



HEADQUARTERS
International Security Assistance Force/
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COMISAF

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FOR the Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines, Coast Guardsmen, and Civilians of the NATO International Security Assistance Force

SUBJECT: COMISAF's Guidance Concerning Civilian Casualties (CIVCAS)

The issue of civilian casualties demands the continued attention of every leader and trooper in Afghanistan. Indeed, no issue highlights more the need to balance tactical aggressiveness with tactical patience – both of which are critical to achieving our objectives.

The Tactical Directive sets out the principles for achieving the proper balance between aggressiveness and patience. It is complemented by my Counterinsurgency Guidance, the Tactical Driving Directive, and the Escalation of Force SOP. These are fundamental documents. **We are now at a pivotal moment in our work here, and I believe it would be valuable for every leader in ISAF to reread these documents and to internalize and employ the principles in them, in addition to ensuring that the members of their elements understand how to implement the principles, as well.**

Given the progress that Afghan and ISAF troopers have made since last summer, especially in clearing and holding important areas, it is likely that our enemies will pursue high-profile attacks this summer in an attempt to demonstrate continued capability. These attacks may increase the risk of civilian casualties and put Afghan and ISAF forces into difficult situations. In the face of such enemy actions, we must continue our efforts to reduce civilian casualties to an absolute minimum. Indeed, every loss of innocent civilian life is a tragedy for the family involved and diminishes our cause.

Through hard work and many sacrifices, we and our Afghan partners have achieved considerable momentum across Afghanistan. Building on that momentum will demand exceptional skill, bravery, and, above all, judgment from every trooper involved in the campaign as we seek to protect the Afghan people. I know that we are asking a lot of each of you, but you have proved many times that you are equal to every task. I know that you will be equal to this one, as well.

Thanks for your continued great work in this hugely important mission.

David H. Petraeus
General, United States Army
Commander
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