



**Headquarters
International Security Assistance Force**



KABUL AFGHANISTAN

**STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES –
ISAF SUPPORT TO 2009 AFGHANISTAN PRESIDENTIAL AND PROVINCIAL
COUNCIL ELECTIONS**

1. **Purpose.** This Statement of Principles serves to guide the ISAF response, within means and capabilities, to requests for support to the 2009 Afghanistan Presidential and Provincial Council Elections. This document does not preclude or pre-empt any consideration of individual requests, but rather establishes a set of ‘first principles’ in determining ISAF support to the conduct of the electoral process.
2. **Background.** The 2009 elections are critical to the continuing development of Afghanistan. ISAF OPOD 002-2009 ISAF Support of AFG 2009 Presidential and Provincial Elections, and the IEC Concept of Operations provide the framework for provision of support to the elections. In addition, PRT Executive Steering Committee Policy Note Number 4 *PRTs on Support to Elections Process*, and ISAF FRAGO 205-2009 STRATCOM *Coordinating Instruction for May 09* provide additional guidance on ensuring that ISAF has an impartial approach to election support.
3. **Key Principles.** The key guiding principles are to:
 - a. **Support and promote an Afghan process.** All ISAF efforts should support and promote the institutions of Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and the IEC as the lead for election activities. Visible international presence should be minimized. Physical ISAF security and logistic support should be as transparent as possible and provided as *in extremis* assistance, after a request from the IEC has been approved. If at all possible it will always be preferable for ISAF to take on other ANSF tasks to free up Afghan capabilities for direct election support.
 - b. **Maintain political neutrality.** Enable a level playing field by avoiding actual or perceived partiality towards any incumbent, candidate, or political faction. Overt partiality or perceptions of favouritism may undermine the legitimacy of the elections and will provide the enemy with situations readily exploitable by his influence campaign.
 - c. **Build confidence in election security.** Promote community confidence in the security of the elections by operating within the agreed tiered system of support to ANSF, with ANSF carrying prime security responsibility in Tiers 1 and 2. ISAF will not provide Tier 1 security. ISAF should only plan for Tier 2 security operations if requested or required to replace displaced or incapacitated ANSF elements. ISAF commanders must of course balance this guidance against the requirement to provide necessary *in extremis* support when requested.

d. **Enable stability.** Support an environment of stability by facilitating the free and unhindered daily routine of the population wherever possible. This will serve to reinforce a sense of community confidence and reduce fear of participation in the election process.

e. **Expand partnerships.** Embrace and expand the partnerships with GIRoA, IEC, ANSF, and international and non-government organisations involved in facilitating a secure and legitimate election. Build strong relationships across all players through early, robust and continuous partnering, planning and coordination, while retaining an appropriately supportive and low key physical presence.

f. **Plan for election follow through.** Facilitate the post election process by preparing to provide logistic support to recovery and transport of sensitive election materials, within means and capabilities and adhering to the above guidelines. This will reduce delays in the certification and announcement of results. Unnecessary delays could erode community confidence in the Government and undermine the support provided by ISAF and other organisations.

4. **Conclusion.** Whilst not prescriptive, the above guidelines serve to reinforce the requisite impartiality of ISAF to the election process and outcomes, and build community confidence in the capacity of GIRoA and its security institutions.

DAVID D. McKIERNAN
General, U.S. Army
Commander,
United States Forces – Afghanistan/International Security Assistance Force,
Afghanistan