

Afghanistan Strategy More Than Proposed Military Buildup, U.S. Ambassador To VOA

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WASHINGTON, D.C. ([RPRN](#)) 10/29/09 — As the debate intensifies over a proposed U.S. troop buildup in Afghanistan, the U.S. Ambassador in Kabul says the strategy goes far beyond military operations against Taliban extremists.

Ambassador Karl Eikenberry said the United States and its NATO allies have a comprehensive plan to stabilize Afghanistan, adding a proposed military buildup is "the most emotional component."

"The strategy has a diplomatic dimension to it," Eikenberry said. "There is an array of ideas we could talk about, whether it's in the area of governance, whether it's in the area of development," he said in an interview this week in Kabul with the Voice of America (VOA) Afghanistan Service.

"What we're hoping to do over the next five years is to really strengthen the sovereignty of Afghanistan," Eikenberry said. "I've never seen a better alignment of what we would call the goals and interests of the international community and the Afghan people."

Training thousands of new Afghan troops to serve in the national army and police force is a key to bolstering Afghanistan so international forces can hand over security to the Afghan people, he said.

Turning to presidential elections, Eikenberry said there were "problems with irregularities" in the August presidential contest. A run-off is scheduled for November 7.

VOA's Afghanistan Service broadcasts in radio and television, and is available on the Internet with 12 hours daily of radio programming in Dari, Pashto and Special English. Two television

newscasts air six days a week in Dari and Pashto. Programs are available on the Internet in Dari at www.VOANews.com/dari/ and in Pashto at www.VOANews.com/pashto/.

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