

**RELEASE
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From: Abedin, Huma <AbedinH@state.gov>
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From: Withers, Anne M
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Sent: Thu Dec 16 06:02:08 2010
Subject: (AP) Germany: pullout from Afghanistan to start in 2011

BERLIN (AP) - Germany's foreign minister is playing down the country's expectations for Afghanistan's future while reiterating that German troops will start their withdrawal by the end of next year as planned. Guido Westerwelle told parliament December 16 that after nearly a decade in Afghanistan, Germany has "more realistic expectations" for the country, saying that Berlin is no longer expecting good governance but the more achievable goal of "good-enough governance." Westerwelle says German troops will start withdrawing as planned in late 2011 and start handing over the responsibility to Afghan authorities by the middle of next year. He says the last of Germany's current 4,600 troops are to leave by 2014, saying the withdrawal must not endanger allied troops or leave the country in the hands of the Taliban.