responsible transition of nationwide security lead to the Afghans by the end of 2014. To this end, with Coalition support, the ANSF have made considerable progress in terms of both the size and capability of their force. Both the Afghan National Army and the Afghan National Police are on schedule to meet their surge-end strength goals by or before October. Their continued performance and proven ability has allowed them to move increasingly into the lead for operations. Currently, the ANSF participate in 90 percent of all Coalition operations, and more than 50 percent of partnered operations are ANSF-led.

In addition to the successes of the ANSF, we have seen two major achievements that send a strong signal to the Afghan people, the Taliban and the region. First, the Strategic Partnership Agreement (SPA) signed in May by President Obama and President Karzai shows the United States and Afghanistan are committed to a mutually beneficial relationship beyond 2014. Second, the Chicago Summit was a great success and demonstrated the continued dedication of over 50 NATO and other partner nations to supporting security and stability in Afghanistan. ISAF's members reaffirmed their commitment to the Lisbon timeline to complete transition by the end of 2014 and continue engagement in Afghanistan post-2014.

Despite these recent achievements, there are still areas needing improvement before the ANSF can be considered an independent force. One of those areas is the development of a medical system capable of sustaining the health and well-being of the ANSF. The allegations raised in 2010 of mismanagement at Dawood National Military Hospital highlighted the gross deficiencies in that system and the critical need for serious reforms.

Coalition medical mentors and advisors reported inexcusable mismanagement and, at times, neglect in the operation and provision of basic medical care, resulting in substandard patient care, disturbing sanitation conditions, poor facilities management, and a dysfunctional medical logistics system. These concerns were elevated to senior leaders in the NATO Training Mission-Afghanistan (NTM-A) and eventually directly to the Commander of NTM-A, Lieutenant General William Caldwell. Recognizing the enormity of the situation, Lieutenant General Caldwell took action. He requested the involvement of the Department of Defense Inspector General Office of Special Plans and Operations to assess the nation-wide medical logistics system in Afghanistan. With regard to the substandard patient care concerns, a member of Lieutenant General Caldwell's staff alerted the IG and his staff of the patient care concerns and the IG appropriately expanded the scope of its oversight activities to include reports on this important matter.

Thanks to the response and concerted effort devoted to reforming the healthcare and medical logistics systems at Dawood Hospital, we are now helping turn around what was once a broken system, introducing accountability, standards, and stewardship at all levels. In addition to the desire to eliminate unacceptable abuses, the senior leadership of ISAF, NTM-A and its medical advisory group recognized the critical importance of enabling a system that could effectively and transparently provide healthcare to the ANSF and achieve an end-state that will allow for transition to take place by 2014. Towards that end, it is my understanding that vast improvements have been made in the accountability of the hospital leadership and staff, the general sanitation of facilities, the standard of patient care, and the supporting logistics systems. The panel looks forward to addressing these improvements in the Q&A.

NTM-A and Coalition forces remain committed to continuing this progress and supporting their Afghan counterparts as they display increasing capability and a growing dedication to responsibility and self-improvement. These conditions, which create a sustained uplift in patient care, are key to the sustained improvement necessary for Afghanistan to have enduring capability past transition.

I would like to thank the House Armed Service Committee and this Sub-Committee for the opportunity to appear before you today. I look forward to your questions.