

AFGHANISTAN
MONTHLY PROGRESS REPORT
October 2012

The UK is part of a 50-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 twenty second report covers progress in October 2012. 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

On 9 October the UN Security Council adopted resolution 2069 (2012) extending the authorisation of the International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan (ISAF) by a further year. The resolution provided a 12 month roll-over of the Chapter VII authorisation, with an unqualified “all necessary measures” provision. It also incorporated NATO Chicago Summit commitments to support the training, equipping, financing and capability development of the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) up to and beyond 2014.

The UK and Afghanistan held the first meeting of the Afghanistan-UK Joint Commission chaired by Afghanistan’s Deputy Foreign Minister Jawed Ludin and Baroness Warsi to review implementation of the Enduring Strategic Partnership document signed by President Karzai and the Prime Minister in January.

On 31 October the Afghan Independent Election Commission (IEC) publicly announced that 5 April 2014 would be the date for the next Presidential Election in Afghanistan. The Provincial Council elections, postponed from 2013, will also take place on 5 April. As part of this announcement, the IEC published an ambitious timeline for the full electoral processes. Although the timeline as it stands does not cover the Parliamentary elections due in 2015, it effectively meets the Afghan commitment at the Tokyo Development Conference to produce a timeline by early 2013. An implementation plan is set to follow.

October typically marks the end of the Afghan Summer fighting season. A combination of cold weather and lack of vegetation cover makes it harder for insurgent fighters to move around during the winter months. Many insurgent commanders use this time to recuperate,

reflect and plan. Overall the levels of violence are likely to decline, and in accordance with seasonal norms, we can expect the character of operations to change during the winter.

Four members of UK Armed Forces lost their lives while deployed on operations in Afghanistan in October. The two separate incidents that caused these deaths were assessed to be the result of insider attacks. We take these attacks and their causes extremely seriously and we continue to work at the highest level to reduce the risk of insider attacks

The Government of Afghanistan continued to progress plans for the privatisation of the New Kabul Bank. The first in a series of investor road shows took place in October. A road show in Dubai is planned for November. Tenders are being managed by the Afghan Ministry of Finance, Central Bank, and the Cabinet. The process aims to attract high quality investors. The New Kabul Bank is a commercially viable bank, with 550 million USD of deposits and over 100 branches across Afghanistan. As one of the largest banks in Afghanistan, its survival is important for economic development and jobs. The UK is supporting the Afghan Government with the sale of the Bank, thus promoting a transparent and effective process.

Strengthening the Afghan State

Political

Baroness Warsi visited Kabul on 14-16 October. During this visit, the first meeting of the Afghanistan–UK Joint Commission was held, chaired jointly by Afghanistan’s Deputy Foreign Minister Jawed Ludin and Baroness Warsi. The Joint Commission was established to review implementation of the Enduring Strategic Partnership Document signed by President Karzai and the Prime Minister on 28 January 2012.

Baroness Warsi discussed police reform with the new Minister of the Interior and met a number of political commentators and opposition figures, including Dr Abdullah, to hear their perspectives on Afghanistan and discuss the 2014 presidential elections. She discussed women’s rights with Deputy Minister for Women’s Affairs, Sayenda Mizghan Mustafawi and visited the Zardozi Project, which specialises in linking chronically poor female tailors and embroiderers to local markets through female sales agents. She met prominent women’s rights activist and MP for Badakhshan, Fawzia Koofi. The Minister hosted a dinner attended by the Chairman of the Free and Fair Elections Foundation of Afghanistan, Ahmad Nader Nadery and the Chairperson of the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission, Dr Sima Samaar to hear their perspectives on human rights in Afghanistan. She sought assurances from the Director of National Directorate of Security (NDS) on the need for Afghanistan - and in particular the NDS - to abide by international human rights standards and obligations, such as the Additional Protocol II to the Geneva Conventions which obligates nations to treatment detainees in a humane manner. Both sides reaffirmed their commitment to the development of strong, transparent and accountable political institutions and to the protection of human rights in Afghanistan.

On 25 October the International Development Committee (IDC) published its *Afghanistan: Progress and Prospects after 2014* report. HMG welcomes this valuable report. The Department for International Development will shortly publish a formal response.

The Afghan Independent Election Commission announced that Presidential elections will be held on 5 April 2014. As part of the announcement the IEC published a timeline for the full electoral process, meeting the Afghan commitment at the Tokyo Development Conference.

Helmand

Newly-appointed Provincial Governor Mohammed Naeem spent most of October in Lashkar Gah getting to grips with his new role. He held meetings with tribal and religious leaders and appointed special advisers to focus on key areas. Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) representatives met Naeem a number of times to discuss a wide variety of issues.

Reconciliation and Reintegration

Governance

UK support to the Helmand Transitional Budget Support Fund, supporting District Governor Offices and local level community outreach activities. In October it enabled the creation of a women's *shura* in the Nazwad District of Helmand, increased school enrolment in Khanshin District by 120 students (including 35 female students) and facilitated resolution of a land conflict between two tribes.

Economic and Social Development

In Helmand, the UK-funded vocational training programme managed by Mercy Corps graduated a further 4,302 students at the end of September. This brought the total number of graduates to 11,291, of which 1,918 are female. In October, new training centres were opened in the northern districts of Sangin and Now Zad. The UK also funded training for 31 Afghanistan Technical Vocational Institute staff and public officials on safety, canal and irrigation maintenance and training instructors. This will help to ensure that development activities supported by the Helmand Provincial Reconstruction Team and local government bodies are maintained to a good standard and are sustainable in the long term.

Two generators purchased by US partners in the Provincial Reconstruction Team arrived in Lashkar Gah. These will be installed through a UK-funded training exercise with *Da Afghanistan Bresha Sherkat* (Helmand's utility company). The generators will provide a 4.5 mW increase in diesel generator power for Lashkar Gah while essential energy infrastructure rehabilitation and upgrading work takes place in the province. Improved access to energy will help to improve the day-to-day lives of Helmand's citizens.

The UK continued its support for the work of the Afghan Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock in Helmand, including by funding training in animal health and husbandry for Ministry officials. UK assistance for agriculture in the province is helping to increase the value of local agricultural products, improve farmers' access to finance, introduce innovative farming techniques and link local farmers to markets for their goods.

Rule of Law

The recommendations of the Strategic Review of EUPOL were agreed in Brussels. These were that the Mission should continue with the existing mandate (training, building police and prosecutor links, mentoring and advising) through to the end 2014. It also agreed that

there should be a tighter and more focused EUPOL presence in the provinces and that there should be a further review next year to determine the shape of Common Security Defence Policy engagement after transition.

There was a high level study visit by General Selab (Commander ANP General Training Command) and General Zal (Commander Police Staff College) to the UK. The visit was an opportunity for the Generals to visit policing facilities in the UK and to deepen their understanding of UK policing techniques.

Security

Over the course of this year the insurgency has continued to evolve in preparation for the end of the ISAF mission in 2014. As part of this there has been continued insurgent emphasis on improving their internal governance structures to compliment their fighting. Although the insurgency has probably not made the gains they would have hoped for, and their 2012 “*al Farooq*” summer campaign does not appear to have achieved its strategic aims they remain a resilient force and we should not underestimate the threat they represent

Over the winter months it is likely that they will continue their attempts to execute high-profile spectacular attacks in an effort to distort perceptions, undermine public confidence of security and gain the initiative. This year, albeit with some notable exceptions such as September’s assault on Camp Bastion, the insurgents have found it increasingly difficult to carry out these ‘spectaculars’ and the ANSF, supported where necessary by ISAF, have continued to disrupt threats against high-profile targets. Nevertheless the insurgency continues to demonstrate their intent to conduct a campaign of violence. A suicide attack in Faryab Province in the north of the country, which left 42 dead (27 ANSF and 15 civilians) and wounded 50 more, reminds us that there can be no room for complacency.

Since 2010 there has been a steady decline in the number of Afghans living in close proximity to violent incidents and we continue to see evidence that insurgent activity is increasingly displaced from the major population centres. This shift of violence away from the towns, markets and extensively farmed areas is significant. It provides space for Afghan local confidence to grow and for security and economic gains to have tangible effect on an increasing number of Afghan lives. Comparison with the third quarters of 2012 and 2011 show a 13% reduction (about 100,000) in those living in close proximity to an enemy initiated attack.

Insider attacks

In October four members of the UK Armed Forces lost their lives while deployed on operations in Afghanistan. The two separate incidents that caused these deaths are assessed to be the result of insider attacks.

On 24 October a Royal Marine Commando and a soldier from 3 Medical Regiment were killed following an exchange of gunfire in Nahr-e Saraj in Helmand. Some details of the attack remain unclear and although the initial investigation has now reported, it will take time for the full process to complete. On 30 October, two soldiers from 1st Battalion The Royal Gurkha Rifles were shot and killed by a man wearing an Afghan Uniformed Police uniform. The attack took place after a shura at Checkpoint Prrang in Nahr-eSaraj.

As we have reported in previous months, we take these attacks and their causes extremely seriously. Partnering remains essential to our strategy in Afghanistan but it cannot be without risk. We continue to work at the highest level to reduce these attacks to an absolute minimum. However, we recognise that we cannot eradicate the threat completely.

Redeployment of Materiel

Work on managing the recovery of UK equipment in Afghanistan is underway and redeployment began in earnest, and as planned, on 1 October. We do not underestimate the challenge or the scale of this job and a cross-defence planning group has been established to oversee the process. We are working to ensure that redeployment is conducted in a way that achieves good order and represents value for money to the taxpayer. We are equally determined that the gradual drawdown of our equipment will not compromise our ongoing operations. Military commanders on the ground will continue to be properly resourced and equipped for the operations they need to undertake.

Afghan National Army Officer Academy

On 10 October a “turning of the earth” ceremony took place at the site of what will become the Afghan National Army Officer Academy (ANAOA). The UK will become the lead coalition partner at the Academy which is expected to open its doors in 2013. Its establishment as a key Afghan training institution demonstrates the UK’s long term commitment to the ANSF and to Afghanistan. The ANAOA will aid the Afghans by educating the next generation of Afghan military leaders. This will help sustain the progress made so far in developing a capable and professional force, both during and after the transition of security responsibility to the Afghans. The Academy will be modelled on the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst and once fully operational will train approximately 1,350 male student and 150 female students every year.

Transfer of Authority

Transfer of Authority from 12 Mechanized Brigade to 4 Mechanized took place on 10 October. This officially marked the start of HERRICK 17, which will oversee the drawdown of 500 UK Service personnel by the end of December.

Table One: ANSF Growth to 21 October 2012

	Target Strength (October 2012)	Actual Strength* (October 2012)	September Target Met
ANA:	187,000	178,501	NO
AAF:	5,800	6,325	YES
ANP:	157,000	148,536	NO

*ISAF reports that the ANSF (less the Afghan Air Force) are expected to reach their fielded end-strength in Feb 2013.

Table Two: ANSF Attrition Rates

	Target Monthly Attrition	Actual Monthly Attrition	July Target Met
ANA:	1.4%	3.5%	NO
AAF:	1.4%	1.3%	YES
ANP:	1.4%	1.5%	NO
Uniformed Police	1.4%	1.3%	YES
Border Police	1.4%	2.3%	NO
National Civil Order Police	1.4%	2.9%	NO

Violence Levels

Table Three: Security Incidents

Type of incident	Definition	Change from September 2012	Comparison with October 2011
Security incidents	Enemy action and explosive hazards, both executed attacks and ‘potential’ attacks (e.g. an IED found and cleared)	↓ Fall in attacks	↓ Fall in attacks
Enemy initiated attacks	Attacks executed by insurgents (This does not include ‘potential’ attacks)	↓ Fall in attacks	↓ Fall in attacks
Complex attacks	Attacks conducted by multiple hostile elements employing at least two distinct classes of weapon	↓ Fall in attacks	↔ No significant change

Table Four: International Contributions to ISAF

Country	Contribution	% of Total
US	68,000	64.8%
UK	9,500*	9.1%
Germany	4,737	4.5%
Italy	4,000	3.8%
France	2,418	2.3%
Poland	1,800	1.7%
Romania	1,762	1.7%
Australia	1,550	1.5%
Spain	1,450	1.4%
Turkey	1,328	1.2%
Others (38 nations)	8,360	8%
Current Total	104,905	100.00%
Above numbers are indicative of troop contributions as at 8 Oct 2012, actual numbers fluctuate daily. Source: ISAF *Force levels reducing to 9,000 by end 2012		

Foreign and Commonwealth Office
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