

RELEASE IN PART  
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**Sent:** Tuesday, December 1, 2009 11:46 PM  
**To:** H  
**Subject:** Couple additional points

They did a background briefing at the White House today for columnists and opinion makers. Paul Jones participated. Here are two questions -- and the answers given -- that I wanted to call to your attention:

**Will the withdrawal be conditions-based or begin automatically?**

- Summer 2011 is a strategic inflection point.
- We are guaranteeing a U.S. troop level for a certain period of time. That is 18 months from now. The situation will change, and so we will naturally reassess where things stand.
- Our emphasis is on building capacity so that the Afghans can assume natural ownership of their own security. We plan to begin to remove our combat troops as we transfer responsibility to the Afghans.
- The pace of the withdrawal will be based on an assessment of conditions

NOTE: The assumption seems to be that the transfer process will be a district by district effort, and that there will surely be at least one district where we can transfer by summer 2011.

**What are the revised endstates and training timelines for ANSF?**

- We have reaffirmed CSTC-A's goal for the ANA for FY 2010 (134,000 troops).
- Police is being recalibrated.
- We will now set annual goals of ANSF growth, based on progress, realistic expectations, and conditions on the ground.

One further note -- the background briefers observed that we will "rely on local forces in some places" to help provide security. This sounds like a vague reference to McC's Community Defense Initiatives, which Dexter Filkins wrote about in the Sunday NYT on 11/23.