Bismillah Hay ar Rahmani Raheem. So ba khayr. As Salama A-Leikum. General Allen, Rear Admiral Crawford, Minister Wardak, Deputy Minister Hashemzai, Deputy Director Karimi, Ambassador Gass, Ambassador Dinesen, Lieutenant General Bucknall, Lieutenant General Huber, Lieutenant General Fugier, Head of Mission Savolainen, other distinguished government officials, international diplomats, general officers, members of the great 1st Cavalry band, troops of the Rule of Law Field Support Mission, and each of you at this ceremony—esteemed guests one and all—good morning.

U.S. Supreme Court Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes is said to have remarked, “The mind, once expanded to the dimensions of larger things, never returns to its original size or form.” I quote Oliver Wendell Holmes, by the way, because in addition to being a wise man, he was a pretty fair soldier. He enlisted in the 20th Massachusetts Infantry Regiment during the United States Civil War. For my Afghan friends, that was a bloody and intense war that lasted about 1/6th of the time your own armed conflict has thus far lasted. Holmes received a battlefield commission to lieutenant and fought in every campaign from the Peninsula to the Wilderness. He was nearly fatally wounded in three major battles, and until his final days at the age of 94, he saved the minie balls that almost killed him. After the war, he
went on to distinguished service in other fields, including as a teacher and as a judge.

Holmes’s mind was expanded to the dimensions of larger things by years spent in lands distant from his home, by friendships with extraordinary people, by service in missions much greater than Holmes himself, and of course by war and by the law. His mind—and from his writings we know also his heart, touched, as he wrote that it was, “by fire”—never could possibly return to their original size or form afterward.

As for us, the ancient crossroads between civilizations that is Kandahar, the rugged mountains of Paktika and Zabul and Khost, the peak-rimmed highlands of Uruzgan, the rushing streams of Badakshan, the vast orchards of Helmand, the historic gates of Torkham and Weesh, the deep blue sky over the snow-capped Hindu Kush—these and many other wonders could not be blotted out by conflict, nor could they be prevented from changing us.

But even more than by the physical beauty of the terrain, our minds and hearts have been transformed by the people we have encountered. Today, in the Zheray district of Kandahar province, a fearless and honest national security prosecutor named Colonel Abdul Rahim Safi, a native of Laghman, is doing his part to bring peace to Afghans who until only months ago had no alternative to the brand of “justice” imposed by the Taliban at the barrel of a gun. Safi, and many other honest and brave Afghans in the service of the people, as well as remarkable partners and colleagues from the international community, have inspired us with their example and stirred us with their words—all while extending us warm hospitality—and we will never be the same.
Service in an important mission has provided strength and purpose, while humbling us with the sacrifices that have been visible at every turn. By serving the ISAF mission, we assist the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, and through it the Afghan people, to share meaningfully in the hopes and aspirations of all peoples—to live in peace and security, to get an education, to work with dignity, to demand fairness and accountability, and to love our families, our communities, and our God. Among the sacrifices have been:

- that of my great friend Afghan National Army Major General Marjan Shuja, who suffered a tremendous personal loss when his oldest son was killed by an IED;
- that of my great friend Lieutenant General Yarmand, Director of the Ministry of Interior’s Criminal Investigation Division, who lost his brother, a district police chief in Badakshan, also to an enemy attack.

These and many other Afghan leaders and Afghan National Security Forces continue to work for the people of Afghanistan, despite enormous personal risk to their and their families’ safety. Their individual losses and continuing daily risks serve as vivid reminders that the collective sacrifices we all make here are shared in the greatest proportion by Afghans. That realization not only motivates each of us to press forward toward our assigned objectives within the larger mission, it also ensures that we will do so as fundamentally changed people, in mind as well as heart.

And let me say just a few things about our own assigned unit objectives and mandate within the larger ISAF mission and the comprehensive civil-military campaign that is underway. This organization was formed in recognition that assisting Afghans in building the rule of law
requires more than high sounding ideals. While all units must work toward the rule of law—and the ISAF Joint Command strongly directs this in its orders—there is need for a component of field support, liaison, and security to be dedicated to the justice sector during this period of transition. Make no mistake: justice sector capacity-building must be Afghan-government-owned and civilian-led and predominantly civilian-manned in order to succeed. But during armed conflict, the security, logistics, administrative, procurement, communications, and other field projection capabilities of the military—Afghan as well as coalition—must be leveraged. This is particularly so where the government is competing for the peoples’ minds and hearts with armed groups that use corruption as their battle cry and justice as their calling card. Within this narrow but critically important mandate, USFOR-A’s Rule of Law Field Force and, upon establishment, the NATO Rule of Law Field Support Mission, have made strong contributions to the following Afghan and civilian-led achievements:

- the establishment of a national security Justice Center in Parwan province, which now has 2 Afghan judicial trial panels working, and which has heard 253 trials since May of last year;
- the building of Afghan forensic evidence capacity, such that provided by Afghan law enforcement examiners supporting the Justice Center in Parwan; 166 of those trials, or 65%, relied upon explosive residue testing, fingerprint examination, or other forensic analysis in their judgments.
- the deployment of Rule of Law Field Support Teams to eight provincial hub cities and Rule of Law Field Support Officers to 23 key districts identified by an Afghan government task force, with
additional manpower recently acquired to approach up to 52 key districts.

- the deployment by the Afghan government of dozens of justice sector officials to districts lacking them.
- the conduct of five Afghan public trials at the district level in the Nangarhar districts of Kuz Kunar, Surkh Rod, and Rodat over the past six weeks, a trend of transparency and public accountability of defendants as well as judges, prosecutors, defense counsel, and Afghan security forces that is encouraging. This trend confirms the importance of police professionalization—championed by the Ministry of Interior, the NATO Training Mission, and EUPOL—and also highlights the criticality of judicial and prosecutorial security for exposed and vulnerable justice sector officials.
- support to Afghan legal education, civil society organizations, and district leaders who can increase the access of Afghan villagers to the community-based dispute resolution processes that will handle the bulk of civil disputes for the foreseeable future.

Although these and other achievements are just the beginning, and so much still must be done, it is sustainable Afghan rule of law capacity such as this that Afghans so rightly see as essential to transition of security responsibility. My Afghan friends know that my favorite Pashtun proverb is “Yow mumlakat bey la qanoon tzacka de dzangal haysiat laree”—“a country without law is a jungle.” Oliver Wendell Holmes would have seen the wisdom in this proverb.

Today marks the end of a transition within our coalition military rule of law support ranks to a new and inspired leadership team—a transition that
began on the 10th of June. General Allen, since your arrival we have all been awed by your command of every situation and by how you bear the enormous burdens of your post. Lieutenant General Huber, the comprehensive and methodical approach you have taken to your complex mission has been a professional privilege to watch, Sir, and that approach will serve you and the entire effort well in the hard months ahead. Jim Crawford, it is a particular pleasure to welcome you, and I simply cannot think of an officer better prepared to take this mission to the next level. Even as I reflect with gratitude toward General Stan McChrystal, General David Petraeus, and Vice Admiral Robert Harward for their tremendous leadership and for giving me the opportunity to serve these past two years, I am delighted at the true heavyweights our government has assembled for the challenges ahead, and I wish you all success.

I must also thank Deputy Minister Hashemzai, Director Nader Jama, Ambassador Gass, Ambassador Royle, Lieutenant General Fugier, Lieutenant General Bucknall, Major General Sadat, Major General Tahir, Major General Rossmanith, Major General McHale, Mr. Abdullah Ibrahimkhil, Mr. Mike Marsac, CAPT Pat Neher, and Colonel E.J. Degen, and Command Master Chief Bob Edwards for their belief in this mission. Although they could not be here, I also want to publically recognize Ambassador Hans Klemm, Ambassador Mark Sedwill, Professor Jack Goldsmith, Dean Martha Minow, Ms. Sarah Chayes, Mr. Ryan McCarthy, Major Generals James Terry and John Toolan, Brigadier General Carmine Masiello, Colonels Chris Toner and Pat Frank, and also former Deputy Chief of Mission at Denmark’s Embassy, Jesper Sorensen. Mercan Nielsen, who is here with Ambassador Dinesen on behalf of the Danish Mission, thank you for your support and please say Tashakor and Deera
Manana to Jesper for me. And special thanks to Dr. Ashraf Ghani, who also could not be here but who graciously received me and Rear Admiral Crawford last night at his office despite the impossible schedule he maintains, in part because of the importance he places on the rule of law within the Inteqal process.

My final thanks must go to those in the ranks of the NATO Rule of Law Field Support Mission, represented here today by SGM Desilva, who secured the colors, by CAPT Greg Belanger, and by the 8 Team Leaders who lead some 330 magnificent field troops around Afghanistan. Greg, could you please raise your hand so that we can identify you all and those to whom the credit really belongs. [applause] Next month, our first international contributions from Denmark and the Netherlands will augment these ranks, with Poland and Australia and likely another two nations soon to follow.

I end by noting that all of us participating in this struggle for Afghanistan's future can identify with the remarks of Oliver Wendell Holmes that I quoted at the outset. Our minds have been expanded to the dimensions of larger things and a flame has been put in our hearts—after Afghanistan, we will never be the same. Thank you.