

**AFGHANISTAN**  
**MONTHLY PROGRESS REPORT**  
**February 2013**

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 fifth report covers progress in February 2013. 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 3-4 February the Prime Minister hosted a summit at Chequers, attended by the Presidents of Afghanistan and Pakistan. They were joined by Foreign Ministers, Chiefs of Defence Staff, Chiefs of Intelligence, the Afghan National Security Adviser and the Chair of the Afghan High Peace Council. This was the fourth in a series of trilateral meetings hosted by the Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary in the last year to discuss the Afghan-led peace and reconciliation process and how to strengthen joint efforts to address extremism and advance regional peace and stability. Key achievements included agreement on co-operation between Afghan and Pakistani military and security services, strengthened coordination of Taliban prisoner releases from Pakistani detention and a public statement in support of the opening of a Taliban political office in Doha.

Home Secretary Theresa May made her first visit to Afghanistan 24-27 February. The visit focused on British-Afghan co-operation in areas including police training, counter-narcotics, counter-terrorism and migration. The Afghanistan Minister of Defence, Bismillah Mohammadi, visited the UK 24-26 February. He held discussions on the development of the Afghan National Security Forces, Institutional Development, countering the insider threat, and progress of the UK-Afghanistan-Pakistan Trilateral with the Foreign Secretary, the Defence Secretary, the Minister for the Armed Forces and the Chief of the Defence Staff.

The UN Assistance Mission Afghanistan reported that civilian casualties in 2012 decreased by 12% compared with 2011. Civilian deaths caused by ISAF and Afghan Forces fell from 14% of the total to 8%, while deaths caused by the insurgency rose by 9% to 81%.

In February, the International Development Secretary approved £12 million from existing DfID funds to help deliver emergency food support to over 900,000 people in Afghanistan. This assistance will support activity over a five month period up to June 2013 and target food insecure regions of Afghanistan to help reduce malnutrition-related rates of mortality and morbidity.

In his State of The Union Address on 14 February President Obama confirmed that the US military presence will be approximately halved over the next year, reducing to 34,000 US troops in Afghanistan until the end of 2014. The reduction in international forces is made possible by the increasing capacity of the Afghan National Security Forces.

## **Strengthening the Afghan State**

### **Political**

On 3-4 February the Prime Minister hosted a Summit at Chequers, attended by President Karzai of Afghanistan and President Zardari of Pakistan. They were joined by Foreign Ministers, Chiefs of Defence Staff, Chiefs of Intelligence, the Afghan National Security Adviser and the Chair of the Afghan High Peace Council. This was the fourth in a series of trilateral meetings hosted by the Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary in the last year to discuss the Afghan-led peace and reconciliation process and how to strengthen joint efforts to address extremism and advance regional peace and stability.

Key achievements included agreement on strengthened co-operation between Afghan and Pakistani military and security services, strengthened coordination of Taliban prisoner releases from Pakistani detention, support for a joint Ulema conference and a public statement in support of the opening of a Taliban political office in Doha.

During the Prime Minister's visit to India on 18-20 February, he held discussions on a range of issues, including Afghanistan, with Prime Minister Singh. In a joint statement they emphasized the need for joint and concerted efforts and cooperation among regional and other countries to address the challenge of terrorism and supported the efforts made by the Afghan Government to establish a peaceful inter-Afghan dialogue. The two leaders also agreed to establish a new Joint Working Group as a mechanism for a regular bilateral dialogue on peace, security and development in Afghanistan.

The Independent Election Commission produced a finalised operational delivery plan for the voter registration exercise in advance of the forthcoming 2014 elections. A limited registration exercise will take place to ensure that Afghan citizens who do not currently possess a voter registration card will be able to register to receive one. The majority of voters will be expected to use cards issued during previous registration exercises, or where possible, will be able to present an *e-taskera* electronic ID card to enable them to vote. While the plan will do little to deal with the large numbers of fraudulent voter cards known to be in circulation, it has the benefit that it will enable a higher turnout. Now that plans have been finalised, the IEC can begin to focus on other important elements of preparing for the elections, including fraud prevention measures.

## **UNAMA Report**

On 19 February the UN Assistance Mission Afghanistan (UNAMA) published its annual report on the protection of civilians. Civilian casualties in 2012 decreased by 12% compared with 2011. They reported that civilian deaths caused by ISAF and Afghan Forces fell from 14% of the total to 8%, while deaths caused by the insurgency rose by 9% to 81%. There was a 108% increase in civilian casualties caused by targeted killings, with a 700% rise in killings and injuries to civilian Government employees specifically. UNAMA were unable to attribute 11% of civilian deaths to either group.

## **Rule of Law**

Home Secretary Theresa May made her first visit to Afghanistan 24-27 February. The visit focused on British-Afghan co-operation in areas including police training, counter-narcotics, counter-terrorism and migration. In addition to meeting President Karzai and spending time with British soldiers based at Camp Souter, the Home Secretary met with Interior Minister Patang to discuss his priorities for the Afghan National Police, such as focusing on criminal investigations and building public trust, and saw the work of senior UK police officers at the EUPOL Police Staff College in Kabul. The Home Secretary also met with Counter Narcotics Minister Osmani to discuss progress on the Afghan National Drug Control Strategy, visited the UK-mentored Criminal Justice Taskforce (an end-to-end system of investigation and prosecution) at the Counter Narcotics Justice Centre, and observed the mentoring work of the Serious Organised Crime Agency in support of Afghan counter narcotics investigations.

In Helmand, counter narcotics work continued to progress, with the Provincial Reconstruction Team supporting the new season of Governor Led Eradication of poppy plantations by funding tractor repairs and maintenance, providing fuel, fitting GPS tracking systems to monitor the eradication, and supporting wages for tractor drivers. For the first time the Counter Narcotics Police began prolonged operations without ISAF support and seized several tonnes of opiates during February. Also in Helmand construction began on the new Ministry of Justice (jointly funded by UK and Denmark), and the dedicated juvenile facility at Helmand Provincial Prison was opened.

## **Economic and Social Development**

In February, the International Development Secretary approved a new project from existing DFID funding of £12 million to help deliver emergency food support to over 900,000 people in Afghanistan. This assistance will support activity over a five month period up to June 2013 and target food insecure regions of Afghanistan to help reduce malnutrition-related rates of mortality and morbidity.

The UK through the Strengthening Provincial Administration and Delivery (SPAD) programme has been working with local government and communities in Helmand to deliver a wide range of projects according to priorities set by local communities. In February over 100 contractors attended a tendering conference to cover 85 projects ranging from purchasing ambulances to provision of solar panels, water pumps, wells and a new building for the

Agriculture High School. The conference was broadcast on local and national Afghan media, increasing transparency.

## **Infrastructure**

All the Op TETHYS canal maintenance projects were completed and UK Conflict Pool-funded capacity building of the Mid Helmand Sub Basin Agency is being evaluated. Conflict Pool funding also trained DABS (Da Afghanistan Breshna Sherkat Power Company) engineers to operate and maintain newly installed generators for Lashkar Gah. The Conflict Pool-funded Route 611 project was mobilised and the first 5km from Sangin has been prepared. DFID-funded Route 601 was completed and is being handed over to the Provincial Government.

## **Health**

The Afghanistan Centre for Training and Development's Community-Integrated Management of Childhood Illnesses project is now operational, providing Community Healthcare Workers and their supervisors the skills and tools to provide early diagnosis and effective treatment of illnesses such as pneumonia and diarrhoea to children in their communities. Once existing staff have completed their training, they will be able to roll out further training to new staff, ensuring the UK's investment and the benefit for local people is sustained in the future.

## **Security**

No members of the UK Armed Forces were killed on operations in Afghanistan in the reporting period.

As we approach the Spring, we can expect to see an increase in insurgent attacks in accordance with seasonal norms. Confidence will lie at the heart of the battle between the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) and the insurgents throughout 2013. The insurgency will seek to undermine popular confidence in the Afghan national authority and its ability to govern effectively by initiating spectacular and high-profile attacks. In turn, the confidence of the Afghan people, of the international community and crucially within the ANSF itself will be vital for the future mission to secure Afghanistan. The latter will come in part from operational successes and in part from the continued commitment and support of regional and international partners.

In his State of The Union Address on 14 February President Obama confirmed that the US military presence will be approximately halved over the next year, reducing to 34,000 US troops in Afghanistan until the end of combat operations in 2014. The reduction in international forces is made possible by the increasing capacity and capability of the Afghan National Security Forces.

On 10 February, General Dunford replaced General Allen as the Commander of ISAF forces in Afghanistan. He has emphasised the need to maintain momentum in supporting the development of ANSF capability and the importance of communicating our long term commitment to the Afghan people.

The Afghanistan Minister of Defence, Bismillah Mohammadi, visited the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst. He used the visit as an opportunity to learn more about the design of the Afghan National Army Officer Academy that is being modelled on Sandhurst, as well as meeting the ANA cadets that are training at the college. In addition, Minister Mohammadi met the Foreign Secretary, the Defence Secretary, the Minister for the Armed Forces and the Chief of the Defence Staff. They held discussions on the development of the Afghan National Security Forces, Institutional Development, countering the insider threat, and progress of the UK-Afghanistan-Pakistan Trilateral. The Defence Secretary attended the NATO Defence Ministerial meeting on 21-22 February which discussed progress in security and NATO's commitment to Afghanistan after combat troops leave post 2014.

### **ISAF Air Support to ANSF**

On 16 February, President Karzai publicly directed restrictions on ISAF Air Support to ANSF. As a result, ISAF will no longer provide Air Support in residential areas in support of the ANSF. The decision does not affect Air Support to UK Forces.

### **Redeployment**

The gradual redeployment of UK military equipment as we move to end combat operations continues. We estimate that we have around 11,000 Twenty-foot Equivalent Units (TEU) of materiel in theatre, of which there is around 6,500 containers worth of materiel to bring home. The majority of the remaining TEUs are consumables such as food, spares for vehicles and other items which will be used up during the remainder of operations in Afghanistan. In addition, we plan to return the majority of our vehicles currently in Afghanistan (this totals approximately 2,000 vehicles) excluding those that are damaged to a point that it would make no economic sense to return to the UK. As at 28 February, we have redeployed around 198 vehicles, 108 pieces of major equipment and 530 TEUs of materiel.

Three Transit Treaties and an associated gifting package were laid before Parliament on 13 February. The Treaties provide surface transit permissions for non-warlike stores and, separately, for motorised armoured vehicles, to move by rail from Afghanistan through the territory of Uzbekistan to the Kazakhstan border; and the air transit of personnel and equipment. The gifting package to Uzbekistan, comprising two equipment items already declared as surplus and currently held in the UK strategic base, was also laid before Parliament on 13 February. The total value of the package is estimated to be around £450,000, plus transportation costs. The Treaties are an essential component in establishing additional options for the recovery of personnel and equipment from Afghanistan via Northern lines of communication (NLOC), which will provide additional operational resilience to support redeployment from Afghanistan.

On 24 February, the Afghan National Security Council ordered all US Special Forces to be removed from Wardak Province due to allegations of harassment, torture and murder. These allegations are being investigated by ISAF.

## ISAF Statistics

On 27 February, ISAF reported that the 7% fall in the number of Enemy-Initiated Attacks (EIAs) in 2012 over 2011 was incorrect. This was the result of a record-keeping error which failed to take into account some data from Afghan forces. After updating the figures with this missing data, EIAs were shown to have remained unchanged between 2011 and 2012. ISAF has since announced that it will no longer be publishing figures on EIAs due to the fact that these statistics are becoming increasingly difficult to verify as Afghan security forces take over from ISAF in collecting the data. Consequently, the table below which captures this data will no longer feature in future Monthly Progress Reports.

**Table One: ANSF Growth to 18 February 2013**

	Target Strength (February 2013)	Actual Strength (February 2013)	February Target Met
ANA:	187,000	175,441	NO
AAF:	5,800	6,393	YES
ANP:	157,000	150,919	NO

**Table Two: ANSF Attrition Rates**

	Target Monthly Attrition	Actual Monthly Attrition	February Target Met
ANA:	1.4%	2.9%	NO
AAF:	1.4%	1.2%	YES
ANP:	1.4%	1.1%	YES
Uniformed Police	1.4%	0.8%	YES
Border Police	1.4%	2.3%	NO
National Civil Order Police	1.4%	2.1%	NO

## Violence Levels

**Table Three: Security Incidents**

Type of incident	Definition	Change from January 2013	Comparison with February 2012
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	↔ No significant change

Complex and Coordinated attacks	Attacks that exhibit deliberate planning conducted by multiple hostile elements, against one or more targets and involving at least two distinct classes of weapons system.	↓ Fall in attacks	↓ Fall in attacks
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**Table Four: International Contributions to ISAF**

Country	Contribution	% of Total
US	68,000	67.7%
UK	9,000	8.9%
Germany	4,400	4.3%
Italy	3,067	3.0%
Poland	1,739	1.7%
Spain	1,035	1.0%
Georgia	1,561	1.5%
Romania	1,595	1.5%
Australia	1,096	1.0%
Turkey	1,093	1.0%
Others (40 nations)	7,744	7.7%
Current Total: 102,011		
<i>The above numbers are indicative of troop contributions as at 19 Feb 2013, actual numbers fluctuate daily.</i>		
<i>Source: ISAF</i>		

**Foreign and Commonwealth Office  
March 2013**