

AFGHANISTAN
MONTHLY PROGRESS REPORT
October 2011

The UK is engaged in Afghanistan as part of a 49-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 eleventh report covers progress in October. It 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 Bonn Conference on 5 December provides President Karzai with an opportunity to set out his vision for an inclusive settlement. It is also an opportunity for the international community to reiterate its long-term commitment to Afghanistan.

The summer fighting season is ending and it has been a hard year for the insurgency. The numbers of attempted and executed attacks in October were significantly lower than during the corresponding period last year, continuing the trend observed over the Summer. Despite considerable efforts, insurgents failed to re-establish themselves in areas in the south from which they had previously been displaced. High profile attacks in Kandahar early in October and in Kabul at the end of the month affected Afghan and international perceptions of security. However, Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) disrupted many attempts and responded effectively and professionally to those that got through. Overall, the performance and operational capability of the ANSF continued to develop: they are on track to achieve their October 2012 growth objective of 352,000 and work continued to ensure that the quality of the forces steadily improves.

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime's (UNODC) 2011 Afghan Opium Survey reported a year on year increase in cultivation of 7% nationally (from 123,000 hectares to 131,000 hectares). However, the increase should be interpreted in the context of a difficult economic backdrop of opium prices (which have doubled in the last year to the highest level since 2004) and that the figures are 32% lower than in 2007 (which saw 193,000 hectares cultivated).

With UK support, the Government of Afghanistan continued to make important progress on revenue collection and budgeting. The Government confirmed their best ever first quarter performance for revenue collection to date, bringing it in line with neighbouring countries including Bangladesh and Pakistan. Meanwhile, Provincial Governments have been working with the Ministry of Finance to ensure that for the first time, local priorities are reflected in plans for next year's national and provincial budgets. This will improve the Government's ability to deliver vital basic services to the Afghan people.

During his recent visit to Afghanistan, the Secretary of State for International Development launched an important new fund for Afghan civil society organisations. This will help them to engage better with the Afghan Government and hold it to account, for example on human rights and corruption.

Political

Reconciliation and Reintegration

The Afghan investigation into the assassination of High Peace Council chairman Professor Rabbani continued. President Karzai is yet to appoint a successor to Professor Rabbani. He made clear on 3 October that peace efforts would continue in the interim. Afghan Peace and Reintegration Programme (APRP) head Masoom Stanekzai, who was injured in the attack on Professor Rabbani, has not yet returned fully to work.

It remains too soon to judge what the long-term impact of the assassination will be on the prospects for reconciliation. The Afghan Government intends to convene a Loya Jirga on 16 November at which it will discuss progress made so far on reconciliation and next steps, alongside the US-Afghan Strategic Partnership. Reintegration Shuras have been held in Kandahar and Helmand to take forward implementation of the APRP. Almost 2500 individuals are now enrolled in the APRP nationwide.

Reintegration is a key component of achieving security in Afghanistan through insurgents recognising the Government of Afghanistan as the credible alternative to the Taliban and subsequently removing themselves from the battlefield. Provincial Governor Mangal gave a boost to reintegration in Helmand by hosting the Helmand Reintegration Shura on 6 October. He made a public statement of support for the process and called upon District-level officials to support the programme. This was a welcome step in taking forward the formal peace process in Helmand.

Parliament

Parliament has focused increasingly on its legislative and oversight responsibilities following conclusion of the electoral dispute. The Coalition for Rule of Law ended its boycott of Parliament on 5 October. Its members continued their pledge to oppose the Independent Electoral Commission's (IEC) ruling to replace nine sitting MPs from within Parliament.

Strengthening the Afghan State

Justice and Rule of Law

Thirteen prosecutors and one judge from the Attorney General's Office (AGO) in Kabul were trained by UK prosecution advisers to deliver a case-building course to their staff. This will enable the AGO to deliver the course themselves. The Afghan delegates studied a wide range of issues in the criminal justice field, including anti-corruption, counter-narcotics and counter-terrorism.

Chief Justice Azimi, Head of the Afghan Supreme Court, visited the UK to attend the opening of the legal year and to meet with UK justice officials. It was a successful visit, which provided an opportunity for the UK to share its legal and judicial expertise with the Chief Justice. The programme included a visit to the UK Supreme Court to understand how the court operates.

The Afghan Minister of Interior, Bismullah Khan Mohammadi, also visited the UK. He met with Ministers from the FCO, DFID, Home Office and the Ministry of Defence. Ministers took the opportunity to underline the importance of addressing the concerns raised in the UNAMA report on detentions and the UNODC Opium Survey. The visit was an opportunity for Minister Mohammadi to learn from UK expertise on policing, justice and prisons.

The new training plan for Lashkar Gah Training Centre was released. Literacy training for patrolmen has been increased from 60 to 96 hours. Non Commissioned Officer (NCO) students from Helmand and Nimruz province took part, for the first time, in the new 14 week programme of instruction. This is part of ongoing efforts to improve further levels of NCO literacy.

Overall police attrition was slightly above target. However, there was a significant decrease in Afghan National Civil Order Police (ANCOP) attrition. This is a positive sign, given that ANCOP operate in more challenging security environments.

This month saw the Afghan Rule of Law professionals increasingly taking the lead across Helmand. For example, the joint Police and Prosecutor course facilitated by EUPOL was delivered by an Afghan CID officer. The counter-terrorism prosecutors and investigators are also taking more of a leadership role in case management. Afghan-led training and operational management is fundamental to sustaining the gains made through to Transition and beyond.

The Supreme Court announced 11 new judges for Helmand. These have been sworn in and will take up their posts after Eid al Qurban. This will mean that for the first time a panel of three judges will sit in some district courts, improving the delivery of justice and limiting any opportunities for corruption.

Governance

During a recent visit, the Secretary of State for International Development launched the Strengthening Afghanistan's Civil Society Project *Tawanmandi* ('*strengthening*' in Dari) on 31 October in Kabul. Jointly funded with Denmark, Norway and Sweden, *Tawanmandi* will provide grants to civil society organisations across Afghanistan. This will help them to

engage more effectively with the Government and help make the Government more accountable and responsive to its citizens, particularly women. Human rights, access to justice, anti-corruption, peace-building and the media will be major themes.

Ensuring funds from central government get to priority areas across the country is essential. Thirty two out of 34 provinces have been working with the Ministry of Finance to identify local priorities to feed into next year's national budget. The two remaining provinces will do so by the end of 2011. For the first time, budget planning will include local peoples' priorities. The process has already helped pilot ministries link much more closely to their provincial departments.

With UK assistance, the Afghanistan Central Statistics Organisation (CSO) has published the current version of its Statistical Yearbook online for the first time. The website includes data from across government, covering education, health, the economy, agriculture, industry, trade, the environment and donor assistance. This will help the Afghan people make better use of information to inform policy making, project design and monitoring.

After a halting start, funds are now flowing through national budgeting channels to meet the priorities identified by Helmand's District Delivery Plans. These priorities vary from district to district and are key development requirements identified by the local communities. At the same time, Provincial officials are finalising multi-year, cross-Province sector plans to provide a long-term vision and coherence to development. Together, this means that for the first time Helmand is starting to grapple with the full range of activities required for self-sufficiency in its central districts, from planning through to prioritisation and funding. The challenge over coming months will be to strengthen these processes, and build evaluation mechanisms to make plans responsive.

Economic and Social Development

UK support to the Afghan Government helped secure staff-level agreement to a new IMF country programme in October, subject to approval by the IMF Board in November. UK-funded technical assistance included financing a forensic audit into the Kabul Bank and supporting an IMF banking expert. A new country programme will enable donors, including the UK, to restore much-needed funding to the multi-donor Afghan Reconstruction Trust Fund.

During October the Afghan Government confirmed their best ever first quarter performance in domestic revenue collection. Achieved with UK support, revenue was more than £325 million, equal to 11.2% of GDP, which is in line with the revenue levels of Pakistan, Bhutan and Bangladesh.

DFID-supported technical assistance is helping Afghanistan to begin negotiations on Double Tax agreements with its neighbours. This will help the free flow of goods and investment by ensuring that companies and individuals pay corporation or income tax in only one country.

Road building continued in Helmand, improving freedom of movement and access to markets, hospitals and schools. In October, tenders were launched for key routes in the Helmand Roads Plan, including the Lashkar Gah-Marjah road and the Gereshk New Bazaar Road. Construction started on the Nad-e-Ali spine road.

Counter Narcotics

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) released its 2011 Afghan Opium Survey on 11 October. This year's results show an increase in cultivation of 7% nationally (from 123,000 hectares to 131,000 hectares). The increase should be interpreted in the context of a difficult economic backdrop of opium prices, which have doubled in the last year to the highest level since 2004. Despite this, this year's figures are 32% lower than in 2007 (which saw 193,000 hectares cultivated). At the provincial level the picture is mixed.

UNODC reported a 3% reduction in Opium poppy cultivation in Helmand. However Helmand cultivation has decreased by 39% from 133,590 hectares in 2008 to 63,307 hectares in 2011. This is testament to the success of Governor Mangal's Food Zone Programme. A key part of this is the wheat seed distribution, which is supported by the UK-led Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT). The wheat seed will have reached 42,000 farmers across 11 Districts in the Helmand food zone by the end of October. In Lashkar Gah Municipality, there has been a pilot system of distribution employing a syndicate of local merchants to build their capacity to deliver more in future years as the PRT draws down.

Herat Province security forces seized 342 kg of narcotics (293 kg of which was high quality heroin) near the Iranian border in October. This brings the amount of narcotics seized in the Herat region in 2011 to nearly two tonnes. Separately, seventeen individuals were sentenced this month to 9-20 years in jail on charges of drug trafficking by the Criminal Justice Task Force.

Security

Violence Levels

October traditionally marks the end of the Afghan Summer fighting season. Overall levels of violence are falling with the onset of winter. Afghan Security Forces responded professionally and effectively to recent high profile attacks in Kabul and disrupted numerous other attempts. Nonetheless, these incidents generated propaganda success and have the potential to shape local and international perceptions, undermining Afghan public confidence about security. The security situation continues to improve in the south and southwest and insurgents have failed to re-establish themselves in areas from which they had previously been displaced. However, substantial gains in Helmand and Kandahar provinces must be balanced against an increasingly challenging situation in the east. Within Helmand, the Taliban have suffered notable operational set-backs and, over the summer months, violence levels have been significantly lower than for the same period last year. Not only does this represent an improvement in security but it also enables more development work and mentoring of the Afghan National Security Forces. However, our security gains remain fragile and while there are signs of real progress, much work remains to be done.

Insurgent Threat

Type of incident	Definition	Change from September 2011	Comparison with October 2010
Security incidents	Enemy action and explosive hazards, both executed attacks and 'potential' attacks (e.g. an IED found and cleared)	↔ No significant change	↓ Fall in incidents
Enemy initiated attacks	Attacks executed by insurgents (This does not include 'potential' attacks)	↔ No significant change	↓ Fall in attacks
Complex attacks	Attacks conducted by multiple hostile elements employing at least two distinct classes of weapon	↔ No significant change	↓ Fall in attacks

The insurgent leadership is likely to continue to push for a campaign of violence over the winter months, albeit one with a focus on high profile attacks to maintain a perception of sustained relevance. The insurgency remains a nationwide threat, but as the Afghan summer draws to a close, the insurgents' planned offensive does not appear to have achieved its strategic aims.

Herrick 14

Transfer of Authority from 3 Commando Brigade to 20 Armoured Brigade took place on 9 October, officially marking the end of Herrick 14 (H14). Over the duration of H14 over 400 IEDs were found; 7.2 tonnes of Home Made Explosives destroyed; 1,300 Afghan uniformed police patrolmen and 230 NCOs were trained; over 650 Shuras were held; 47km of road were tarmacked; and 11 schools and three bazaars were refurbished.

Troop contributions

Table One: International Contributions to ISAF

Country	Contribution	% of Total
US	90,000	68.9%
UK	9,500	7.3%
Germany	5,000	3.8%
France	3,932	3.0%
Italy	3,918	3.0%
Poland	2,580	2.0%
Romania	1,873	1.4%
Turkey	1,840	1.4%
Australia	1,550	1.2%
Spain	1,526	1.2%
Others (37 nations)	8,919	6.8%
Current Total	130,638	100.00%
<i>Above numbers are indicative of troop contributions as at 18 October 2011, actual numbers fluctuate daily.</i>		
<i>Source: ISAF</i>		

Progress towards Transition

Transition in Tranche One has progressed well, with Afghan National Security Force capability continuing to improve. On 29 October, the Joint Afghan-NATO Inteqal Board (JANIB) met to discuss the second phase of transition. Current plans are for President Karzai to announce the full list of Tranche Two areas in November, with implementation beginning before the end of the year. By early 2012, we expect about 50% of the Afghan population will be in areas under transition and seeing daily benefits. The process remains on track for the Afghan National Security Forces to lead on security across the country by the end of 2014.

NATO Defence Ministerial

NATO Defence Ministers met in Brussels on 5 and 6 October. Former Defence Secretary, Dr Liam Fox, noted progress on the NATO Strategic Plan which outlines NATO's strategic relationship with Afghanistan. Negotiations will begin in November on the Plan's Desired Strategic Outcomes, with a view to the final plan being agreed at the NATO Summit in Chicago in May 2012. At the Ministerial, Dr Fox reconfirmed the UK's intent to lead the Afghan National Officer Academy. He also welcomed open and frank discussion on individual nations' commitment to support the Afghans post 2014. A vision for a capable, sustainable and affordable ANSF is vital to avoid presenting the Taliban with a propaganda opportunity. He called on the international community to begin thinking on how we would work towards an agreed long-term funding programme for the ANSF at Chicago.

Detentions

On 10 October, UNAMA released a report looking into allegations of torture and mistreatment of detainees in a number of detention facilities across Afghanistan. UNAMA has discussed the contents of the report with the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GIROA), who are investigating the allegations. We monitor the well-being of all detainees we have transferred to GIROA and will continue to support GIROA in tackling mistreatment and establishing processes that reduce the risk of abuse of detainees.

ANSF Growth and Capability

The ANSF reached their 2011 end-strength objective of 305,600 and reported an overall strength of 307,000. The ANSF are on track to achieve their October 2012 growth objective of 352,000. However, while it has been critical to achieve the quantity of forces required, work continued to ensure that the quality of the forces also steadily improves. Work included operational training and mentoring, as well as continuous efforts to professionalise the force through iterative professional education for officers and non-commissioned officers and focused efforts to implement and expand mandatory literacy training.

Table Two: ANSF Growth to 30 October 2011

	Objective (31 October 2011)	Target Strength (31 October 2011)	Actual Strength (31 October 2011)	October Target Met
ANA:	171,600	171,600	173,150	Yes
ANP:	134,000	139,159	139,070	No
ANA Officers:	26,631	26,631	23,307	No
ANA NCOs:	59,500	59,500	48,527	No

Table Three: ANSF Attrition Rates

	Target Monthly Attrition	Actual Monthly Attrition	October Target Met
ANA:	1.4%	2.4%	No
ANP:	1.4%	1.9%	No
Uniformed Police	1.4%	1.8%	No
Border Police	1.4%	1.9%	No
National Civil Order Police	1.4%	2.6%	No

**Foreign and Commonwealth Office
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