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Afghanistan



briefing

JANUARY 2005



ISAF
Evolution



Working
with other
security
actors



Helping secure Afghanistan's future

NATO is leading international peacekeeping efforts in Afghanistan and helping bring peace and stability to the country after three decades of turmoil.

“Our own security
is closely linked
to the future of
Afghanistan”
Jaap de Hoop Scheffer

This groundbreaking operation, launched in August 2003 when NATO took command of the UN-mandated International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), was the Alliance's first mission beyond the Euro-Atlantic area. As such, it has demonstrated NATO's resolve and ability to address new security challenges wherever they may

arise to the benefit to all involved: to Afghanistan and its people, the United Nations and the wider international community.

In the words of NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer: “Afghanistan is a top priority for NATO. Our own security is closely linked ►

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“NATO is seeking to help build a multi-ethnic, gender-friendly and stable Afghanistan”



to the future of Afghanistan as a stable, secure country where citizens can rebuild their lives after decades of war.”

ISAF was originally created to help the then newly formed Afghan Transitional Authority maintain security in Kabul and its surrounding areas so that the Transitional Authority and UN personnel could operate in a secure environment. Troop-contributing nations were additionally called upon to help the Transitional Authority set up new Afghan security and armed forces. In effect, a three-way partnership was established between the Transitional Authority, ISAF and the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) to lead Afghanistan to a more peaceful and prosperous future.

ISAF’s mandate has since been expanded to include supporting the Afghan government’s efforts to extend its authority beyond Kabul to make the country safer, more peaceful and more stable. Today, in addition to the area around Kabul, NATO forces are helping provide security in nine Afghan provinces, covering some 185,000 square kilometres, and preparing to expand the mission further in the course of 2005.

Ultimately, NATO is seeking to help build a multi-ethnic, gender-friendly and stable Afghanistan, capable of looking after its own security needs, without the need for an open-ended political-military commitment.

To this end, the Alliance is currently helping provide area security in those parts of Afghanistan where it already has a presence. NATO is also providing technical and logistical assistance in some areas of security sector reform. Allied representatives, the NATO Senior Civilian Representative and the ISAF Commander, are engaged with various political actors to promote political participation and the rule of law. And NATO is assisting political initiatives aimed at bolstering Afghan governance, such as the *Loya Jirga* or grand council of December 2003 and January 2004, which drew up a constitution, and the presidential election of October 2004.

ISAF is also operating Kabul International Airport, which is a vital lifeline into and out of Afghanistan. And it is coordinating hundreds of civil-military projects that are providing for basic human needs, improving the quality of life and instilling a new sense of hope among the civilian population. ■

ISAF evolution

Even before NATO took charge of ISAF in August 2003, Allied nations had at all times contributed more than 90 per cent of ISAF's troops. The mission was led for the first six months by the United Kingdom (ISAF I), then between June 2002 and January 2003 by Turkey (ISAF II) and between February and August 2003 jointly by Germany and the Netherlands (ISAF III).

This sequential approach to commanding ISAF achieved impressive results on the ground but was hampered by a lack of continuity. It put great pressure on lead nations who carried responsibility for ISAF's strategic direction, planning and force generation as well as the provision of essential operational capabilities, such as intelligence and communications. And, since lead nations were only prepared to carry such responsibility for six-month periods, there was no let-up in the quest to identify new lead nations and with each change a new headquarters had to be established.

NATO first became involved in ISAF in response to a request from Germany and the Netherlands for support in the planning and execution of ISAF III. The Alliance's assumption of the strategic command, control and coordination of the entire mission was, therefore, a logical continuation of this process. NATO's enhanced role overcame the

problem of a continual search every six months for a new lead nation. Moreover, the creation of a permanent ISAF headquarters added stability, increased continuity and enabled smaller countries, which find it difficult to act as lead nations, to play a stronger role within a multinational structure. In this way, NATO has agreed a schedule for commanding ISAF until 2007.

In October 2003, UN Security Council Resolution 1510 paved the way for ISAF to expand its mission beyond Kabul to help the government of Afghanistan extend its authority to the rest of the country and provide a safe and secure environment conducive to free and fair elections, the spread of the rule of law and the reconstruction of the country.

NATO has been expanding its presence in Afghanistan via the creation of Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRT). These are teams of international



“ISAF numbers some 8,000 troops from 36 countries, including all 26 NATO nations”





“Enhanced security presence contributed to a calm environment for voting and helped ensure the election’s success”



civilian and military personnel working in Afghanistan’s provinces to extend the authority of the central government and to provide a safer and more secure environment in which reconstruction can take place.

As a first step, NATO took command of the previously German-led PRT in Kunduz in January 2004. This served as a pilot scheme for other ISAF-led PRTs. At the Alliance’s Istanbul Summit, which was attended by Afghan President Hamid Karzai, NATO leaders announced that the Alliance was taking responsibility for four more PRTs – the UK-led PRTs in Mazar-e-Sharif and Maimana, the German-led PRT in Feyzabad and the Dutch-led PRT in Baghlan – and to establish a logistics support base near Mazar-e-Sharif and temporary satellite presences in Sar-e-Pol, Samangan and Sherberghan. NATO also agreed to deploy extra troops in support of the electoral process, in the run-up to and during the presidential election.

At the time of the election, which took place on 9 October 2004, NATO had more than 10,000 troops in Afghanistan, including quick reaction forces both in and out of theatre. This enhanced security presence contributed to a calm environment for voting and helped

ensure the election’s success. In the event, some 10.5 million people registered to vote and 8.1 million cast ballots on the day, 55.5 per cent of whom voted for President Karzai, hitherto chairman of the Transitional Authority.

Elections are scheduled to take place in the course of 2005 at parliamentary, provincial and local levels. In preparation for these ballots, NATO is continuing to expand the number of PRTs under its command moving progressively westwards from the north of the country. In addition, it is planning to increase its presence during the electoral period in a similar fashion to what it did around the October 2004 presidential election.

The North Atlantic Council (NAC), the Alliance’s highest decision-making body, provides political direction to ISAF, in close consultation with non-NATO ISAF troop-contributing nations. To advance the political aspect of NATO’s engagement in the country, NATO appointed Hikmet Çetin, a former Turkish foreign minister, as its Senior Civilian Representative in January 2004. He provides advice to, and receives guidance from, the NAC and works in close coordination with the ISAF Commander, the Afghan authorities and the UNAMA as well as



AFGHANISTAN

Population: approx. 28.5 million (July 2004)

Area: 650,000 km²

Land boundaries:

China, Iran, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan

Ethnic groups:

Pashtun 42%, Tajik 27%, Hazara 9%, Minor ethnic groups (Aimaks, Turkmen, Baloch, and others) 13%, Uzbek 9%

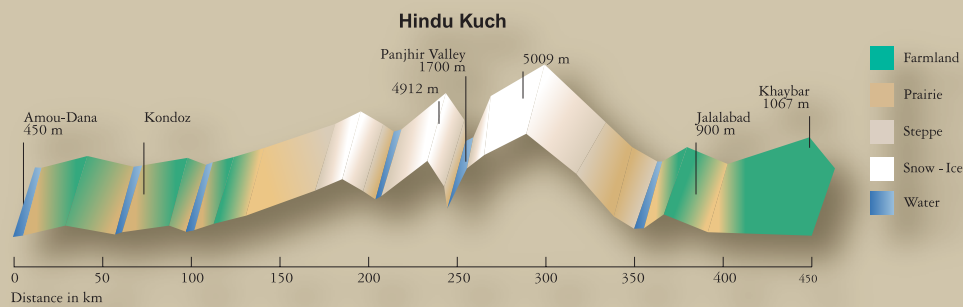


Photo: L. Penney

other bodies of the international community present in the country.

Strategic coordination, command and control is exercised by Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers, Europe (SHAPE) in Mons, Belgium, which also hosts the ISAF international coordination cell to involve non-NATO participating nations. Allied Joint Force Command Brunssum in the

Netherlands acts as the operational-level headquarters between SHAPE and ISAF headquarters in Kabul. Through this “reach-back” capability, the ISAF Commander is able to draw on a vast pool of staff expertise and specialised assets in such areas as strategic planning without having to deploy them into Afghanistan.



Working with other security actors



Photo: B. Walsh

“NATO is able through ISAF to help create the stability that is a pre-requisite for successful reconstruction”

NATO is not the only outside security actor currently operating in Afghanistan. In addition to ISAF, the US-led, war-fighting operation *Enduring Freedom* that ousted the Taliban and *al-Qaida* in 2001 remains active to combat the residual threat that these groups and others continue to pose, predominantly in southern and south-eastern areas of Afghanistan.

Currently, in addition to NATO's five PRTs, there are 14 PRTs under Operation *Enduring Freedom*. The ISAF Commander meets up with his US counterpart in Operation *Enduring Freedom* every week to coordinate activities and great effort is made to ensure maximum synergy between the two operations.

Both the Senior Civilian Representative and the ISAF Commander exchange information and assessments on a regular basis within a quadrilateral forum including the two of them, the *Enduring Freedom* Commander and the US Ambassador. Moreover, a monthly meeting is held among these actors and the other senior international officials to increase cohesion of effort.



Photo: B. Walsh



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Various members of the G8, the group of the world's wealthiest countries and Russia, have also taken the lead in helping Afghanistan in specific areas with ISAF support. Japan, for example, is the lead nation overseeing the Demobilisation, Disarmament and Reintegration (DDR) Process.

The DDR process has two components to it: the cantonment of heavy weapons and the disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration of Afghan militia. As of the beginning of December 2004, almost 2,800 of an estimated 4,500 heavy weapons had been disabled and cantoned. In the province of Kabul, where ISAF has overseen the process, all heavy weapons have been cantoned. Moreover, some 20,000 former militia members have been disarmed, demobilised and reintegrated into society.

The United States is leading international efforts to train the Afghan National Army. Germany has taken the lead in training the Afghan National Police. Italy is the lead nation involved in judicial reform. And the United Kingdom is leading international efforts to help combat the production of and trade in narcotics.

The Afghan National Army has some 14,000 soldiers, including the first elements of four regional corps

headquarters in Gardez, Kandahar, Herat and Mazar-e-Sharif. The Afghan National Police had some 48,000 officers deployed by the time of the October 2004 presidential election. A new Criminal Code has been approved and several associated laws are currently being drafted. In May 2003, the Afghan government adopted a National Drug Control Strategy aiming to reduce production of illicit drugs by 70 per cent by 2007 and to eliminate it by 2012. A Counter-Narcotics Directorate is embedded in the Interior Ministry.

In spite of the progress that has been made to date, great challenges remain. The terrorist threat to ISAF is a major source of concern. Moreover, persistent Taliban and *al-Qaida* activity in southern and south-eastern Afghanistan undermine ISAF's mission by creating a climate of uncertainty. The drug trade, organised crime and the poor state of local infrastructure remain longer-term challenges for Afghanistan and the international community working to rebuild the country.

While the task of rebuilding Afghanistan is primarily one for the Afghans themselves, NATO is able through ISAF to help create the stability that is a prerequisite for successful reconstruction.

For more information on ISAF, see www.afnorth.nato.int/ISAF



“In spite of the progress that has been made to date, great challenges remain”



Photo: B. Walsh

ISAF International Security Assistance Force



The International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) has a peace-enforcement mandate under Chapter VII of the UN Charter. The mandate, nevertheless, differs from the peace-enforcement mandates under which the Alliance has operated in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo, where NATO-led forces were the primary security provider. In Afghanistan, NATO is playing a supportive role to enhance security and Afghan authorities retain ownership of the process. The mandate was created in accordance with the Bonn Conference of December 2001 at which Afghan opposition leaders gathered to begin the process of reconstructing their country. Its tasks are detailed in a Military Technical Agreement of January 2002 between the ISAF Commander and the Afghan Transitional Authority. These include

assisting the Afghan Transitional Authority in the maintenance of security in Kabul and its surrounding areas so that the Transitional Authority and UN personnel could operate in a secure environment.

ISAF also assists in developing reliable security structures; identifying reconstruction needs; and training and building up future Afghan security forces. Four UN Security Council Resolutions, 1386, 1413, 1444 and 1510, relate to ISAF, but it is not a UN force. Rather, it is a coalition of the willing deployed under the authority of the UN Security Council, supported and now led by NATO and financed by the troop-contributing nations. As of December 2004, ISAF numbered some 8,000 troops from 36 countries, including all 26 NATO nations.



Afghanistan after the Taliban

In the wake of the ouster of the Taliban, Afghanistan was one of the poorest countries in the world as a result of more than two decades of fighting, repressive rule and the aftermath of war. Since the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979, more than two million Afghans are estimated to have been killed and many times that number wounded or maimed for life. Afghanistan is the most heavily mined country in the world with an estimated five to seven million land mines and 750,000 pieces of unexploded ordnance. According to the UN Development Programme, 70 per cent of Afghanistan's 22 million inhabitants are malnourished and life expectancy is 40. The World Bank estimates annual per capita GDP to be about \$200.

In December 2001, Afghan opposition leaders met in Bonn to set up a new

government structure for their country, specifically the Afghan Transitional Authority. In June 2002 a national *Loya Jirga*, a grand council peculiar to Afghanistan, took place giving the Transitional Authority 18 months in which to hold a constitutional *Loya Jirga* to adopt a constitution and 24 months in which to hold national elections. The *Loya Jirga* took place from December 2003 to January 2004 and a presidential election in October 2004. Parliamentary, provincial and local elections are scheduled for 2005. The international community pledged US\$ 4.7 billion for the first three years of reconstruction at a donors' conference in Tokyo in January 2002 to be administered by the World Bank. At a second donors' conference held in Berlin in March 2003, a further US\$ 8.2 billion were pledged for the next three years.

Photo: F. Hudec

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