

AFGHANISTAN

MONTHLY PROGRESS REPORT

December 2010

The Government has committed itself to keeping Parliament informed about developments in Afghanistan on a monthly basis. This second monthly report covers developments in the areas of security, governance and the rule of law and regional engagement.

This report reflects the combined assessment of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Ministry of Defence and Department for International Development.

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

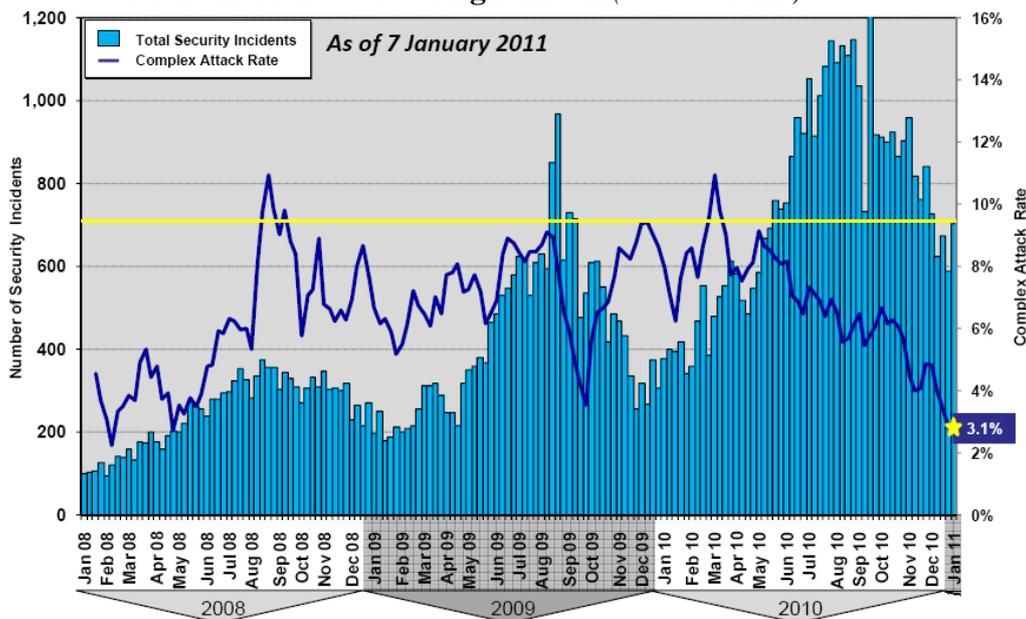
Overview

In December ISAF and Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) continued to consolidate security gains in the south of Afghanistan whilst positive trends in the growth of the ANSF and local government in Helmand continued. Afghanistan’s High Peace Council also began a nationwide outreach programme to Provincial Governments on reintegration.

Security

The number of violent incidents has remained lower than during the summer months although the level of violence has been higher than previous winters as ISAF and the ANSF continue to disrupt insurgent activity and expand the influence of the Government of Afghanistan into insurgent safe havens in order to reduce the overall threat. This can be seen in the chart below. In spring 2011 we expect levels of insurgent activity to rise again and we must be prepared to meet this. As we approach the launch of the transition process it becomes more important that it is the ANSF who are taking the lead in meeting this threat.

Figure 1: Violent incidents across Afghanistan (source: ISAF)

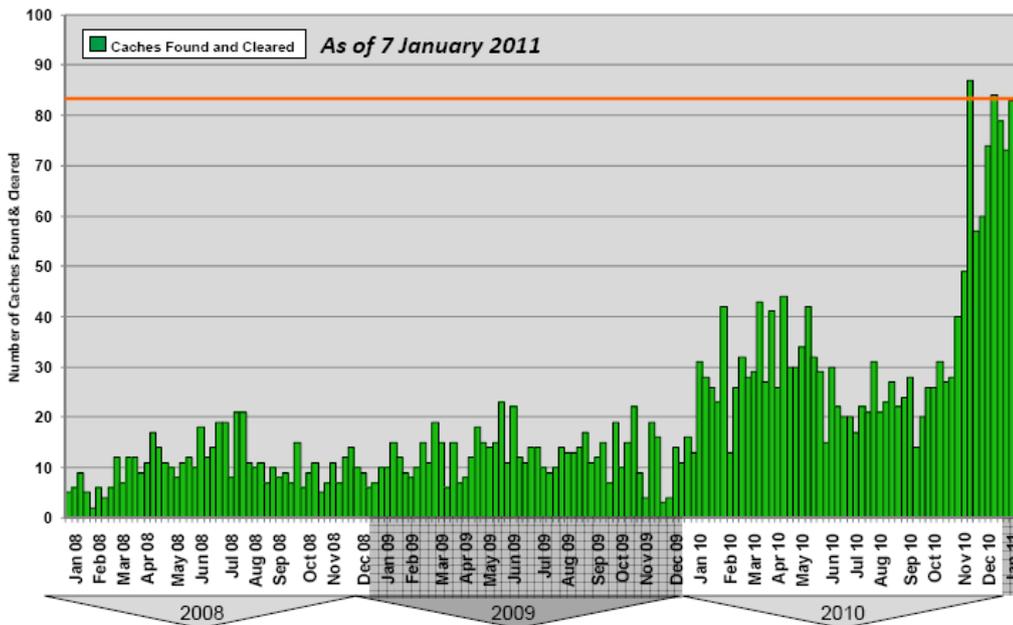


Complex attack: a combined arms attack conducted by more than one enemy element.

The chart above also shows the complex attack rate. That is the percentage of total attacks that are conducted by more than one insurgent and using more than one method of attack. Over the past few months we can see that the rate has declined steadily as the insurgents' ability to coordinate and execute these attacks is degraded by ISAF and ANSF operations.

Over recent months we have also seen a rise in the number of weapons caches (including small arms, explosives, IED components and other weapons) being found and cleared, as shown in the chart below:

Figure 2: Weapons Caches Found and Cleared



On 20 December the Secretary of State for Defence informed the House that a Company Group, formed around elements of the 2nd Battalion The Royal Welsh and partnered by a company from the Afghan National Army (ANA), would temporarily extend their operations, for a period of up to six months, to secure greater freedom of movement along Highway One east into Kandahar Province. Highway One is a key road in the South of the country, linking the economic and population hubs of Helmand and Kandahar. Improved freedom of movement will enable ISAF and the ANSF to increase security in both provinces and stimulate economic growth.

Afghan National Security Forces

Progress continues to be made in developing the Afghan National Security Forces. By late December the ANA had reached a total establishment of around 146,000 and the Afghan National Police (ANP) had reached around 116,000. ANSF growth has been ahead of schedule for the last quarter and remains on track to meet its future targets. The capabilities of the ANSF are also improving through training, partnering, mentoring and experience in the field. These advances in both the quantity and quality of the ANSF will set the conditions for transition to full Afghan security responsibility and leadership by the end of 2014.

Transition

ISAF's monthly assessment in December reported that the transition process, as set out at the NATO Summit in Lisbon in November, remains on track to begin in early 2011. Significant campaign progress was reported in the South and Southwest and ANSF growth remains ahead of schedule. However it will take further work to cement these gains and address the challenges of attrition rates and leadership quality in the ANSF.

The International Community's Military Contribution

Figure 3: Contributions to ISAF

Country	Contribution	% of Total
US	90,000	68.3%
UK	9,500	7.2%
Germany	4,877	3.7%
France	3,850	2.9%
Italy	3,770	2.8%
Canada	2,913	2.2%
Poland	2,488	1.9%
Turkey	1,815	1.4%
Romania	1,644	1.3%
Australia	1,550	1.2%
Spain	1,505	1.2%
Others (37 nations)	7,818	5.9%
Current Total	131,730	100.00%

Above numbers are indicative of troop contributions as at 14 December 2010, actual numbers fluctuate daily. Source: ISAF

In mid December the first of 50 troops from the Royal Tongan Marines joined RAF troops at Camp Bastion in Helmand Province. This is the first time that the Tongans will be carrying out security duties in Afghanistan and follows an intensive period of training at RAF Honington in Suffolk.

Reintegration

The High Peace Council convened further events to publicise the Afghan Peace and Reintegration Programme (APRP) and give guidance to Provincial Governors on its implementation. These took place in Kandahar on 6-7 December, in Herat on 14-15 December and in Jalalabad on 21-22 December. These followed previous events in Mazar-e-Sharif. We now look forward to Governors responding to reintegration opportunities as they arise.

Parliamentary Elections

Following the announcement of the final results for the Parliamentary elections on 1 December, the Afghan Supreme Court established a Special Tribunal to examine a number of electoral complaints raised by the Attorney General's office on the behalf of unsuccessful candidates. It is unclear when the Tribunal is likely to finish its work.

Governance

The Afghan Government has continued to make progress on its National Priority Programmes which cover areas such as development, peace and security. Nine of the twenty-two programmes have been designed and costed and cover financial and economic reform, health, education and other sectors. We look forward to the next full Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board in March which will assess progress.

Corruption remains a serious concern for the Afghan Government, Afghan citizens and the international community. Having earlier appointed three international members President Karzai announced, at the end of December, the appointment of three Afghan members of the anti-corruption Monitoring and Evaluation Committee.

Supported by the Helmand Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT), a team from the Helmand Provincial Governor's office met elders and other figures in Marjah and gathered the Chairs of some 40 Community Development Councils (village-level bodies supported by the Ministry of Rural Reconstruction and Development). They concluded that elections for a District Community Council (DCC) should be held in February 2011. This is an important reflection of growing confidence in Marjah. The Musa Qala District Community Council approved a draft District Strategic Plan for Musa Qala. The District Delivery Plan for Nawa was approved by the Nawa DCC.

The Helmand Police Training Centre (HPTC) is now enrolling 150 police recruits every three weeks, for eight-week courses. In the last week of December the 2000th recruit graduated from the HPTC since it opened a year earlier, with UK support.

Two UK-funded buildings, a new Detention Centre for the National Directorate of Security and a temporary facility for juvenile prisoners, were opened in December.

The Helmand PRT supported the Max Planck Institute to provide training for Helmand's statutory justice officials on criminal law, followed by a course on judicial ethics. The UK-funded Helmand legal aid office hired the Province's first female paralegal.

Economic Development

In December the first contract was awarded to begin a new UK Government-funded project to upgrade 35km of roads across central Helmand. The UK will invest £6m in 2011 to provide new transport and business opportunities for local people, allowing farmers greater access to markets to sell their produce. This new project is part of a wider programme supported by the Department for International Development (DFID) to upgrade roads across Helmand.

Early work on the DFID-funded Bost Agri-Business Park continues. The Park will give small and medium enterprises in Helmand a more secure base, with utilities such as electricity and water and processing facilities, in which to develop their businesses. To date, 46 business proposals have been received.

Over 45,000 farmers have now received subsidised packs of seed and fertiliser to encourage legal crops and reduce poppy planting. This is supported by the credible sanction that any farmer who grows poppy may have their crop ploughed up; preparations for poppy eradication began in December.

Regional Engagement

The Fifth Trilateral Summit of the Presidents of Afghanistan, Pakistan and Turkey was held on 24 December 2010 in Istanbul. The meetings provide a valuable platform for regional dialogue and cooperation on important issues such as security, infrastructure, trade and culture. We welcome Turkey's continued efforts to promote peace and stability in the region and the commitment of the three nations to an annual Summit.

On 11 December the Presidents of Turkmenistan, Afghanistan and Pakistan and the Indian Minister of Oil signed an agreement signalling progress on plans to construct the TAPI Pipeline which will carry Turkmen gas to Afghanistan, Pakistan and India. This is a positive indicator of increasing economic cooperation in the region and we welcome the continued regional collaboration on the project as it moves into its next phase.

Conclusion

Security, governance and economic development remain a formidable challenge in Afghanistan. The Government will continue to work with the international coalition and the Afghan Government to make progress towards peace and stability in Afghanistan.

Foreign and Commonwealth Office
January 2011