The full text of the Prime Minister's Statement on sending extra troops to Afghanistan can be read below:

With permission, Mr Speaker, I should like to make a statement on Afghanistan and Pakistan;

First on our work with the government of Pakistan to counter the terrorist threat from al Qaeda and the Taliban

Second on our priorities for Afghanistan in the next stage of the work our armed forces and civilians are undertaking there.

And third on the conditions we are setting down for the next stage, including for the best possible protection of our troops, especially against the growing threat of IEDS.

Mr Speaker, earlier this afternoon we honoured those who have died serving our country in Afghanistan. Today I also want to honour and thank all those who serve and have served there.

Each time I visit them, as I did a few weeks ago, I find myself in awe of the immense skill, courage and sacrifice of our forces. It is right that we put on record in this house - and for times to come - our gratitude for their immeasurable contribution to our security.

Mr Speaker, we should also pay tribute to the service and sacrifice of our allies in the 42-country coalition - including that of the 873 American soldiers who have been killed, and of two of our closest partners in central Helmand - the Danes and Estonians - who have disproportionately suffered among the largest losses of all.

Every time I read to this house the names of those who have lost their lives in Afghanistan; every time I write a letter of condolence to their families; every time I meet the wounded at Selly Oak; I ask myself whether we can justify sending our young men and women to join our allies to fight on the other side of the world.

And I have to conclude:

• That when the safety of our country is at stake we can not and will not walk away.

• That three-quarters of the most serious terror plots against the UK have roots in the border and mountain areas of Afghanistan and Pakistan

• That as our security services report to me, while the sustained pressure on al Qaeda in Pakistan combined with military action in Afghanistan is having a suppressive effect on al Qaeda, the main element of the threat to Britain still emanates from al Qaeda and Pakistan

• That a peaceful and stable Afghanistan would be a strategic failure for al Qaeda

Our objective is clear and focused; to prevent al Qaeda launching attacks on our streets and threatening legitimate government in Afghanistan and Pakistan. But if we limit ourselves simply to targeting al Qaeda — without building the capacity of Afghanistan and Pakistan to deal with terrorism and violent extremism — the security gains will not endure.

So over the last two years we have sought to build and support the Afghan army and police and to work with the Pakistan security forces. Our strategy is dedicated to counter-insurgency and what we have called 'Afghanisation'. This guiding purpose - reinforced in our strategy and in the NATO strategy in April - is at the heart of the announcements I am making today.

First Mr Speaker our work with Pakistan against terrorism and extremism. At the meeting of the friends of democratic Pakistan, which I chaired in New York on September 24th together with President Obama and President Zardari, there is now a clear plan for stabilisation and a policy that will assist reconstruction. We welcomed the recent success of the Pakistan government against the Pakistan Taliban in Swat, Dir and Buner. The support of the opposition now demonstrates that a wide cross section of Pakistan society accepts that terrorism poses a threat as serious to Pakistan as to the rest of the world. It is vital that basic services and economic assistance be provided in the liberated areas as soon as security conditions allow. So the Development Secretary is today announcing a further British contribution of £10m, in addition to the £22m we have already provided for humanitarian assistance.

Second, Mr Speaker, in Afghanistan we will now move further and faster to implement our strategy: one that starts with training, mentoring and partnering the afghan army and police. The more the Afghans can take responsibility for security, the less our coalition forces will be needed in the long term - and the sooner our troops will come home.

In recent weeks I have discussed this approach with President Obama, secretary of state Clinton, NATO Secretary General Rasmussen, Admiral Mullen, the U.S. Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and Generals Petraeus and Mcchrystal - as well as with our own military commanders here and on the ground.

Britain supports general Mcchrystal's ambition to accelerate the growth of the Afghan security forces, with the Afghan army building to 134,000 by next October.

The Afghans are committed to the recruitment of 5,000 soldiers a month from next spring; the new NATO training mission established at Strasbourg expects to help train 40,000 afghan soldiers in 2010; and Britain is setting up a new training centre which will train around 900 junior officers and NCOs each month.

Last year there were 4200 Afghan soldiers in Helmand, this year there are fifty per cent more. At our request the Afghan government undertook to send more units to support Operation Panther's Claw - and while those units arrived, they were below strength and not yet fully ready for the task. In a province which faces 30 per cent of the violence in the country we need more and better Afghan participation.

And that is why I can announce:

o That the Afghans will set up a corps headquarters in Helmand

o And that British forces will be ready to partner 5,000 of the 10,000 Afghan troops the coalition will be training in Helmand - not just embedding mentors with Afghan units, but working integrally right up the command chain

In future operations the protection of populated areas must be the shared responsibility of Afghan and coalition forces. This will be central to the new benchmarks and timelines we will set out as part of a new framework for the transition to Afghan authority - Afghan forces taking responsibility for security for the Afghan people, area by area.

Mr Speaker, as 19 Light Brigade completes its tour of duty, I know the whole house will join me in thanking Brigadier Tim Radford and the men and women he leads for their service throughout this hard-fought summer - and join me also in sending our best wishes to 11 Light Brigade who are replacing them.

11 Light Brigade will deploy with further enhancements to deal with the deadly threat from IEDs - including more specialist troops, and more equipment - to protect our forces, to find and defuse the IEDs, and to identify and target the networks who build and set them.

19 Brigade were able to prevent 1200 IEDs from being detonated. They will pass on this experience to their successors, together with the equipment enhancements I announced on my recent visit and which are now coming on stream this month and next:

• Increased flying hours for unmanned aerial vehicles (33% for Hermes, 50% for Desert Hawk and next year 80% for Reaper)

• An extra £20m contributing to a four-fold increase in the total number of Mastiff and Ridgback mine-protected vehicles since April

• And the first Merlin helicopters to be deployed to Helmand in two weeks.

This is highly specialised equipment which must be manufactured, delivered and adapted - and personnel must be trained to operate it - before it can be put into action. But, Mr Speaker, no one should doubt our commitment to responding as fast as we possibly can to the new and deadly tactics of the Taleban - nor should they doubt the scale of our financial commitment to our soldiers and to this campaign. Since 2006-07 we have increased annual military spending on the Afghan operation - spending from the Treasury Reserve, in addition to the Defence budget - from 700 million to £1.5bn to £2.6bn to more than £3.5bn this year.

So Mr Speaker, we are determined to provide our forces with the resources they need to keep them safe. But we are also determined to make the right decisions about equipment and about troop deployments as part of our wider strategy.

To meet the changing demands of the campaign, which require greater concentration of our forces in Central Helmand, we have confirmed the decision we made in the summer: that one of the British units, the regional battle group for Southern Afghanistan, will be redeployed to Helmand with immediate effect.

And Mr Speaker, to support our plan to train more Afghan soldiers and police, while at the same time maintaining the security of our forces, I have agreed in principle a new force level subject to the following conditions.

First, that a new Afghan government demonstrates its commitment to bring forward the Afghan troops to be trained and to fight alongside our forces - and I talked yesterday to President Karzai and Dr Abdullah and received assurances that this will happen.

Second, that as before every soldier and unit deployed to Afghanistan is fully equipped for the operations they are asked to undertake.

Third, that our commitment is part of an agreed approach across the international coalition, with all countries bearing their fair share.

The combination of force levels, equipment levels and tasks I am setting out today follows the clear military advice from the Chiefs of Staff and our commanders on the ground: on implementing our strategy; and on reducing the risk to our forces. And it is on this basis that I have agreed in principle to a new British force level of 9,500, which will be put into effect once these conditions are met.

Mr Speaker, we do not yet know the result of the first round of the Afghan elections. But while these were the first ever elections run by the Afghans themselves, and took place against the backdrop of a serious insurgency, we cannot be anything other than dissatisfied with the intimidation and corruption which has been exposed by Afghan and international observers. The Electoral Complaints Commission has set out a process of investigation including the disqualification of fraudulent votes and this process must be allowed to run its course.

When I spoke to President Obama last week, we agreed that when a new government is formed, the international community including Afghanistan's neighbours must develop a contract with the new government including:

• Commitment to growing the Afghan army;

• Tough action on corruption;

• A more inclusive political process, including reaching out to reconcilable elements of the insurgency;

• And stronger Afghan control of local affairs.

These are the necessary changes I discussed with President Karzai and Dr Abdullah yesterday

- for without them the efforts of our military will be hampered, and the new Afghan government will not gain the trust of its people.

Mr Speaker, a better future for Afghanistan, with its village and rural population, can only be forged if there is stronger governance right down to district level. And so last year we doubled the number of Civilian Stabilisation Advisers, and now our joint civilian-military stabilisation teams - the first in Afghanistan - are supporting not just Governor Mangal but district governors and village Shuras.

During the last year four new district governors have been appointed in Helmand. The Afghan government is now functioning in 9 out of its 13 districts, compared to 5 last year; and we are supporting community councils to consult with thousands of local people.

To ensure this work has immediate backing, I announced last month an extra £20 million for stabilisation in Helmand - money that is already being disbursed - increasing the number of Afghan national police in Helmand by 1000 a year for three years; building a new police training academy; and building new facilities for district governors.

And we are working with coalition partners to extend such support to the 34 provincial governors and 400 district governors right across Afghanistan. British aid will continue to help pay the salaries of teachers and doctors, but we are also ready to fund and partner the first Afghan stabilisation teams sent from Kabul to work alongside us in Helmand - reinforcing the hard-won gains of our forces in this hardest of summers, while fostering greater Afghan responsibility for their own affairs.

For Mr Speaker, we will have prevailed in Afghanistan when our troops are coming home because the Afghans have not only the will to fight but the ability to take control of their own affairs.

So the right strategy is the one that finishes the job - by giving the Afghans the tools to take over.

Mr Speaker, a safer Afghanistan is a safer Britain.

A stronger Pakistan is a safer Britain.

We must never again let the territory of this region, or any region, become a base for terror on the underground, the streets, the cities and airports of Britain. We must not permit it. We will not permit it.

We have the right strategy, and we will see it through.

I commend this statement to the house.