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Afghanistan



# briefing



Extending  
security



Supporting  
governance,  
reconstruction and  
development



## Helping secure Afghanistan's future

The Allies are united  
in their commitment to  
keep the NATO-led  
force in the country  
for as long as  
the Afghan government  
deems it necessary

**A**s part of wider international efforts, NATO-led forces are working to help secure Afghanistan's future and prevent the country from being used as a base for terrorists again. Afghanistan is the front line in the fight against terrorism and other threats to universally recognized values. Its security is directly linked to that of NATO member countries.

The NATO-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) is operating under a United Nations mandate and at the request of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan.

ISAF is a multinational force, which in April 2008 comprised troops from 40 countries, including all 26 NATO member

countries. It is assisting the Afghan government in extending its authority across the country and establishing a stable and secure environment in which sustainable reconstruction, development, and good governance can take place.

ISAF's ultimate goal is to enable Afghanistan to provide for its own ►

security without the support of ISAF. To this end, one of ISAF's key tasks is to help train and build up the Afghan National Army and security forces. NATO is also helping the Afghan government to develop the necessary defence structures and institutions through a substantial programme of defence cooperation that was launched by a joint NATO-Afghan declaration in September 2006.

However, security cannot be achieved by military means alone. It is essential that ISAF's military efforts be duly coordinated with the civilian assistance provided by other key actors in Afghanistan in a comprehensive manner. NATO's engagement is an integral part of the broader international community's support for an Afghan-driven stabilization process. The Alliance is working

closely with the Afghan government as well as other international organizations and actors.

NATO's strategy in Afghanistan focuses on extending security, and supporting governance, reconstruction and development. A Senior Civilian Representative has been appointed to coordinate the political-military aspects of the Alliance's commitment to Afghanistan. This envoy works closely with ISAF, liaises with the Afghan government and other international organizations, and maintains contacts with neighbouring countries.

Helping Afghanistan recover after decades of civil war, the repressive rule of the Taliban and the aftermath of war is a long-term challenge. Progress is being made but much remains to be done.

Allied leaders stressed that "Afghanistan is the Alliance's key priority" at NATO's Summit in Bucharest in April 2008, where a meeting dedicated to Afghanistan was held with ISAF partners and high-level representatives of international organizations. They published a strategic vision for ISAF, guided by four key principles: a firm and shared long-term commitment; support for enhanced Afghan leadership and responsibility; a comprehensive approach by the international community, bringing together civilian and military efforts; and increased cooperation with Afghanistan's neighbours, especially Pakistan. This declaration is supported by a medium-term political-military plan for ISAF, which will be updated regularly and will serve as a basis for measuring progress. ■

## Afghanistan







## Extending security

**ISAF has gradually extended its presence across the country. NATO and ISAF are also working to build Afghanistan's capacity to provide for its own security.**

Since NATO took command of ISAF in 2003, the force has extended its presence across the whole of Afghanistan, in a phased approach that was completed in 2006 (*see also "Brief History of ISAF" on back cover*).

A key focus of ISAF operations is to create the security conditions that will allow sustainable reconstruction, development, and good governance to take place on a country-wide scale.

A good example of this is ongoing Operation Achilles, a joint operation with Afghan forces, which was launched in northern Helmand province in March 2007 at the request of the Afghan government. The key objective is to secure the area around the Kajaki Dam. This is a long-term initiative and huge undertaking. Once rehabilitated, the dam will improve the water supply for local communities, restore irrigation systems for farmlands and provide sufficient electric power for

two million residents and commerce and industry. The area has been attacked several times by the Taliban in an attempt to disrupt the progress of the reconstruction project. Considerable progress was made in securing and stabilizing the area over spring and summer 2007. The centre of the Sangin district is now under Afghan government control, the bazaar is open for business again, and a new school and police station have been built.

ISAF's security and stabilization operations are conducted in cooperation with the Afghan security forces. As it builds up in numbers and capacity, the Afghan National Army is increasingly able to take on the leadership of these operations (*for more see "Empowering Afghanistan's security forces", page 5*).

Extending security in Afghanistan requires increasing security at its borders. This is why ISAF works closely with Pakistan, a neighbour of Afghanistan

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## Commanding ISAF

The North Atlantic Council (NAC) is the Alliance's principal decision-making body. It provides overall coordination and political direction for ISAF. This is done in close consultation with non-NATO ISAF troop-contributing nations.

Based on the political guidance from the North Atlantic Council, overall strategic command and control of ISAF is exercised by the Allied Command for Operations which is based at Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers in Europe (SHAPE) in Mons, Belgium. An International Coordination Cell at SHAPE facilitates military coordination with non-NATO troop-contributors.

Under SHAPE, the Joint Force Command Brunssum in the Netherlands is responsible for staffing, deploying and sustaining the mission. Brunssum serves as the operational-level headquarters between ISAF headquarters in Kabul and the strategic command at SHAPE. Through this "reach-back" capability, the ISAF Commander in Afghanistan is able to draw on a vast pool of staff expertise and specialized assets in areas such as strategic planning, without having to deploy them to Afghanistan. ■

that has a vital role to play in the fight against terrorism. Practical military-to-military cooperation is taking place through a tripartite commission, which includes senior military officials from Afghanistan, Pakistan and ISAF.

Considerable progress has been made. Three fifths of Afghanistan is considered as stable – the regions in the north, west and around the capital have been relatively calm for well over a year. Today, the key security challenge remains in the southern provinces of Helmand, Uruzgan and Kandahar, where engagements with the Taliban insurgents have increased as ISAF expanded its operations into new areas. However, the insurgents suffer regular defeats whenever they attempt to confront ISAF and Afghan

forces. These defeats have forced Taliban extremists to change tactics and to resort increasingly to terrorist activities. However, from October 2006 through to the end of 2007, 70 per cent of terrorist events have occurred in 10 per cent of Afghanistan's 398 districts, where less than 6 per cent of the Afghan population live.

Other ISAF supporting security tasks include support provided to the Afghan government in the removal and cantonnement of heavy weapons belonging to various armed factions in the country to special government-controlled sites. They have also supported the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of former combatants, and assisted the Afghan government in the disarmament of illegally armed groups.

## ISAF: a multinational endeavour

In April 2008, 40 countries from around the globe were contributing troops to ISAF, including all 26 NATO Allies.

Among non-NATO troop contributors are countries from NATO's Partnership for Peace: Albania, Austria, Azerbaijan, Croatia, Finland, Georgia, Ireland, Sweden, and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia\*, and Ukraine.

Jordan, which participates in NATO's Mediterranean Dialogue, also contributes to the mission.

Troop-contributors from further afield include Australia, New Zealand and Singapore – these are among what are often referred to as NATO "contact countries" (non-member countries that have less formal

relationships with NATO but share NATO's values and often contribute to NATO-led operations).

Other countries are providing logistical support for ISAF operations. Many Partner countries in the Caucasus and Central Asia are providing support ranging from over-flight rights to the leasing of military bases to individual Allies and transit agreements.

In April 2008, an agreement between Russia and NATO was signed, which will facilitate land transit across Russian territory of non-military equipment destined for ISAF. ■

\* Turkey recognizes the Republic of Macedonia with its constitutional name.



Photo by MOD Netherlands

## Empowering Afghanistan's security forces

Building an effective Afghan National Army (ANA) is critical to building a self-sustaining Afghanistan. One of ISAF's key military tasks is to increase the ANA's capability and reach through mentoring and support.

Afghan national security forces are growing in strength and capability every day. In 2004, the ANA barely existed. In April 2008, the force stood at about 50 000 and is expected to rise to 70 000 by the end of the year. Many Afghan troops are conducting operations side by side with ISAF forces. In several cases, the ANA is leading major operations. This was the case, for example, when Afghan troops successfully retook Musa Qala, a Taliban stronghold in Helmand province, in December 2007.

The United States is the G8 lead nation for the development of the ANA. Significant progress has been made, though further work is required to strengthen



the Afghan forces' mobility, combat support and combat-service support.

ISAF's involvement with the ANA focuses more on its employment and on bringing Afghan forces up to operating capability. ISAF Operational Mentor and Liaison Teams (OMLTs) support training and deploy with ANA troops on operations in an advisory role. These teams also play an important role in coordinating ANA and ISAF operations. By March 2008, ISAF had ►

**Afghan national security forces are growing in strength and capability every day**

## ISAF post-operations humanitarian relief fund

A fund was set up in 2006 to provide quick humanitarian assistance in the immediate aftermath of significant ISAF operations.

Assistance includes the provision of food, shelter and medicines as well as the repair of buildings or key infrastructure. Such assistance is provided on a short-term basis and responsibility is handed over to civilian actors as soon as circumstances permit.

The fund, established under the auspices of the Commander of ISAF, consists entirely of voluntary donations from ISAF troop-contributing countries. By early 2008, over € 1 000 000 had been disbursed. The North Atlantic Council is regularly updated on the use of the fund through its Senior Civilian Representative in Afghanistan. ■





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**An important part of building Afghanistan's capacity to provide for its own security is to help develop the necessary national defence structures and institutions**

deployed 34 OMLTs, each composed of between 12 and 19 personnel. The Alliance is working to increase this number significantly.

Individual NATO member countries are also supporting the ANA by helping finance the development of training infrastructure and by donating military equipment and ammunition.

### **NATO-Afghan programme of cooperation**

Complementing ISAF's work in training and building up the Afghan National Army, an important part of building Afghanistan's capacity to provide for its own security is to help develop the necessary national defence structures and institutions.

NATO is lending support in this area under a joint programme, launched in September 2006 in a joint declaration by NATO and Afghanistan, which established a framework for cooperation. This cooperation will concentrate on defence reform, defence institution-building and the military aspects of security-sector reform, as well as on

other areas, such as promoting interoperability between Afghan and NATO forces. Public diplomacy will be another focus of cooperation.

Following consultations in 2007, NATO agreed to assist the Afghan Ministry of Defence in developing a sustainable defence-planning process and budget capability. Work is being taken forward in the context of a Five Year Strategic Defence Plan, currently being drawn up by the Afghan authorities, which will provide the basis for decisions on the future structure, size and composition of the Afghan national defence forces. NATO will also provide training opportunities and courses related to defence reform and defence planning.

Through a Trust Fund project, support is also being given to Afghanistan to secure its munitions (*see box below*). Other areas of cooperation currently being considered under the NATO-Afghan programme of cooperation include support to strengthen Afghanistan's professional military education system and to promote integrity in the defence sector. ■

## **Securing Afghan munitions**

A two-year Trust Fund project, due to be launched in spring 2008, will support Afghanistan in enhancing the physical security and effective stockpile management of its munitions.

The project aims to build national capacity. Technical assistance and advice will be given to improve security and management at two national ammunition depots near Kabul at Khairabad and Chimtalla. Support is also being provided to the Afghan

authorities for the development of a national action plan for ammunition stockpile management, including the disposal of munitions.

Total costs for the project, which is financed by voluntary contributions from individual NATO members, Partner countries and other interested countries, are estimated at € 6.29 million. Project implementation will be overseen by the NATO Maintenance and Supply Agency (NAMSA). ■



The international community's goal of helping to securing Afghanistan's future will require a long-term commitment

## Supporting governance, reconstruction and development

**SAF's mission is to provide the security needed for civilian reconstruction and development without which progress will be temporary. There can be no development without security in Afghanistan, nor can long-term security be achieved without development. Coordination of a wide spectrum of civilian and military instruments in a comprehensive manner is required.**

There has been substantial progress in Afghanistan since 2002. More than 58 000 reconstruction and development projects have been launched across Afghanistan, which has contributed to increasing gross domestic product. The average Afghan's income has doubled. Access to basic health care is improving and infant mortality is falling. School enrolment of children, including girls, has increased from 900 000 to 6.4 million over the last five years. Four million refugees have returned.

Nevertheless, the development challenge in Afghanistan remains huge. The country is one of the poorest countries in the world, ranked 174 out of 178, according to the Human Development Report on Afghanistan for 2007,

commissioned by the UN Development Programme (UNDP). The country is also one of the youngest in the world with over half of its population under 18. The unemployment rate is generally estimated to be around 40 per cent and adult literacy levels are very low. A key priority must be to provide young Afghans with opportunities to learn and to earn a living to prevent them from becoming radicalized or being drawn into the drug economy.

The UNDP's report highlights, in particular, the need for the rule of law and governance to underpin development in Afghanistan. Unfortunately, these remain weak in a large part of the country. The ever-growing drugs trade is a key challenge to the expansion of the rule of law. It feeds pervasive corruption





Every effort is made to ensure that initiatives are in line with the Afghan government's priorities



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and finances warlords, organized crime and the insurgents, and could destabilize the country if left unchecked (see box, page 9).

In light of the many challenges that remain, it is clear that the international community's goal of helping to securing Afghanistan's future will require a long-term commitment. International donors pledged their continued support at a conference in London in January 2006, where the Afghanistan Compact was agreed with the Afghan government. It set benchmarks for progress over the next five years in specific areas concerning security; governance, rule of law and human rights; and economic and social development. Progress will be reviewed at a conference in Paris in June 2008.

### **Afghan-led development strategy**

Work on achieving the benchmarks agreed in the Afghan Compact has been taken forward in the framework of an interim Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS). Following a comprehensive consultation process across Afghanistan, a new ANDS is expected to be finalized by mid-2008.

ISAF is working with the Afghan authorities and international actors to facilitate reconstruction and development

according to the priorities identified by the Afghans themselves.

Having completed its expansion across Afghanistan, ISAF has been able to work with the full array of civilian actors to build up a comprehensive picture of what is being done or needs to be done to meet the needs of the Afghan people in different parts of the country. By helping to record progress and identify gaps, the Afghan Country Stability Picture has proved to be a valuable tool for the Afghan government in directing international assistance towards priority areas.

In exceptional circumstances, where civilian actors are unable to provide assistance because of security or logistical constraints, ISAF itself may carry out or commission reconstruction or development work to meet the needs of the local population. Development advisors are embedded within ISAF's Provincial Reconstruction Teams, Regional Commands and at ISAF Headquarters. Every effort is made to ensure that there is no duplication of effort, and that initiatives are sustainable and in line with the Afghan government's priorities.





## Close coordination among all actors

Two key structures have been set up to help ensure close coordination between the Afghan government, ISAF and other international partners.

A Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board (JCMB) is charged with implementing the Afghanistan Compact. It is chaired by the Afghan president and comprises key government actors and representatives of the international community. A number of functional working groups report to the JCMB. ISAF and NATO's Senior Civilian Representative play a full role in this body.

A Policy Action Group (PAG), created in July 2006 at the initiative of the Afghan president, focuses Afghan and international efforts on fostering improved security. It meets weekly and is supported by ISAF, the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, the World Bank, the European Union and the G-8 nations that have taken the lead in supporting Afghanistan in specific areas\*. The PAG has four working groups on security, intelligence, strategic communications, and reconstruction and development.

\* Japan is overseeing the demobilization, disarmament and reintegration of illegally armed groups. The United States is leading efforts to train the Afghan National Army. Italy is the leading on judicial reform. The United Kingdom is leading counter-narcotics efforts. Germany was leading efforts to train the Afghan National Police, until the European Union took over in summer 2007.

## Counter-narcotics: a major challenge

Afghanistan produces over 90 per cent of the world's illegal opium and is also the largest producer of marijuana, according to a report published by the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) in early 2008. Opium production amounted to over half of Afghanistan's gross domestic product in 2007. While poppy cultivation is falling in northern and central Afghanistan, it continues to grow at an alarming rate in the south and southwest, where governance is weak. These regions, which are Taliban strongholds, accounted for an estimated 78 per cent of Afghanistan's cultivation in 2007. The total export value of opiates produced in and trafficked from Afghanistan that year was estimated at about US\$ 4 billion – only about a quarter of this went to poppy farmers; the rest went to insurgents, warlords and drug traffickers.

The drugs trade threatens Afghanistan's development and security, fostering endemic corruption in the country and financing the insurgency. Afghan drugs are also of direct concern to the international community: the drug-financed insurgency poses security risks for troops deployed in Afghanistan, and the drugs exported end up on the streets of cities across the world, causing serious health and social problems and violent crime.

Experience has shown that an effective counter-narcotics strategy must consist of a comprehensive series of interlocking measures, and that it takes sustained commitment over many years to minimize production.

The Afghan government has the primary responsibility for counter-



narcotics efforts. Its Afghan National Drug Control Strategy defines four priorities: targeting the trafficker; providing alternative rural livelihoods; reducing demand and developing state institutions. The international community is supporting the government's efforts, in particular the United Kingdom, which is the G8 lead nation in this area. ISAF also provides support.

NATO-led forces provide indirect assistance to the counter-narcotics operations of the Afghan government through training, intelligence and logistics. ISAF also helps the Afghan government to explain its counter-narcotics policy to its people. ISAF does not take part in poppy eradication activities. However, when Afghan counter-narcotics officials come under attack, ISAF provides military support if needed.

Support is also being given for the counter-narcotics training of Afghan and Central Asian personnel under a project launched in December 2005 by the NATO-Russia Council. The initiative seeks to build local capacity and to promote regional networking and cooperation by sharing the combined expertise of Russian and NATO member countries with mid-level officers from Afghanistan, Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan. The UNODC acts as the pilot project's executive agent. By spring 2008, nearly 450 officers had been trained under this project. ■

## Provincial Reconstruction Teams are key to ISAF's efforts to support governance, reconstruction and development



### Provincial Reconstruction Teams

Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) are key to ISAF's efforts to support governance, reconstruction and development. These civilian and military teams are helping the Afghan government extend its authority throughout the country, providing area security, and supporting the activities of Afghan, international and non-governmental actors in the provinces.

In March 2008, ISAF was responsible for 26 PRTs, led by 14 different NATO member or Partner countries with a total of 30 countries represented.

The PRTs seek to identify Afghan stakeholders, understand local dynamics and encourage local ownership of reconstruction and development projects. A key priority is to help build sustainable Afghan capabilities by working through and with Afghan authorities.

In places where the security environment does not permit other actors to operate effectively, the PRTs are helping get reconstruction and development projects off the ground and supporting projects to meet short-term needs.

To date, over 7 500 civil-military cooperation projects have been launched

across Afghanistan, of which 75 per cent have already been completed. Schools and infirmaries are being rebuilt. The water and power supply has been re-established in some regions. Bridges and roads are being reconstructed. Support is also being given to local and provincial education initiatives, agriculture and rural development projects, and mediation and conflict-resolution activities. Demining activities are improving safety for civilians.

Specific examples of different kinds of PRT-sponsored projects include:

- the construction of a new provincial hospital in Badghis province by the Spanish-led PRT in Qala-e-Naw, at a cost of US\$ 2.9 million;
- an initiative by the Lithuanian-led PRT in Chaghcharan to deliver 28 micro-hydro plants to Ghowr province to provide power to the local population;
- the construction of a flood-prevention wall in Baghlan province by the Hungarian-led PRT in Pol-e-Khomri, at a cost of US\$ 166 000; and
- the development of a pomegranate nursery in an area where farmers used to grow poppies by the Canadian-led PRT in Kandahar province, at a cost of US\$ 60 000. ■





## Connecting people

NATO's Science for Peace and Security (SPS) Programme has provided the academic community of Kabul with the tools and infrastructure needed to teach and train the next generation of doctors, lawyers, teachers and engineers. High-speed internet access is being provided via the Virtual Silk Highway project, which promotes internet connectivity for academics in the Caucasus and Central Asia.

Another SPS-funded project is establishing a non-stop internet support service for doctors, psychologists and other healthcare workers working with victims of trauma.

NATO's Public Diplomacy Division also regularly funds tours to Afghanistan for opinion leaders and

journalists from NATO countries and other troop-contributing nations, giving them a chance to meet Afghan people and members of the NATO-led force. The aim is to promote better understanding of the situation in Afghanistan and ISAF's multifaceted mission there, including its cooperation with a variety of Afghan and international players.

Similarly, to help promote understanding of NATO, groups of Afghan opinion leaders, members of parliament, students, young political leaders and women are regularly invited to visit to NATO Headquarters and the capitals of NATO countries. Two NATO-Afghan Student Forums have been organized and student conferences are also sponsored in Afghanistan. ■



## Brief history of ISAF

The International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) was created following the Bonn Conference in December 2001, which was held after the repressive Taliban regime had been ousted from power by the US-led coalition, Operation Enduring Freedom. The conference brought together Afghan leaders with representatives of the international community. It led to the establishment of an Afghan Transitional Authority and launched the process of rebuilding Afghanistan.

In this context, a UN Security Council Resolution called for an international force to assist the Afghan Transitional Authority to maintain security in Kabul and surrounding areas. Troop-contributing nations were also called upon to support the development of 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 to lead Afghanistan towards a more peaceful and prosperous future.

ISAF is not a UN force but a coalition of the willing, deployed to Afghanistan under the mandate of a series of UN Security Council Resolutions. In the beginning, the force was commanded by individual Allies on a six-month rotational basis – led first by the United Kingdom, then Turkey, and then jointly by Germany and the Netherlands.

NATO took over responsibility for ISAF in August 2003, after having supported the planning and execution of the German/Dutch command. ISAF is NATO's first operation outside the Euro-Atlantic area.



In October 2003, the UN Security Council authorized NATO-led ISAF to expand its mission beyond Kabul to the rest of the country. ISAF's mission is to help the government of Afghanistan to extend its authority 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.

ISAF's expansion was conducted in a staged approach, over a period of some three years. The initial expansion was to the north of the country in 2003 and 2004, followed by the west in 2005, and finally the south and the east of Afghanistan in 2006. The expansion included ISAF taking over and establishing new civil-military Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) to provide security for aid workers and assist with reconstruction work in the provinces.

ISAF has assisted in providing security for a number of major political milestones in Afghanistan's development. These include the Constitutional Loya Jirga – a grand council specific to Afghanistan, which was convened from December 2003 to January 2004 to adopt a new constitution for the country – as well as the presidential election in October 2004 and parliamentary and provincial elections in September 2005.

The size of ISAF has increased progressively as it expanded its presence. In April 2008, the force numbered around 47 000 troops (including national support elements) from 40 countries – up from about 6 000 troops two years ago. (Forces operating under the US-led Operation Enduring Freedom remain in Afghanistan on a counter-terrorism mission, which is separate to ISAF.) ■

For more information, please see • [www.nato.int/isaf](http://www.nato.int/isaf)

• [www.nato.int/issues/afghanistan](http://www.nato.int/issues/afghanistan)