

AFGHANISTAN
MONTHLY PROGRESS REPORT
June 2011

The UK is engaged in Afghanistan as part of a 48-nation coalition to prevent international terrorists, including Al Qaeda, from again using Afghanistan as a base from which to operate, threatening our security and that of the region.

The Government has committed itself to keeping Parliament informed about developments in Afghanistan on a monthly basis. This is the eighth monthly report and reflects the combined assessment of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, the Ministry of Defence and the Department for International Development.

The Rt Hon. William Hague MP
Secretary of State for Foreign & Commonwealth Affairs

Overview

The UN Security Council unanimously adopted resolutions 1988 (2011) and 1989 (2011). This created two new sanctions regimes to replace the UN Security Council Resolution 1267 (1999) Al-Qaeda and Taliban sanctions regime. This is an important step. It sends a clear signal that now is the time for the Taliban to break with Al-Qaeda and join the political process. We welcome the Government of Afghanistan's support of this initiative and its continued engagement in the implementation of sanctions to counter the insurgency.

June saw the anticipated increase in security incidents. The insurgency continued its attacks in an attempt to reassert itself, but the Afghan National Security Forces continue to respond effectively. It is still early on in the fighting season so it would be premature to draw any definitive conclusions but early indications are that the insurgency is under pressure.

The Special Electoral Court established in December to investigate accusations of electoral fraud following the 18 September Parliamentary elections announced its findings. These called for the dismissal and replacement of 62 of the Lower House's 249 MPs. The Lower House of Parliament responded to the announcement by passing votes of no confidence in the Attorney General, Chief Justice and members of the Supreme Court.

Negotiations between the Afghan Government and the International Monetary Fund on a new IMF programme have stalled. While the Government of Afghanistan has made progress, the IMF is keen to see more robust action in key areas including asset recovery. A UK co-funded forensic audit of the Kabul Bank is now under way.

Political

Reconciliation and Reintegration

On 17 June, the UN Security Council unanimously adopted resolutions 1988 (2011) and 1989 (2011), creating two new sanctions regimes to replace the UN Security Council Resolution 1267 (1999) Al Qaeda and Taliban sanctions regime. Creating a new and separate regime for Afghanistan is an important step. It sends a clear signal that now is the time for the Taliban to break with Al-Qaeda and join the political process.

It allows for broader listing criteria and a greater role for the Government of Afghanistan in consultation on listing and delisting decisions. It also explicitly links delisting individuals with the Kabul Communiqué reconciliation conditions of renouncing violence; cutting ties with Al-Qaida; and accepting the framework of the Afghan constitution.

Regional Developments

The Foreign Secretary visited Afghanistan from 21-23 June. He was accompanied by Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed al Nahyan, UAE Minister for Foreign Affairs. This was the first joint visit by a European and Arab Foreign Minister and demonstrated the breadth and depth of the coalition supporting Afghanistan. They visited UK and UAE troops in Helmand and witnessed first-hand some of the progress made in security, development and governance work. In Kabul the Foreign Ministers made joint calls on President Karzai and other Ministers to discuss a range of issues, including transition progress and political settlement.

The Foreign Secretary went on to Pakistan on 23 June where he held substantive discussions with the Pakistani Prime Minister and acting Foreign Minister for Afghanistan. This took place within the context of President Karzai's visit to Islamabad in early June, which saw the inauguration of the Afghanistan-Pakistan Joint Commission for Peace and Reconciliation, and the coming into force of the Afghanistan-Pakistan Trade Transit Agreement, thereby cementing increasingly productive relations between the two countries.

The International Contact Group (ICG) met in Kabul on 27 June. The four Working Groups on Transition, Long Term International Community Engagement, Reintegration, and Regional Cooperation met the previous day. The UK co-chaired the Reintegration Working Group with Japan.

The ICG gave a strong message of support for Afghanistan from the international community post-2014, but also emphasised the responsibilities of the Government of Afghanistan. The discussions provided a good basis for work towards concrete deliverables for the Bonn Conference and the Istanbul Conference on Regional cooperation later this year.

The Secretary of State for Defence visited Afghanistan from 15-16 June, accompanied by the First Sea Lord and the Chief of the General Staff. He saw British and Estonian troops in action in Nad Ali and discussed transition with the Commanders of Task Force Helmand, the Provincial Reconstruction Team, Regional Command (Southwest) and of ISAF Joint Command. In Kabul, the party met officials from the Afghan Government and the Secretary of State met with his Dutch and Estonian counterparts to discuss the three countries' ongoing partnership in Helmand. Through discussion with the Afghan Government and the NATO Training Mission, the Secretary of State confirmed the appetite and detail of support for the Afghan National Army Officer Academy. UK leadership of the academy was subsequently confirmed by the Prime Minister.

Baroness Warsi attended and addressed the 38th Session of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC) Council of Foreign Ministers conference in Astana from 27-29 June. In her address, Baroness Warsi emphasised our long term commitment to Afghanistan and Pakistan. The visit also provided an opportunity for a meeting with Afghan Foreign Minister Rassoul, as well as for discussions on Afghanistan with the Foreign Ministers of several other countries.

On 28 June the UK-India Strategic Dialogue took place in London. The delegations discussed a wide range of foreign policy matters, including bringing long-term stability to Afghanistan. The Foreign Secretary met the Indian Foreign Minister Krishna on 30 June and discussed India's contribution to development in Afghanistan.

Parliament

On 23 June, the Special Court established to investigate allegations of malpractice from the 18 September Parliamentary elections announced its findings. These called for the replacement of 62 MPs across 29 provinces. The Lower House of Parliament, which had previously declared the Special Court unconstitutional, responded to the announcement by passing votes of no confidence in the Attorney General, Chief Justice and members of the Supreme Court. The Independent Election Commission (IEC) has also questioned the Court's authority. There remains an ongoing dialogue between the Executive, Judiciary, Legislature and the IEC regarding the implementation of the findings. The UK is in contact with the Afghan Government, Parliament, and electoral institutions and continues to reiterate its support for democratic principles. On 25 and 26 June respectively, the EU and UN issued public statements reiterating that Afghanistan's peaceful future lies in the building up of robust democratic institutions based on the rule of law and the clear respect for the separation of powers.

Strengthening the Afghan State

Justice and Rule of Law

On policing, the 4th Criminal Investigations Department course commenced and for the first time included the Counter Narcotics Police of Afghanistan. The female police tashkiel (the number of posts to be filled) for Helmand has been confirmed and the Provincial Chief of Police agreed to support a concentrated literacy training package. For the first time, the Military Prosecutor was deployed to investigate allegations of Police malpractice.

In the justice field the first outreach for the Huquq, (which facilitates the adjudication of civil right cases) will allow, for the first time, people in Marjah to take civil disputes to the state.

Governance

Following the adoption of the Sangin Peace Accord almost six months ago, progress has been made on governance with the establishment of a 25 man interim District Community Council (DCC) in Sangin. Expanded security in Garmsir led to further progress on governance. Six new members were elected by secret ballot to the Garmsir DCC by 350 village elders and other community leaders from the southern area of the District. Nevertheless, there continues to be concern that the Peace Accord is under strain heightened by the onset of the fighting season.

Through UK support to a UNDP anti-corruption project three new complaints offices were established at the Provincial Education Directorate, Deputy Ministry for Islamic Education and Teacher Training Directorate. The complaints offices received 68 new complaints in May 2011 alone.

A senior Afghan woman, Seema Ghani (currently the deputy Minister of Labour Affairs) has been appointed as the head of the Secretariat for the Anti-Corruption Monitoring and Evaluation Committee. She will have a key responsibility to help the Committee fulfil its role as agreed at the London and Kabul 2010 conferences.

In June the UK supported Civilian Technical Assistance Programme deployed advisors to two Government agencies: the Ministry of Public Health and the Office of Administrative Affairs. So far, the UK has helped to embed 55 advisors in 17 Government ministries. These advisors will help develop the skills of civil servants to deliver better services to the Afghan people.

The UK has supported the Provincial Governor's Office in Helmand to improve public financial management, including tax collection. Performance in this area has exceeded expectations: figures published in June revealed that the Provincial Government collected US\$ 7 million in tax during the last financial year, against a target of US\$ 3 million.

Economic Development

The IMF and the Government of Afghanistan have still to agree on a new programme of support. The Government of Afghanistan, through the Central Bank and Ministry of Finance, continue to take a lead on the Kabul Bank audit process, which DFID is co-funding. The IMF is closely monitoring this and other reforms.

The Governor of the Central Bank has resigned. It is absolutely critical that the Government of Afghanistan chooses a good quality replacement with thorough knowledge of the banking sector.

Two former Kabul Bank executives have been arrested. The UK Government welcomes the news of the arrests, but it is important that this is followed by credible legal action if required.

The Afghan Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MoCI) announced that it will be working with British and Belgian investors to begin cashmere processing in Herat. This will create 45 jobs in factories this year, and up to 10,000 jobs through the supply of raw materials. UK support has helped the MoCI undertake negotiations with investors through the 'Supporting Employment and Enterprise Development' programme. This will bring about much needed investment in local Afghan businesses.

Over 4000 students registered for the PRT funded technical vocational education in Lashkar Gah, 600 female students are due to start courses on 19 July.

The Afghan-run and Afghan-led Helmand Agriculture Forum took place at the Provincial Governors compound on 23 June. Governor Mangal brought together over 200 Helmand based agriculture co-operatives to encourage them to share information about market demand, and collaborate on better ways of accessing wider markets.

Counter Narcotics

The UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) launched its 2011 World Drug Report on 23 June. Whilst the focus was not solely on Afghanistan, it reiterated the findings of the UNODC Afghanistan Opium Survey of December 2010. Opium cultivation in 2010 remained stable at 123,000 hectares. It also stated that Afghanistan remains the world's largest cultivator of opium, although down as a percentage of the global total from 66% to 63%. This was largely due to an increase in Burma. The report restated that, despite rising opium prices, UNODC predicted a slight decrease in Afghan opium cultivation for 2011.

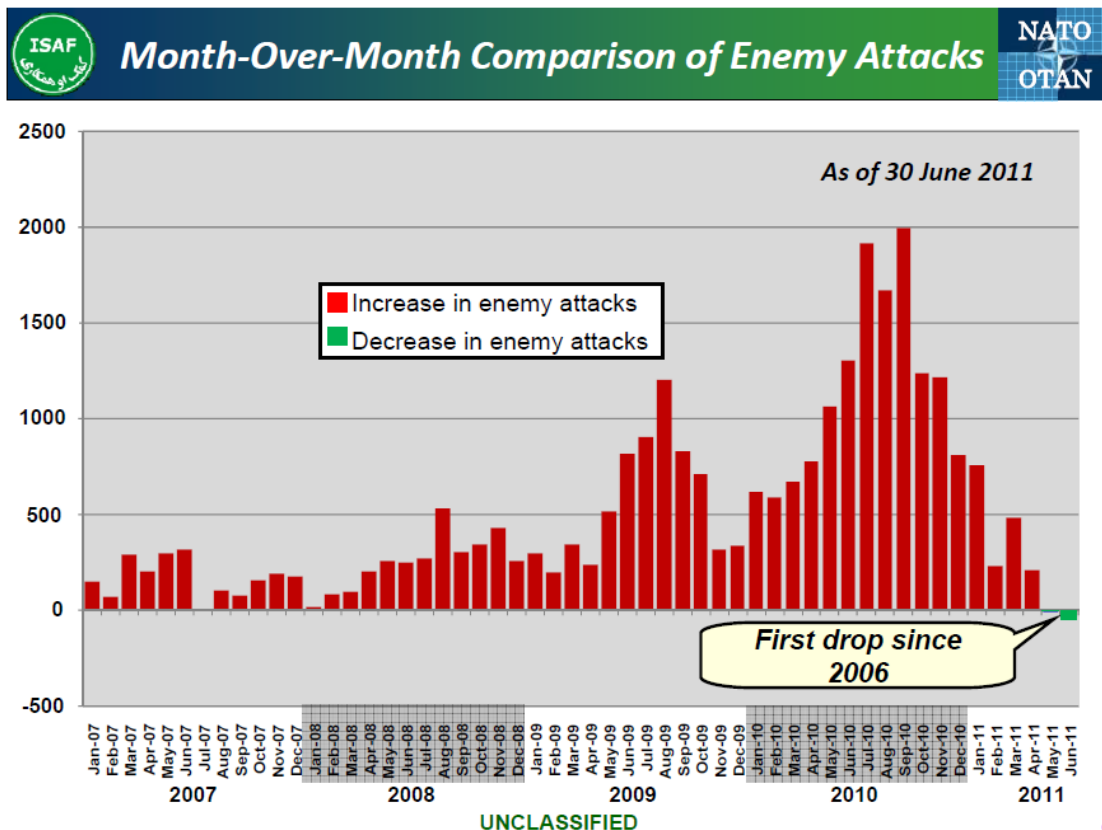
Security

Insurgent Threat

June saw an anticipated increase in security incidents (executed and potential attacks across Afghanistan), when compared to May, as the insurgency continued its attacks in an attempt to reassert itself. On 28 June, insurgents attacked the Intercontinental Hotel in Kabul killing 12 civilians and Afghan National Police. The Afghan forces dealt with this major and sophisticated attack professionally and speedily, only calling in assistance from a NATO helicopter to deal with insurgents on the roof.

Looking at a different data set, June 2011 has seen the first decrease in enemy attacks (initiated by the insurgency against ISAF, the Government of Afghanistan and the civilian population), when compared with the same month the previous year, since 2006. In addition we judge that the insurgents have found it difficult to maintain momentum in executing complex and coordinated attacks. That they represent less than 10% of attacks suggests that the insurgency is having difficulty launching these more sophisticated attacks. The targeting of civilians indicates an insurgency under pressure and losing the battle for hearts and minds. It is still early on in the fighting season and many factors such as the late poppy harvest can affect trends. It would be premature to draw any firm conclusions, but early indications are of progress being made against the insurgency.

(Source ISAF)



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Troop contributions

On 23 June President Obama announced that the US will start to recover the 33,000 surge troops deployed in 2010, bringing 10,000 troops home by the end of this year and the remainder by next summer. Thereafter troops will continue to leave "at a steady pace". The Prime Minister announced to Parliament on 6 July a reduction in force levels by a further 500, from 9,500 to 9,000, by the end of 2012. This decision was agreed by the National Security Council on the advice of military commanders. The reduction reflects the progress that is being made in building up the ANSF.

A number of ISAF allies, including France, Belgium and Spain, have announced that they will begin withdrawing troops in 2012. Others, including Romania, Estonia and Australia, have stated that they will maintain their current force levels. Georgia, the second largest non-NATO contributor, has announced that it will increase its force levels by 700 troops and Mongolia is set to double its contribution to around 400. We recognise that, where progress has made it possible, it is right that troops are brought home, but we also continue to call for allies to reinvest troops into training the ANSF and into preparing other areas to enter transition.

Table One: International Contributions to ISAF:

Country	Contribution	% of Total
US	90,000	68.0%
UK	9,500	7.2%
Germany	4,812	3.6%
France	3,935	3.0%
Italy	3,880	2.9%
Canada	2,922	2.2%
Poland	2,560	1.9%
Romania	1,938	1.5%
Turkey	1,786	1.3%
Spain	1,552	1.2%
Australia	1,550	1.2%
Others (37 nations)	8,022	6.1%
Current Total	132,457	100.00%

Above numbers are indicative of troop contributions as at 6 June 2011, actual numbers fluctuate daily.
Source: ISAF

Progress towards Transition

The Government of Afghanistan made good progress this month preparing for the start of transition process implementation on 20 July. The Afghan lead for transition, Dr Ashraf Ghani, completed visits to all the tranche one transition areas. The seven areas, containing more than a fifth of the population, are Bamyan Province, Panjshir Province, Kabul (all districts except Surobi), Mazar-e-Sharif city (Balkh Province), Herat City (Herat Province), Lashkar Gah (Helmand Province) and Mehtar Lam city (Laghman Province). He was accompanied by relevant security Ministers on some of these visits, helping to connect both provinces and ministries into the transition planning process. In Helmand, transition plans developed jointly by the provincial Government, the provincial reconstruction team and task force Helmand were well received by Dr Ghani. The Government of Afghanistan followed Dr Ghani's visits with a Ministerial Transition Conference on 29-30 June to agree transition implementation plans for tranche one areas and improve inter-ministry co-ordination.

ANSF Growth and Capability

Following the launch of Operation OMID HAFT (Hope Seven) at the end of May, elements of Task Force Helmand have been working closely with the Afghan National Army (ANA) to coordinate an operation to rid the Kopak, Malgir and Loy Mandeh areas of Nahr-e-Saraj of insurgent activity and extend the safe and protected community up to the Nahr-e-Bughra canal. After securing the area, the forces moved to establish a number of checkpoints to give ISAF and ANSF a base from which to operate and monitor security.

Updated ANSF figures were not available in time for this Report.

In addition to the ANA and ANP, the Afghan Local Police (ALP) continues to grow and there are now more than 40 validated sites and over 6,500 members. The ALP is an Afghan-owned community focussed programme, which provides interim community based security in areas with little or no ANSF presence. ALP forces are requested by Afghan District Governors and Provincial Governors and controlled by the Afghan Ministry of Interior. Recruits are vetted and approved by local shuras (committees) and district police chiefs.

Table Two: ANSF Growth to 30 June 2011

	Objective (31 October 2011)	Target Strength (30 June 2011)	Actual Strength (30 June 2011)	June Target Met
ANA:	171,600	162,108	171,050	Yes
ANP:	134,000	129,321	130,622	Yes
ANA Officers:	26,400	25,125	21,788	No
ANA NCOs:	59,000	54,433	45,010	No

Table Three: ANSF Attrition Rates

	Target Monthly Attrition	Actual Monthly Attrition	June Target Met
ANA:	1.4%	2.9%	No
ANP:	1.4%	1.6%	No
Uniformed Police	1.4%	1.4%	Yes
Border Police	1.4%	1.4%	Yes
National Civil Order Police	1.4%	3.7%	No