



## Afghanistan: The Timetable for Security Transition

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NATO assumed command of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan in August 2003.

At its Lisbon summit in November 2010, NATO agreed gradually to handover security responsibilities to Afghan National Security Forces by the end of 2014. At its summit in Chicago in May 2012, the Alliance confirmed ISAF's mission will end on 31 December 2014. It also mapped out the transition of security for Afghanistan from ISAF to Afghan National Security Forces. Specifically, it set the goal for Afghan forces to be in the lead for security nation-wide by mid-2013.

Between now and the end of ISAF's operation at the end of 2014, ISAF will gradually shift from a combat role to a training and assistance role. Forces will be gradually drawn down in the intervening period – individual countries are setting their own withdrawal plans within the overall framework of the 2014 end-date. Altogether there are nearly 129,000 personnel from 50 countries currently serving in ISAF.

The Government says British troops will move out of a combat role by the end of 2014 but will retain a combat capability until then. The British presence will be reduced by 500 to 9,000 personnel by the end of 2012. The Prime Minister has said the speed of further reductions between now and the end of 2014 will be “in accordance with conditions on the ground.”

There are five phases of the transition. The first was completed in 2011 and the second and third are underway. 75% of the Afghan population live in areas covered by the first three phases of transition. The fifth and final phase is not expected to be announced until mid-2013.

Library Note SN06147 [Afghan reconciliation and the Bonn Conference](#) looks at the progress or otherwise of attempts to reconcile and reintegrate insurgents with the government.

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# 1 Background

The UN mandated International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan began in December 2001 under UN Security Council Resolution 1386. NATO assumed command of the operation in August 2003 and its mandate has been repeatedly extended by the UN Security Council.

## 1.1 ISAF Mandate

UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1386 of December 2001 laid down the initial mandate for a 5,000-strong International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) to deploy to the region in, and immediately around, Kabul, in order to provide security and to assist in the reconstruction of the country under Chapter VII of the UN Charter.

While UN-mandated, the ISAF force is not, however, a UN force. In November 2001 the then UN Secretary General's Special Representative for Afghanistan, Lakhdar Brahimi, recommended, as part of his wider proposals that led to the Bonn Agreement, that a new security force for Afghanistan be established. He also suggested, however, that a UN peacekeeping force could not be recommended, partly because of the time it would take to form and partly because:

UN peacekeepers have proven most successful when deployed to implement an existing political settlement among willing parties - not to serve as a substitute for one. Any security force established in the absence of a credible cease-fire agreement or political settlement, whether constituted by Afghans, international personnel, or both, could quickly find itself in the role of combatant. This is not a role for 'Blue Helmets.'<sup>1</sup>

Until August 2003, when NATO assumed command, the ISAF operation was conducted as a UN-mandated coalition of the willing.

Since UNSCR 1386, the UN Security Council has adopted several resolutions extending the deployment of ISAF, including UNSCR 1510 in October 2003 which expanded the ISAF mandate to cover the whole of Afghanistan and thereby lay the groundwork for ISAF commanders to expand operations beyond Kabul.

UN Security Council Resolution 2011 (2011) currently authorises the presence of ISAF until 13 October 2012.<sup>2</sup>

A detailed Military Technical Agreement agreed between the ISAF Commander and the Afghan Transitional Authority in January 2002 provides additional guidance for ISAF operations.

## 1.2 Mission

NATO's main role in Afghanistan is to assist the Afghan Government in exercising and extending its authority across the country and creating a secure environment with a view to paving the way for reconstruction and effective governance. ISAF is a key component in achieving those aims. ISAF's mission is to:

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<sup>1</sup> [www.un.org/news/dh/latest/afghan/brahimi-sc-briefing.htm](http://www.un.org/news/dh/latest/afghan/brahimi-sc-briefing.htm)

<sup>2</sup> A copy of UNSCR 2011 is available online at: [http://www.un.org/Docs/sc/unsc\\_resolutions11.htm](http://www.un.org/Docs/sc/unsc_resolutions11.htm)

- Conduct security and stability operations throughout the country together with the Afghan National Security Forces
- Mentoring, training and equipping the Afghan National Security Forces
- Support reconstruction and development (R&D) in Afghanistan through its Provincial Reconstruction Teams, securing areas in which reconstruction work is conducted by other national and international actors.
- Help the Afghan Authorities strengthen the institutions required to fully establish good governance and rule of law and to promote human rights through its Provincial Reconstruction Teams. The principal mission of the PRTs in this respect consists of building capacity, supporting the growth of governance structures and promoting an environment within which governance can improve.<sup>3</sup>

## 2 NATO's Lisbon Summit – November 2010

At a meeting of NATO Foreign Ministers at the end of April 2010 agreement on a common roadmap for progressive security transition to the Afghan authorities, beginning in late 2010, was reached. However, in reaching a draft agreement the NATO Secretary General cautioned:

We need to be clear about what transition means and doesn't mean. Transition means that Afghan authorities take the lead, and we move into a supportive role. But it doesn't mean a rush for the exit.<sup>4</sup>

Few details of that draft plan were released with the expectation that a roadmap would be developed in conjunction with the Afghan government for endorsement at the security conference in Kabul on 20 July 2010. Indeed, the Communiqué agreed at the Kabul Conference reiterated the support of the international community to the objective "that the Afghan National Security Forces should lead and conduct military operations in all provinces by the end of 2014". The plan for transition agreed at that July conference set out the following principles:

- Transition would be a conditions-based process and any recommendations would be based on conditions on the ground.
- Transition would not signify a withdrawal of ISAF forces but a gradual shift to a supporting role as the capabilities of the Afghan National Security Forces developed. As circumstances dictate, the international community's civilian and military representatives would gradually shift toward a supporting, then mentoring, then enabling and finally a sustaining role across all three pillars of security, governance and development.
- Transition would involve key Afghan institutions and functions as well as geographic areas, and would include the evolution of the ISAF Provincial Reconstructions Teams (PRTs) towards a mainstream developmental model. ISAF Headquarters would remain even as forces drawdown.

The criteria for transition were defined thus:

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<sup>3</sup> <http://www.isaf.nato.int/mission.html>

<sup>4</sup> NATO press release, 23 April 2010

Successful transition of security responsibility requires that Afghan National Security Forces, under effective Afghan civilian control, will be capable of tackling existing and new security challenges, with continued support from ISAF. Transition assessments will also consider the ability and authority of the Afghan government to provide the rule of law and manage public administration at sub-national and local levels; and the capacity of an area to sustain socio-economic development. Transition must be irreversible.<sup>5</sup>

Assessment of each province's readiness for transition was to be undertaken by the Joint Afghan-NATO Inteqal<sup>6</sup> Board, with its recommendations to be submitted to the Afghan Cabinet for approval. Any provinces identified as falling short of transition criteria would be the focus of an Action Plan specifically geared towards addressing those shortfalls.

The Kabul Communiqué went on to conclude that “the Government of Afghanistan and NATO/ISAF are to assess jointly the provinces with the aim of announcing by the end of 2010 that the process of transition is underway”.<sup>7</sup> At the time the intention was to launch that process in time for the Lisbon summit.

## **2.1 Transition of Security Responsibilities**

The Lisbon Summit Declaration subsequently identified the ISAF mission in Afghanistan as “the Alliance’s key priority” and confirmed that a new phase in the Afghan mission would now begin, with the process of transition to Afghan security responsibility starting in early 2011 in certain districts and provinces “following a joint Afghan and NATO/ISAF assessment and decision”. Transition would be conditions-based, “not calendar-driven” and “will not equate to withdrawal of ISAF troops” which will remain in a supporting role, but would result in Afghan forces gradually assuming full responsibility for security across the whole of Afghanistan by the end of 2014. The declaration did not, however, pinpoint which districts and provinces would be the first to transition.

More specifically, the Declaration by the nations contributing to ISAF set out the following:

- The agreed process of transition will be jointly carried out.
- Assistance with Afghan national priority programmes will be better aligned.
- As transition proceeds, ISAF’s profile and reconfiguration will be adjusted, with military assets reinvested, as necessary and appropriate, to meet critical security, training and mentoring requirements.
- Afghan security capabilities will be further strengthened as ISAF gradually moves away from combat to an increasingly supporting role.
- The international civilian effort, including the work conducted through the Provincial Reconstruction Teams will continue to evolve and enable greater Afghan capacity and leadership, while also preparing for longer-term development assistance.

That document also reiterated the importance of the Afghan security forces training mission to the process of transition, and emphasised the challenge of meeting the requirements for “trainers, mentors and critical enablers for 2011 and beyond”. It went on to welcome

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<sup>5</sup> NATO Factsheet, [NATO's role in Afghanistan](#)

<sup>6</sup> This is the Dari/Pashto word for transition

<sup>7</sup> *Kabul International Conference on Afghanistan Communiqué*, 20 July 2010

measures for reconciliation and reintegration, recognising them as “a key part of achieving lasting stability in Afghanistan” and expressed continued support for Afghan-led efforts through the Peace Jirga, the High Peace Council and the Afghan Peace and Reintegration Program. The declaration did, however, state that “corruption remains a central challenge to be addressed” and called on the Afghan government to fully implement the Kabul commitments on improving governance, strengthening the rule of law and ensuring sustainable economic growth. Co-operation with regional partners was also welcomed.

## **2.2 Declaration on Enduring Partnership**

NATO leaders and the Afghan government also agreed a *Declaration on an Enduring Partnership* which sought to establish long term partnership arrangements between NATO and the Afghan government beyond the scope of the current ISAF mission, and in line with broader UN-led international efforts. Centred round the Comprehensive Approach, that declaration commits to developing effective measures of co-operation that will provide sustained practical support to Afghan security institutions in the longer term. Specifically, those measures could include:

- Mechanisms for political and military dialogue.
- Continuing use of NATO trust funds in support of capacity building of Afghan government security institutions.
- A continuing NATO liaison in Afghanistan to assist in the implementation of the declaration with a common understanding that NATO has no ambition to establish a permanent military presence in Afghanistan or to use its presence in Afghanistan against other nations.
- Continuation of the NATO Afghan training mission, reconfigured as necessary, and with the approval of NATO leaders, to meet the Afghan government’s evolving security needs.
- An individual programme of additional co-operation activities derived from, and incorporating, the existing Afghan Co-operation Programme along with other initiatives. Such activities could include assistance with the development and reform of security ministries and other national institutions; helping build professionalism and capacity of the Afghan National Security Forces in areas such as counter terrorism and counter narcotics; and providing tailored access to NATO courses, institutions and military and civilian expertise.

## **3 NATO’s Chicago Summit – May 2012**

An explicit commitment to end the ISAF mission in Afghanistan by 31 December 2014 was agreed at NATO’s next summit, held in Chicago on 20-21 May 2012.

In addition, they agreed Afghan forces will be in the lead for security nation-wide by mid-2013. This, they noted, “will mark an important milestone in the Lisbon roadmap.”

During the transition period, described as “irreversible” in the summit’s declaration on Afghanistan, ISAF forces will shift from a combat mission to a training, advising and assistance mission. ISAF-contributing nations reaffirmed their enduring commitment to Afghan security beyond 2014 and NATO agreed to work towards establishing a new NATO-led mission after 2014.

### 3.1 2013 and 2014: has the target moved?

The explicit commitment to mid-2013 as the target for Afghan forces to take the lead for security is an advance on the Lisbon summit. Speaking at the end of that summit, the Prime Minister stated that the withdrawal of British combat troops from Afghanistan by 2015 was a firm deadline that would be met:

The commitment we have entered into today to transfer the lead responsibility for security to the Afghan Government by the end of 2014 will pave the way for British combat troops to be out of Afghanistan by 2015. This is a firm deadline that we will meet.<sup>8</sup>

In early 2012 statements by senior politicians and NATO began mentioning 2013 rather than 2014 as the significant year in the transition process. US Secretary of Defence Leon Panetta told reporters on 1 February he hoped to see US troops make the final transitions from a combat role to a training, advice and assist role by mid-2013. His comment was interpreted by some as suggesting the timetable was being accelerated.

Anders Fogh Rasmussen later said:

In order to actually complete transition by the end of 2014, we need to hand over the last provinces and districts to lead Afghan responsibility at a certain time in 2013. Because based on experience it takes between 12 and 18 months to actually fully implement a transition.

So if the whole of the transition is to be completed by the end of 2014 we'll have to hand over the last provinces to lead Afghan responsibility by mid-2013, or at the latest in the second half of 2013. That's why the year 2013 has suddenly been mentioned. It's not about accelerating the transition process, but it's actually in order to stick to the Lisbon Road Map that we have to take 2013 into account.<sup>9</sup>

### 3.2 The Chicago Summit Declaration on Afghanistan

The *Chicago Summit Declaration on Afghanistan*, adopted on 21 May 2012, says:

In line with the strategy which we agreed at the Lisbon Summit, ISAF's mission will be concluded by the end of 2014.

[...] In Lisbon, in November 2010, we decided on the phased transition of security responsibility from ISAF to the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF), in order to enable Afghans to take full responsibility for their own security. NATO/ISAF and the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan remain committed to this transition strategy which began in July 2011. Irreversible transition is on track and will be completed by the end of 2014.

[...] By mid-2013, all parts of Afghanistan will have begun transition and the Afghan forces will be in the lead for security nation-wide. This will mark an important milestone in the Lisbon roadmap. ISAF is gradually and responsibly drawing down its forces to complete its mission by 31 December 2014.<sup>10</sup>

It also states:

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<sup>8</sup> [MOD Press Release](#), 22 November 2010

<sup>9</sup> ["Monthly press briefing by NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen,"](#) NATO, 2 April 2012

<sup>10</sup> [Chicago Summit Declaration on Afghanistan](#) Issued by the Heads of State and Government of Afghanistan and Nations contributing to the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), NATO, 21 May 2012

- Afghan-NATO Partnership will continue post-2014
- Goal to prevent Afghanistan from becoming a safe haven for terrorists
- Afghan Government confirms its resolve to deliver on its commitments to a democratic society, including combating corruption, rule of law, equality of men and women, elections to be conducted in accordance with the Afghan Constitution and must be transparent, inclusive and credible
- Continued progress by the Afghan government towards these goals will encourage ISAF nations to further provide their support up to and beyond 2014
- Commitment to implement UN Security Council resolution 1325 on women, peace and security
- NATO and Afghan government to deepen their consultations towards further developing and shaping the Enduring Partnership
- Afghan Government continues to welcome the support of ISAF nations to support Afghan security beyond 2014
- Afghan Government invites NATO to continue its support of the ANSF in training, advising and assisting them
- Agree to work towards a new NATO-led mission for post-2014 which will be a training, advising and assistance mission
- Preliminary model for a future total ANSF size envisages a force of 228,500 with an estimated annual budget of \$4.1 billion
- International community to help develop appropriate, coherent and effective funding mechanisms and expenditure arrangements for the ANSF
- Afghan government share of ANSF budget costs to increase progressively from at least \$500m in 2015 with the intention of assuming full financial responsibility for its own security forces no later than 2024
- Afghan government needs to develop an adequate plan for the Afghan National Police
- Reconciliation and reintegration is key to a peaceful and stable Afghanistan
- Process leading to reconciliation must be Afghan-led and Afghan-owned
- Reconciliation must contain the reaffirmation of a sovereign, stable and united Afghanistan, the renunciation of violence, the breaking of ties to international terrorism, and compliance with the Afghan Constitution, including its human rights provisions, especially on the rights of women

#### **4 Timetable for Security Transition**

The International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) mission will end on 31 December 2014. This was agreed by ISAF-contributing nations at the NATO summit in Chicago in May 2012, building on the goal set at its Lisbon summit in 2010. Responsibility for security of

Afghanistan is gradually being transitioned to Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF). The process began in 2011 and will progress through five phases, finishing in 2014. The Chicago summit set a clear expectation that Afghan forces will be in the lead for security nation-wide by mid-2013. Correspondingly, ISAF forces will shift from a combat to a training, advising and supporting role.

Afghan President Karzai summarised the timetable:

2013 means the lead will be given to Afghans, except for a few provinces, or areas where we would still need the foreign forces' presence. But it will be 2014 when everything will be fully handed over, when everything will be completed, when the transition will have been completed, with the international forces leaving the country.<sup>11</sup>

ISAF Strategic Transition Group Brigadier General Richard Cripwell recently confirmed the pace of the transition was going well. In a briefing, he said:

To date, in tranches one and two there has been no regression in terms of security or governance or development in those areas. And whilst clearly there are challenges ahead in tranche three, I've seen no indication at all that either the Afghan national forces would not be able to deal with those problems or that they would put the rough timetable for transition into question.<sup>12</sup>

#### 4.1 Phase One

On 22 March 2011 Afghan President Hamid Karzai announced the first phase of transition of security responsibility to the Afghan National Security Forces. The seven districts and provinces listed are:

- Bamyán province
- Kabul province, with the exception of Surobi district
- Panjshir province
- Herat City (capital of Herat province)
- Lashkar Gah (capital of Helmand province)
- Mazar-e-Sharif (capital of Balkh province)
- Mehtar Lam (capital of Laghman province).

See section 6 for a map of the provinces.

The announcement that Mazar-e-Sharif would be among the first districts to transition was overshadowed, however, by an attack on the UN compound in the city on 1 April 2011 which killed seven UN workers.

The gradual shift in security responsibility began in May 2011 with ISAF operations moving towards a more supporting and advisory role in each of these areas, with Afghan National Security Forces assuming the lead in decision making, planning and conduct of security

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<sup>11</sup> ["Joint Press Conference with NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen and Afghan President Hamid Karzai in Kabul, Afghanistan"](#), NATO, 12 April 2012

<sup>12</sup> ["DOD News Briefing with Brig. Gen. Cripwell via Teleconference from Afghanistan"](#), DOD news transcript, 20 June 2012

operations. The formal handover of security responsibility in each of these areas was subsequently achieved in mid-July. Bamyan province was the first area to be formally handed over on 17 July. British forces handed over Lashkar Gah on 20 July, while Panjshir province was the final area to be formally handed over in phase one of the security transition on 24 July 2011.

## 4.2 Phase Two

President Karzai announced phase two on 27 November 2011:

- The provinces of Balkh, Daykundi, Takhar, Samangan, Nimroz and the remainder of Kabul province.
- The cities of Jalalabad, ChaghCharan (Ghor province), Sheberghan (Jawzjan province), Feyzabad (Badakhshan province), Ghazni (Ghazni province), Maidan Shahr (Wardak province) and Qala-e Now (Badghis province).
- The districts of:
  - Yaftal Safli, Arghanj, Baharak, Tashkan, Keshem and Argu in Badakhshan province
  - Abkamari in Badghis province
  - Nawah and Nad-e Ali in Helmand province
  - All districts of Herat province except for Shindand district, Obi and Chisht Sharif
  - Qarghai in Laghman province
  - Behsud, Quskunar and Sorkhrud districts of Nangarhar province
  - All districts of Parwan province except for Shiwari and Siahgherd
  - All districts of Sar-E Pul province except for Sayyad
  - Districts of first part of Beh Sud, Jelriz and Centre of Behsud in Wardak province.

As part of this second phase, Afghan security forces will progressively take over lead responsibility for security in each of these areas over the next few months. NATO stated in November that implementation of transition in these areas could take up to 24 months to complete.<sup>13</sup>

Following this phase of transition, Afghan Security Forces will be responsible for the security of 50% of the Afghan population.<sup>14</sup>

## 4.3 Phase three

President Karzai announced the third stage of transition on 13 May 2012<sup>15</sup>. The third phase covers all the provincial capitals throughout Afghanistan. The UK Government said

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<sup>13</sup> [NATO press release](#), 28 November 2011

<sup>14</sup> ISAF press release, 27 November 2011

afterwards “once tranche three begins, 75% of the Afghan population will be living in areas where the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) have lead security responsibility”<sup>16</sup> The third phase of the process takes to 11 the number of provinces where security responsibilities will have been transferred in its entirety. Phase three includes all the administrative units in the provinces of Uruzgan, Kapisa and Parwan.

William Hague, the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, confirmed that phase three includes Nahr-e-Saraj, which is in the area of UK operations. British troops have operated in Nahr-e Saraj since 2006. This is the last of the three districts in the UK’s area of operations to enter the transition process (Lashkar Gah and Nad ‘Ali entered transition in phases one and two respectively).<sup>17</sup>

#### 4.4 Phases four and five

No date has been given on when the fourth phase might begin. ISAF Commander General Allen has said he anticipates the fifth and final tranche to be announced by the Afghan Government in summer 2013.<sup>18</sup>

The Chicago Summit Declaration on Afghanistan states:

The third wave of provinces to enter the transition process was announced by President Karzai on 13 May 2012. This means that 75% of Afghanistan’s population will soon be living in areas where the ANSF have taken the lead for security. By mid-2013, all parts of Afghanistan will have begun transition and the Afghan forces will be in the lead for security nation-wide.<sup>19</sup>

## 5 Afghan National Security Forces

Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) are gradually taking over lead responsibility for security of Afghanistan from ISAF.

NATO established its Training Mission in Afghanistan (NTM-A) in November 2009, bringing together NATO and national training efforts under one umbrella. There are currently 38 nations contributing to it.<sup>20</sup> ISAF troops are involved in training, mentoring and operating alongside the Afghan security forces in preparation for the full handover of responsibility. NATO agreed at its Chicago summit to lead a post-ISAF mission after 2014 to support the ANSF.

NATO says both the police and army are on “well on track” to reach the goal of 352,000 by the end of 2012 ahead of schedule.<sup>21</sup>

ISAF military officials have spoken in complimentary terms about the Afghan forces. ISAF Strategic Transition Group Brigadier General Richard Cripwell (British army) said recently:

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<sup>15</sup> “Announcement by President Hamid Karzai on the Official Launch of Transition Tranche 3”, Office of the President of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, 13 May 2012

<sup>16</sup> “[Afghanistan Monthly Progress Report](#)”, *Foreign and Commonwealth Office*, May 2012

<sup>17</sup> HC Deb 24 May 2012 c85WS

<sup>18</sup> Senate Armed Services Committee, *Senate Armed Services Committee holds hearing on the situation in Afghanistan*, 22 March 2012

<sup>19</sup> *Chicago Summit Declaration on Afghanistan Issued by the Heads of State and Government of Afghanistan and Nations contributing to the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF)*, NATO website, 21 May 2012

<sup>20</sup> “[Afghan National Security Forces \(ANSF\): Training and Development](#)”, *NATO factsheet*, April 2012. More about the training programme is available on its website <http://www.ntm-a.com>

<sup>21</sup> “[Afghan National Security Forces \(ANSF\): Training and Development](#)”, *NATO factsheet*, April 2012

The Afghans are out dealing with incidents of all sorts every day. Their ability to plan and conduct operations is improving all of the time. And they are now routinely, for example, planning and conducting brigade operations around the country. This is very serious soldiering, and it's a significant achievement on their part to have -- to have come this far in the time that they have.<sup>22</sup>

He further said:

I am absolutely confident that the ANSF, first and foremost, will be absolutely in a position to assume the lead for security across the country, supported by ISAF forces, by roughly the middle of 2013.<sup>23</sup>

Defence Secretary Philip Hammond, in announcing the details of the withdrawal of 500 British troops, said:

The details I have announced today are consistent with our intention to move out of a combat role by the end of 2014. They demonstrate our commitment to the process of transition and the increasing capacity and capability of the ANSF, reflecting its real achievements on the ground. As the ANSF grows and gradually takes lead responsibility for security across the country, ISAF's military footprint, including that of the United Kingdom, will reduce further. We will keep the House informed of future plans for further reductions in UK troop numbers as conditions on the ground permit.<sup>24</sup>

There is a concern about the Afghan police and the Chicago summit declaration calls for a plan to be developed by the Afghan Government and International Police Coordination Board to "further develop and professionalise", in order to provide policing services to the Afghan population.

**Table one: ANSF Growth to 31 May 2012:** <sup>25</sup>

	Objective (31 October 2012)	Target strength (31 May 2012)	Actual strength (31 May 2012)	May target met
Afghan National Army (ANA) <sup>26</sup>	187,000	173,500	186,012	Yes
Air Force (AAF)	8,000	5,800	144,580	No
National Police (ANP)	157,000	150,531	144, 182	No
ANA Officers	28,400	27,700	27,100	No
ANA NCOs (non-commissioned officers)	67,100	64,100	50,000	No

<sup>22</sup> "DOD News Briefing with Brig. Gen. Cripwell via Teleconference from Afghanistan", *DOD news transcript*, 20 June 2012

<sup>23</sup> Ibid

<sup>24</sup> HC Deb 26 April 2012 c1119

<sup>25</sup> "Afghanistan Monthly Progress Report May 2012", *Foreign and Commonwealth Office*, 28 June 2012

<sup>26</sup> The ANA number no longer includes civilians or Afghan Air Force personnel as was the case in previous FCO monthly reports

The UK Government has expressed concern that “too many people are leaving” the Afghan National Army and the attrition rate “remains consistently above target.”<sup>27</sup>

**Table two: ANSF attrition rates:** <sup>28</sup>

	Target Monthly attrition	Actual Monthly attrition	May target met
ANA	1.4%	2.3%	No
AAF:	1.4%	1.0%	Yes
ANP	1.4%	1.0%	Yes
Uniformed Police	1.4%	0.9%	Yes
Border Police	1.4%	1.3%	Yes
National Civil Order Police	1.4%	2.8%	No

### 5.1 Funding and size of the Afghanistan National Security Forces after 2014

The target of 352,000 by 2012 is considered to be a ‘surge’ force and the peak number required. Sustaining the ANSF beyond 2014 was a key topic of debate at the NATO Chicago Summit, where ISAF-contributing nations reaffirmed their enduring commitment to Afghan security beyond 2014. This builds on the agreement made at the International Afghanistan Conference in Bonn on 5 December 2011 to support the training, equipping, financing and capability development of the ANSF beyond the end of the transition period.

No decision has been made as to the force structure after 2014. A preliminary model, agreed by the Afghan government and the international community, envisages a force of 228,500. This is slightly lower than numbers suggested by ISAF Commander General Allen, in testimony to the Senate in March: there was an “expectation” that after 2014 that number will reduce to between 231,000 to 236,000, based on a study of scenarios for 2017.<sup>29</sup> Afghan President Hamed Karzai says the exact number will depend on the situation on the ground and the capacity of the ANSF.<sup>30</sup>

The Chicago Summit Declaration on Afghanistan says:

The pace and the size of a gradually managed force reduction from the ANSF surge peak to a sustainable level will be conditions based and decided by the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan in consultation with the International Community. The preliminary model for a future total ANSF size, defined by the International Community and the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, envisages a force of 228,500 with an estimated annual budget of US\$4.1billion, and will be reviewed regularly against the developing security environment.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>27</sup> [Afghanistan: Monthly Progress Report](#), February 2012

<sup>28</sup> “[Afghanistan Monthly Progress Report May 2012](#)”, *Foreign and Commonwealth Office*, 28 June 2012 (please note the table in the report says April target met, however the FCO have confirmed this is a typing error and the figures apply for May 2012)

<sup>29</sup> [Testimony to Armed Services Committee](#), 22 March 2012

<sup>30</sup> “[Joint Press Conference with NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen and Afghan President Hamid Karzai in Kabul, Afghanistan](#)”, *NATO*, 12 April 2012

<sup>31</sup> “[Chicago Summit Declaration on Afghanistan](#)”, *NATO*, 21 May 2012 para 16

The Declaration also says funding mechanisms and expenditure arrangements for all strands of the ANSF will be developed. It also states that Afghanistan's annual share will increase progressively from at least US\$500 million in 2015 "with the aim that it can assume, no later than 2024, full financial responsibility for its own security forces".<sup>32</sup>

There are concerns about the implications of making so many trained soldiers unemployed in a few years time. *The Independent* newspaper quoted a senior British officer who worried about the message being sent out to the men currently risking their lives that they may lose their jobs in a few years.<sup>33</sup> There are also concerns that demobilised soldiers may present a danger to stability in future years.

ISAF contributing nations agreed in Chicago to work towards establishing a new NATO-led training, advising and assistance mission for the period after 2014, once the transition is complete.

A number of countries have already made specific commitments to training and supporting the ANSF after 2014 totalling close to \$1 billion. The UK Government says it expects other countries to finalise their contributions over the coming months:<sup>34</sup>

- The UK will provide £70 million a year towards the wider \$4.1 billion fund from 2015<sup>35</sup>
- The UK will create an Afghan National Army Officer Academy, to open in 2013. It is expected to accept 1,350 recruits annually. Approximately 120 British troops will be based at the academy to provide training and related support. The academy is being built within the perimeter of an Afghan facility and UK personnel based there will operate from within a coalition force Operating Base, protected by UK or coalition military personnel.<sup>36</sup>
- Australia will provide \$100 million per year from 2015<sup>37</sup>
- Australia will contribute trainers to the new NATO-led training mission with a focus on the Afghan artillery school and officer training academy<sup>38</sup>

President Obama signed a Strategic Partnership Agreement with President Karzai during a visit to Kabul on 1 May 2012. It is a ten-year agreement that sets the framework for the relationship between the two countries beyond 2014.<sup>39</sup> According to the White House:

The Strategic Partnership Agreement allows US forces in Afghanistan to pursue two missions: train Afghan forces and target the remnants of Al Qaeda. It commits Afghanistan to providing US personnel access to and use of Afghan facilities; commits both countries to initiate negotiations on a Bilateral Security Agreement to supercede the current Status of Forces Agreement.<sup>40</sup>

### Concerns about ANSF

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid, para18

<sup>33</sup> K Sengupta, "NATO chiefs and politicians battle to delay Afghan troop depletion", *The Independent*, 19 April 2012

<sup>34</sup> "Afghanistan Monthly Progress Report May 2012", *Foreign and Commonwealth Office*, 28 June 2012

<sup>35</sup> "Defence Secretary announces £70m for Afghan security forces", *MOD news*, 19 April 2012

<sup>36</sup> HC Deb 1 May 59WS

<sup>37</sup> "Transcript of joint press conference, Chicago", *Prime Minister of Australia website*, 21 May 2012

<sup>38</sup> Ibid

<sup>39</sup> More information about the Strategic Partnership Agreement is available on the [White House website](#)

<sup>40</sup> "Fact Sheet: The U.S.-Afghanistan Strategic Partnership Agreement", *White House press office*, 1 May 2012

The number of ‘Green on Blue’ attacks, in which members of Afghan security forces (or men dressed in their uniforms) attack ISAF troops, has raised concerns among ISAF contributing nations. ISAF Commander General John Allen said such attacks “should be expected in counter-insurgency operations”, adding it is “characteristic of this kind of warfare.”<sup>41</sup>

Eight ISAF soldiers were killed in a ten day period between 20 February and 1 March 2012. Two British soldiers were killed by a member of the Afghan army on 26 March 2012.<sup>42</sup> Three British soldiers were killed by a man wearing an Afghan police uniform, reported to be a member of the Afghan Civil Order Police, on 1 July 2012.<sup>43</sup>

Four of the eleven Australian soldiers killed in action in Afghanistan in 2011 were the result of attacks by members of the Afghan National Army.<sup>44</sup>

France suspended its training and support operations with the Afghan army after four French troops were killed by an Afghan soldier on 20 January 2012. France announced plans to withdraw its troops in 2013, a year earlier than expected, in the wake of the attacks.<sup>45</sup> That date has since been brought forward by the new President.

## 6 ISAF Contributing Nations

There are currently nearly 130,000 troops from 50 nations in ISAF. Those military personnel are divided among the six ISAF Regional Commands and thus have security responsibility for specific geographical areas.<sup>46</sup> The most up to date map of the Regional Commands can be accessed on the [ISAF website](#).

This number will drop to approximately 106,000 in October 2012 after the US withdraws the remaining 23,000 of its 30,000 surge force.

**Table three: troop contributing nations:**<sup>47</sup>

Albania	333	Georgia	800	Norway	515
Armenia	126	Germany	4,701	Poland	2,420
Australia	1,550	Greece	112	Portugal	155
Austria	3	Hungary	339	Romania	1,800
Azerbaijan	94	Iceland	6	Singapore	39
Bahrain	95	Ireland	7	Slovakia	330
Belgium	524	Italy	3,986	Slovenia	79
Bosnia & Herzegovina	59	Jordan	0	Spain	1,596
Bulgaria	561	Republic of Korea	350	Sweden	500

<sup>41</sup> “ISAF commander: rogue Afghan army attacks ‘to be expected’”, *Daily Telegraph*, 26 March 2012

<sup>42</sup> “Afghan security forces kill 3 ISAF troops in south, east”, *The Long War Journal*, 26 March 2012

<sup>43</sup> “Three British soldiers killed by Afghan policeman after argument”, *The Daily Telegraph*, 2 July 2012

<sup>44</sup> “We are serving our national interest in Afghanistan”, *Julia Gillard speech, Australian Strategic Policy Institute*, 17 April 2012

<sup>45</sup> “French troops to withdraw from Afghanistan early”, *Jane’s Country Risk Report*, 31 January 2012

<sup>46</sup> Information on ISAF troop contributions since January 2007 is available from the [ISAF website](#).

<sup>47</sup> [ISAF: key facts and figures](#), 15 May 2012

Canada <sup>1</sup>	950	Latvia	175	The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	177
Croatia	278	Lithuania	237	Tonga	55
Czech Republic	529	Luxembourg	10	Turkey	1,272
Denmark	676	Malaysia	46	Ukraine	23
El Salvador	24	Mongolia	102	United Arab Emirates	35
Estonia	153	Montenegro	39	United Kingdom	9,500
Finland	177	Netherlands	500	United States	90,000
France	3,279	New Zealand	152	<b>Total</b>	<b>129,469</b>

<sup>1</sup> Canadian forces are deployed purely to train Afghan Security Forces.

At present over half of the countries contributing to ISAF operate with national caveats that restrict or prohibit certain actions (such as counter narcotics operations) or operations in specific geographical locations, without national consent. Nearly 40% of caveats are in the latter category, which are regarded as presenting a “significant challenge for COMISAF as they limit his agility”. The Pentagon’s November 2010 report suggested that “The effect of geographical caveats on transition may present further challenges, as thinned-out ISAF Forces may be more difficult to redeploy in unstable, insecure areas where handoff of security responsibilities to ANSF may require ad-hoc ISAF engagement”.<sup>48</sup> Currently 20 troop contributing nations are “caveat free”.<sup>49</sup>

## 6.1 British forces

The UK was the first nation to lead ISAF, which was mandated in December 2001. The UK at the time had 1,300 troops which it reduced by 900 when it handed over command to Turkey in June 2002.

Since November 2009 the UK contingent in Afghanistan has consistently totalled approximately 10,000 personnel: 9,500 of which are deployed as part of ISAF and the remainder are UK Special Forces. 500 are to be withdrawn by the end of 2012, bringing the number of troops with ISAF to 9,000.<sup>5051</sup>

Although the MoD does not routinely publish deployment figures, an idea of the level of service personnel deployed in Afghanistan can be obtained from a variety of sources. These are summarised below:

- June 2002                      400 troops <sup>52</sup>
- August 2003                    300 troops <sup>53</sup>
- September 2004                530 troops <sup>54</sup>

<sup>48</sup> “Report on Progress toward Stability and Security in Afghanistan”, US Department of Defense, November 2010

<sup>49</sup> *ibid*

<sup>50</sup> HC Deb 6 July 2011, c1512

<sup>51</sup> HC Deb 9 February 2012 c497

<sup>52</sup> HC Deb 20 June 2002 c407-410

<sup>53</sup> MoD press release, 11 August 2003

- January 2005            497 troops <sup>55</sup>
- October 2005           544 troops <sup>13</sup>
- May-July 2006        The Allied Rapid Reaction Corps (ARRC), led by the UK, assumed command of ISAF in May 2006. The deployment of the Helmand Task Force also began. During this period troop levels peaked at 5,700 troops. <sup>56</sup>
- End of July 2006    4,900 troops. Following the withdrawal of the engineers building the camps in Helmand, 3,600 personnel were deployed as part of the Helmand taskforce in southern Afghanistan, the remainder are part of the ARRC HQ. <sup>14</sup>
- October 2006        A further 900 personnel were expected to arrive in theatre as part of the Helmand Taskforce by the end of September. The roulement of British forces is also scheduled for October 2006. Following the change over of forces there are expected to be 5,845 British personnel in Afghanistan (4,500 of those personnel deployed as part of the Helmand Taskforce) <sup>57</sup>
- February 2007        Announcement of additional 1,400 personnel in spring/summer increasing presence from around 6,300 to 7,700 until 2009. <sup>58</sup>
- July 2007             6,200 <sup>59</sup>
- November 2007      7,470 <sup>60</sup>
- January 2008        7,800 <sup>61</sup>
- June 2008:            8,000. <sup>62</sup>
- April 2009            9,000. Prime Minister announces a further 700 British personnel would temporarily deploy to Afghanistan for the period of the Presidential election, taking the total number of British personnel deployed in the country to 9,000. <sup>63</sup>
- October 2009        9,500. Prime Minister announces that the UK would deploy 9,000 personnel in Afghanistan on “an enduring basis” and would increase, in principle, to 9,500 personnel. <sup>64</sup>
- May 2012             9,500

Library Note [The cost of international military operations](#) SN03139 is regularly updated with the latest assessments of the cost of operations in Afghanistan.

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<sup>54</sup> HC Deb 8 September 2004, c122-3WS

<sup>55</sup> ISAF contributing nations list

<sup>56</sup> HC Deb 26 January 2006, c1530-32; MOD press release April 2006; HC Deb 15 June 2006, c67WS

<sup>57</sup> HC Deb 10 July 2006, c1131-4

<sup>58</sup> HC Deb 26 February 2007, c619-621

<sup>59</sup> HC Deb 23 July 2007, c677W

<sup>60</sup> HC Deb 5 December 2007 c1223-4W

<sup>61</sup> HC Deb 7 January 2008 c16W

<sup>62</sup> HC Deb 22 July 2008 c1053W

<sup>63</sup> HC Deb 29 April 2009, c871

<sup>64</sup> HC Deb 18 October 2009, c301

## 7 ISAF drawdown plans

The Chicago Summit Declaration on Afghanistan states: "ISAF is gradually and responsibly drawing down its forces to complete its mission by 31 December 2014."<sup>65</sup>

Each nation will decide its own specific timetable for the drawdown of its forces, within the framework for transition. Some countries, like Canada, have completed their combat mission and remain in training role. France, under new President François Hollande, intends to withdraw its combat troops by the end of 2012. The UK government will reduce its 9,500 strong force by 500 by the end of 2012 and complete its combat role in Afghanistan by 2014.<sup>66</sup> The Government has not made definitive plans for the withdrawal of UK troops after 2012.<sup>67</sup>

Defence Secretary Philip Hammond said in April 2012:

Each nation has its own constitutional processes in which to consider its contribution as transition moves forward, but all agree that ISAF cohesion must be maintained. The UK will continue to work and plan closely with our ISAF partners, particularly those operating alongside us in Helmand, including the United States, which provides the bulk of coalition forces.

Foreign Secretary William Hague said in response to a question about Australia's drawdown plans::

The vast bulk of the ISAF troop-contributing countries remain clear about the commitment to the end of 2014 as the time when the transition to Afghan security control will be complete. The United Kingdom is fully in line with that. We have said that British troops will not have a combat role after that point or be there in anything like the numbers they are now. That position is unaffected by announcements by any other countries.<sup>68</sup>

### 7.1 US Forces

In December 2009 President Obama announced a 'surge' of 30,000 US troops to Afghanistan, deploying in early 2010. He said he asked other nations to increase their troop commitment too. He said these additional troops "will allow us to accelerate handing over responsibility to Afghan forces, and allow us to begin the transfer of our forces out of Afghanistan in July of 2011."<sup>69</sup>

In March 2011 Admiral Mike Mullen, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, suggested that while the US is "very committed to beginning the drawdown then" it will be based on conditions and the recommendations of commanders on the ground, and that as a result "there will continue to be a large number of US and allied troops on the ground in Afghanistan after July 2011".<sup>70</sup>

However, differences of opinion between Congress, the US administration and the Pentagon in early 2011 over the size of the reduction in July were widely reported. Military planners reiterated the need for keeping combat troop withdrawals to a minimum in order to avoid

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<sup>65</sup> [Chicago Summit Declaration on Afghanistan Issued by the Heads of State and Government of Afghanistan and Nations contributing to the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force \(ISAF\)](#), NATO 21 May 2012

<sup>66</sup> HC Deb 26 April 2012 c1119

<sup>67</sup> HC Deb 26 April 2012 c1127

<sup>68</sup> HC Deb 17 April 2012 c152

<sup>69</sup> ["Remarks by the President in Address to the Nation on the Way Forward in Afghanistan and Pakistan"](#), *White House*, 1 December 2009

<sup>70</sup> [US Department of Defense Press Release](#), 28 November 2010

losing the security gains that have been made since 2010; while the Administration favoured a “meaningful drawdown” before US Presidential elections in November 2012.<sup>71</sup> Following the death of Osama Bin Laden, which many have viewed as a natural turning point in the ‘war on terror’, dozens of US Senators also called for sizeable reductions in Afghanistan in both combat troops as well as logistical and support forces.

President Obama set out his plans for withdrawal in an address to the nation on 22 June 2011. In that speech he confirmed that the drawdown of US forces in Afghanistan would begin in July. 10,000 troops will be withdrawn by the end of 2011, with a further 23,000 withdrawn by summer 2012, representing the total surge of 33,000 personnel that deployed in early 2010.

He went on to confirm that:

After this initial reduction, our troops will continue coming home at a steady pace as Afghan security forces move into the lead. Our mission will change from combat to support. By 2014, this process of transition will be complete, and the Afghan people will be responsible for their own security.<sup>72</sup>

The US announcement met with a mixture of approval and concern. The NATO Secretary General welcomed the announcement, suggesting that the “tide is turning” and that it was “a natural result of the progress we have made”;<sup>73</sup> while Afghan President Hamid Karzai called it “the right decision for the interest of both countries”.<sup>74</sup> Senator John McCain stated, however: “I am concerned that the withdrawal plan that President Obama announced tonight poses an unnecessary risk to the hard-won gains that our troops have made thus far in Afghanistan and to the decisive progress that must still be made”.<sup>75</sup> According to *The New York Times* in June 2011, a number of military commentators also argued that the withdrawal of 20,000 personnel during the peak of the summer fighting season would make it “difficult, if not impossible, for commanders to carry out one of their major goals for next year”, which would involve US troops freed up in the southern provinces as security gains are consolidated and transition progresses, to focus their efforts on the vulnerable eastern border with Pakistan. Michael O’Hanlon at the Brookings Institution called the decision “a rushed ending to what has been a fairly effective surge”.<sup>76</sup>

The US has since confirmed the remaining 23,000 of its 30,000 surge force will be withdrawn by September 2012. ISAF General John Allen said in testimony to the Senate Armed Services Committee he will require “significant combat power in 2013”. He also stated he does not expect to make a decision on the number of US troops he requires until late 2012, after the September withdrawal is complete.<sup>77</sup> However he did say he anticipates having 68,000 US troops plus approximately 40,000 ISAF forces at his disposal at the end of 2012.<sup>78</sup>

## 7.2 British Forces

The UK is the second largest contributor to ISAF, after the United States. The UK contributes 9,500 troops to ISAF. This number will be reduced by 500 to 9,000 by the end of 2012.

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<sup>71</sup> “Obama and military battling over troop withdrawal”, *The Times*, 1 April 2011

<sup>72</sup> White House, *Remarks by the President on the Way Forward in Afghanistan*, 22 June 2011

<sup>73</sup> NATO press release, 23 June 2011

<sup>74</sup> “Trust Afghanistan’s forces to secure country’s future, says Hamid Karzai”, *The Guardian*, 23 June 2011

<sup>75</sup> “The tide changes for Obama on Afghanistan”, *BBC News*, 23 June 2011

<sup>76</sup> “2012 troop pullback worries military experts”, *The New York Times*, 22 June 2011

<sup>77</sup> [Testimony to Senate Armed Services Committee](#), 22 March 2012

<sup>78</sup> [Testimony to Senate Armed Services Committee](#), 22 March 2012

Combat troops will be withdrawn by the end of 2014.<sup>79</sup> The Government has not made definitive plans for the withdrawal of UK troops in 2013 and 2014.<sup>80</sup>

In his first Statement to the House on Afghanistan on 14 June 2010, the new Prime Minister, David Cameron, highlighted the Government's commitment to the objectives of the Afghanistan campaign and reiterated his view of its importance to the UK:

Let me address the first question that people are asking. Why are we in Afghanistan? I can answer in two words: national security. Our forces are in Afghanistan to prevent Afghan territory from again being used by al-Qaeda as a base from which to plan attacks on the UK or on our allies.

Of course, the al-Qaeda training camps and the Taliban regime that protected them were removed from Afghanistan in the months after 9/11, and the presence of NATO forces prevents them from returning, but Afghanistan is not yet strong enough to look after its own security. That is why we are there [...]

Today I am advised that the threat from al-Qaeda from Afghanistan and Pakistan has reduced, but I am also advised that if it were not for the current presence of UK and international coalition forces, al-Qaeda would return to Afghanistan and the threat to the UK would rise.<sup>81</sup>

The next question is how long we must stay. The Afghan people do not want foreign forces on their soil any longer than necessary, and the British people are rightly impatient for progress. Our forces will not remain in Afghanistan a day longer than is necessary, and I want to bring them home the moment it is safe to do so [...]

That is why we back the strategy developed by General McChrystal, commander of the international security assistance forces, and endorsed by President Obama and NATO. That strategy involves protecting the civilian population from the insurgents, supporting more effective government at every level, and building up the Afghan national security forces as rapidly as is feasible. We want to transfer security responsibility for districts and provinces to Afghan control as soon as they are ready, but that must be done on the basis of facts on the ground, not a pre-announced timetable.<sup>82</sup>

Since 2006 British forces have been predominantly deployed in the southern province of Helmand and at Kandahar airfield. Following the surge of US forces into the southern provinces during the end of 2009/first half of 2010, and the reorganisation of Regional Command South (see above), British forces handed over a number of key areas of territory and the command and control of RC South, to US forces, in order to allow British forces to consolidate their presence in central and southern Helmand: in April 2010 US forces assumed responsibility for the town of Musa Qala, in June 2010 British forces handed over responsibility for Kajaki, while responsibility for Sangin was transferred to the US in September.<sup>83</sup>

Following the transfer of security responsibility to the US, the UK announced in October that the number of British personnel dedicated to training the ANSF would be increased by more than 320, with more than 60 UK troops redeployed to the Helmand Police Training Centre in

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<sup>79</sup> HC Deb 6 July 2011, c1512 ; HC Deb 9 February 2012 c497

<sup>80</sup> HC Deb 26 April 2012 c1127

<sup>81</sup> HC Deb 14 June 2010, c603

<sup>82</sup> HC Deb 14 June 2010, c604

<sup>83</sup> Details of the timeframe for the reorganisation of forces in RC South West, including the handover of Sangin, were set out by the MOD on 7 July 2010.

Lashkar Gah.<sup>84</sup> This rebalancing of forces did not increase the UK's overall force level in Afghanistan from 9,500.

In May 2011 the Prime Minister announced that the withdrawal of 426 personnel by February 2012. However these forces were additional personnel deployed for specific planned task which did not affect the UK's enduring commitment of 9,500 personnel.<sup>85</sup>

In a statement to the House on 6 July 2011, the Prime Minister confirmed that 500 personnel would be withdrawn from Afghanistan by the end of 2012, taking the UK's enduring commitment to 9,000 personnel.<sup>86</sup>

Defence Secretary Philip Hammond outlined how that reduction of 500 personnel will be achieved in a statement on 26 April 2012:

- The majority of the 500 will be combat troops
- UK forces headquarters in Nahri Sarraj North and Nahri Sarraj South will be merged
- Reduction in support personnel and enablers
- Withdrawal of some combat support capabilities
- An additional 200 combat troops will be transferred from ground-holding roles to security force assistance teams working with the ANSF

Mr Hammond added:

For the avoidance of doubt, I should be clear that whatever role is being fulfilled, including the training of ANSF forces, British forces in Afghanistan will retain combat capability until the end of 2014.<sup>87</sup>

All three districts in Task Force Helmand's area of operations have completed or entered the transition process. The whole of Lashkar Gah District and the most populous 60% of Nad-e Ali are now under Afghan control. These two districts were included in transition phase one and two respectively. Mr Hammond said "the security situation in these districts is unrecognisable compared with the start of British operations in 2006." The third district, Nahr-e-Saraj was named as part of phase three of the transition, announced by the Afghan Government in May 2012.

Combined Forces Lashkar Gah and Nad-e Ali were renamed Transition Support Units Lashkar Gah and Nad-e Ali on 23 May 2012. The Government's progress report for May 2012 says:

This reflects the continued progress of both districts as they gradually transition to Afghan security control and marks the first steps in the Task Force's formal adoption of ISAF's security force assistance model. The change in name is indicative of the evolving role of UK forces in central Helmand. UK forces which will increasingly focus

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<sup>84</sup> MOD Press Release, 14 October 2010

<sup>85</sup> Liaison Committee, Evidence from the Prime Minister, 17 May 2011, Q66

<sup>86</sup> HC Deb 6 July 2011, c1512

<sup>87</sup> HC Deb 26 April 2012 c1119

on training, advising and assisting the Afghan security forces as we move towards completion of the transition process at the end of 2014.<sup>88</sup>

*Evening Standard* defence correspondent Robert Fox told the Defence Select Committee in early July:

I am led to believe that, despite the public pronouncements, we are going to step down from major combat offensive operations from the middle of next year, with a draw-down by a little over a year later, by the late summer of 2014.<sup>89</sup>

Operation Herrick 15 drew to a close in April 2012. A list of units deployed under Operation Herrick 16 can be found in the appendix.

### 7.3 Other Coalition Forces

- **France** – Begins withdrawal in July 2012, to be completed by December 2012.<sup>90</sup>

Then President Sarkozy announced in June 2011 a reduction of forces, with 200 leaving in October 2011, reducing the French contingent to approximately 3,800.

After an incident in January 2012 in which four French troops were killed by an Afghan soldier, President Sarkozy announced plans to withdraw all combat troops by the end of 2013, while continuing to train Afghan soldiers.<sup>91</sup>

The election of François Hollande as President has again shifted strategy, with the withdrawal of all combat troops now scheduled for the end of 2012. French forces are based in Kapisa province which is in transition phase three. President Hollande confirmed in a speech on 9 June 2012 that the withdrawal of French forces will begin in July 2012.<sup>92</sup> French personnel will remain involved in training Afghan forces.<sup>93</sup>

- **Canada** – Ended its combat operation in December 2011, currently contributes to NATO's Training Mission in Afghanistan.

Since 2009 the Canadian Government repeatedly made clear its intention to withdraw Canadian forces from Afghanistan once the parliamentary mandate for the combat operation ended in 2011. However, domestic political support for retaining a Canadian non-combat presence in Afghanistan beyond 2011 had been steadily increasing after a Canadian Senate report warned at the end of June 2010 that Canada's standing among its allies could suffer if it was to withdraw the entirety of its forces in 2011.

In November 2010 the Canadian Government announced that its contingent of combat forces would withdraw once its parliamentary mandate expired at the end of July 2011. However, it also stressed its continuing commitment to Afghanistan and therefore outlined the intention to deploy a non-combat force of approximately 950 personnel to the country until March 2014 as part of the NATO Training Mission. The

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<sup>88</sup> "Afghanistan Monthly Progress Report May 2012", *Foreign and Commonwealth Office*, 28 June 2012

<sup>89</sup> Defence Committee, *Securing the future of Afghanistan*, uncorrected oral evidence HC 413-i, 26 June 2012 Q20

<sup>90</sup> "France to begin Afghanistan withdrawal in July: President", *Defence news*, 9 June 2012

<sup>91</sup> Statements by Nicolas Sarkozy, President of the Republic, at his joint press conference with Hamid Karzai, President of Afghanistan, 27 January 2012

<sup>92</sup> "France to begin Afghanistan withdrawal in July: President", *Defence news*, 9 June 2012

<sup>93</sup> French Embassy in the US, Article by M. Jean-Yves Le Drian, Minister of Defence, published in *L'Express magazine*, 6 June 2012

decision to deploy a non-combat force for a further three years was taken without parliamentary approval, a move that has been criticised by some members of the Canadian House of Commons. The government argued that a vote on the deployment was unnecessary as it only involved non-combat troops. Indeed, in January 2010 Canadian military personnel were deployed to Haiti in a non-combat role without a parliamentary vote.

Canadian forces handed over control of their areas of responsibility in southern Afghanistan to US forces at the beginning of July 2011.

- **Australia** – Expects majority of troops to leave in 2013.

In October 2009 the then Australian Defence Minister, John Faulkner, stated that the government was examining how best to complete Australia's mission in Uruzgan province in "the shortest timeframe possible" and that discussion about possible exit strategies had been underway since early 2009.<sup>94</sup> Although 2012 had been touted as a possible date for handing over control of the province to Afghan National Security Forces, the Commander of Australian forces in the Middle East, General Hindmarsh, suggested, however that this date may be too ambitious.<sup>95</sup> The new Australian Prime Minister, Julia Gillard, confirmed at the end of June 2010 that "my approach to Afghanistan will continue the approach taken to date by the Australian government".<sup>96</sup>

Ms Julia Gillard announced in mid-April she expects Australian troops to complete the transition of security in Uruzgan province in 2013.<sup>97</sup> Australian newspapers speculated the majority of the troops will withdraw before federal elections in August 2013.<sup>98</sup> Ms Gillard confirmed at NATO's Chicago summit: "In Uruzgan Province, in which we work, transition begins in coming months and, as you know, we expect this process to take 12 to 18 months, and at its conclusion the majority of Australian troops will be able to return home."<sup>99</sup> Australia will contribute trainers for Afghan forces after 2014 and Ms Gillard also suggested a future role for Australian Special Forces, under the right mandate. Australia pledged US\$100 million annually for three years from 2015 to support the ANSF.<sup>100</sup>

Australia signed [Comprehensive long-term Partnership](#) between Australia and the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan on 20 May 2012.

- **Netherlands** - The Dutch contingent formally ended its mission in Uruzgan province in southern Afghanistan on 1 August 2010, in line with the end of its Parliamentary mandate which was initially agreed in December 2007. The command of Task Force Uruzgan (which had comprised 1,600 Dutch forces) was handed over to US and Australian forces. On 29 January 2011, however, the Dutch parliament approved a cabinet proposal to deploy a new training mission to Afghanistan that would comprise 545 non-combat personnel, including police trainers. Those personnel are based in the northern province of Kunduz alongside German troops and will deploy from May

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<sup>94</sup> "Australia seeks early pull out from Afghanistan", *The Daily Telegraph*, 21 October 2009

<sup>95</sup> "Aim to withdraw diggers from Afghanistan by 2012", *The Age*, 12 January 2009

<sup>96</sup> "Australia: troops to stay in Afghanistan", *The Jerusalem Post*, 25 June 2010

<sup>97</sup> "[We are serving our national interest in Afghanistan](#)", *Julia Gillard speech, Australian Strategic Policy Institute*, 17 April 2012

<sup>98</sup> "[Coalition questions timetable for Afghanistan exit](#)", *The Australian*, 17 April 2012

<sup>99</sup> "[Transcript of joint press conference, Chicago](#)" *Prime Minister of Australia press office*, 21 May 2012

<sup>100</sup> "[Australia commits to ongoing stability in Afghanistan](#)", *Prime Minister's office*, 16 May 2012

2011 until 2014. However, in order to gain parliamentary approval various concessions were made to Dutch opposition parties. Significantly the Dutch Government agreed to seek a written agreement from the Afghan Government that police trained by Dutch troops will not be used in any military action and that any use of four Dutch fighter jets accompanying the mission will be determined by the Netherlands and not the US.<sup>101</sup>

- **Denmark** – At the beginning of March 2011 the Danish Government and opposition parties agreed on a two-year plan for Denmark’s military contingent in Afghanistan. The ‘Helmand Plan 2011’ envisages handing over control of forward operating bases to the Afghan National Army in mid-2011 and reducing its troop levels in the country from 750 to 650 personnel by 2012 (an initial 30 personnel were withdrawn in August 2011). While elements of the current Danish Battle Group are expected to be maintained until the end of 2014, the remaining Danish contingent is expected to have an increased focus on training and education. The plan also sets out a commitment to a continued presence of trainers and enablers after 2014.<sup>102</sup>
- **Germany** – In November 2009 German Foreign Minister, Guido Westerwelle, acknowledged that the government was seeking a framework for the withdrawal of its forces from Afghanistan “to become visible” within the lifetime of the current Bundestag which is due to end in 2013.<sup>103</sup> On 28 January 2011 the Bundestag voted to approve the extension of the current mandate for Afghanistan for a further year, although for the first time that extension included a provision for German troops to begin withdrawing from Afghanistan by the end of 2011, subject to conditions on the ground, and to be completed in 2014. The vote passed by 420 votes to 116, with 43 abstentions. The Bundestag voted to extend the mandate again on 26 January 2012, but also voted to reduce the ceiling on the number of troops available to ISAF in Afghanistan from 5,350 to 4,900. The new mandate will run until 31 January 2013.<sup>104 105</sup>
- **Italy** – In October 2010 the Italian Government suggested that a gradual drawdown of its troops in Afghanistan would begin in summer 2011, with a view to a complete withdrawal by 2014.<sup>106</sup>
- **Poland** – President Bronislaw Komorowski announced in November 2010 that Poland would end its patrol and combat operations in Afghanistan in 2012, after which point troops will take on a purely training mission until 2014.<sup>107</sup> That drawdown of combat troops began with a planned rotation of forces in October 2011. However, the majority of combat troops are expected to withdraw in early 2012 when forces are next rotated with the emphasis shifting from stabilisation to training.<sup>108</sup>
- **Spain** – The new Government is delaying the start of its planned withdrawal. The previous Government outlined plans in June 2011 to start withdrawing troops in

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<sup>101</sup> See “First victory for Dutch minority government as MPs approve new Afghan mission”, *IHS Global Insight Daily Analysis*, January 2011

<sup>102</sup> “Danish Government agrees troop plan for Afghanistan”, *MOD press release*, 23 February 2011

<sup>103</sup> “Germany eyes Afghan exit road map by 2013”, *Reuters News*, 18 November 2009

<sup>104</sup> “Fewer German troops in Afghanistan as of 2012”, *German Federal Government*, 14 December 2011

<sup>105</sup> “German parliament resolves drawdown of Afghan mission”, *Deutsche Welle*, 27 January 2012

<sup>106</sup> “Italy to withdraw troops from Afghanistan”, *The Daily Telegraph*, 12 October 2010

<sup>107</sup> “Germany joins allies in planning to quit Afghanistan”, *International Herald Tribune*, 17 December 2010

<sup>108</sup> “Poland to start Afghan troop drawdown in October”, *Jane’s Defence Weekly*, 22 June 2011

January 2012. But new Defence Minister Pedro Morenés announced, in January 2012, that troops will not be withdrawn until after the end of the summer fighting season. Under current plans, 10% of Spanish forces will withdraw in October 2011, a further 40% in 2013 and the remainder in 2014.

## 8 Logistics of withdrawal

The withdrawal of nearly 130,000 armed forces personnel<sup>109</sup> from fifty nations by the end of 2014 presents a massive logistical challenge. These difficulties include the sheer number of personnel and amount of equipment to be withdrawn; the limited number of routes out of Afghanistan; the limits on the type of equipment that may be transported on those routes; and the cost.

Christian Neef, writing in *Der Spiegel*, suggests the withdrawal “will be militarily precarious, politically explosive and logistically complex”.<sup>110</sup>

The UK anticipates bringing around 11,000 containers and around 3,000 armoured vehicles back from Afghanistan.<sup>111</sup> Germany will be bringing back more than 1,700 vehicles, howitzers and tanks.<sup>112</sup> According to *Defence News*, the French withdrawal plan involves bringing 2,000 combat troops home within six months (by the end of 2012), with the remaining personnel to stay behind to take charge of repatriating military equipment including 900 armoured vehicles and over 1,000 containers.<sup>113</sup>

Private contractors will also be used to bring equipment out of Afghanistan.<sup>114</sup>

### 8.1 The routes out of Afghanistan

Afghanistan borders Iran to the west, Pakistan to the east and south, and Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan to the north, as well as having a short border with China in the far north-east.

There are two main land/sea routes out of Afghanistan.

The quickest and most cost effective is the land route via Pakistan to the Arabian Sea. However in November 2011 Pakistan closed its border to NATO supply convoys in response to the killing of 24 Pakistani troops by the US military. Pakistan lifted the restrictions in early July 2012, but the seven month closure meant NATO had to rely more heavily on the more expensive, cumbersome and slower Northern Distribution Network that runs through Central Asia, the Caucasus and/or Russia as the land/sea option. The US moved about 40% of its cargo through the Northern Distribution Network in 2011.<sup>115</sup>

Personnel and some freight may be transported by air, but the additional cost of moving heavy machinery by air makes the land route the preferred option. The US military uses the terms Ground Lines of Communication (GLOC) and Air Lines of Communication (ALOC) to refer to the supply routes.

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<sup>109</sup> This figure includes the 23,000 US troops already scheduled to be withdrawn by October 2012

<sup>110</sup> “The logistical nightmare of leaving Afghanistan”, *Der Spiegel online*, 4 March 2012

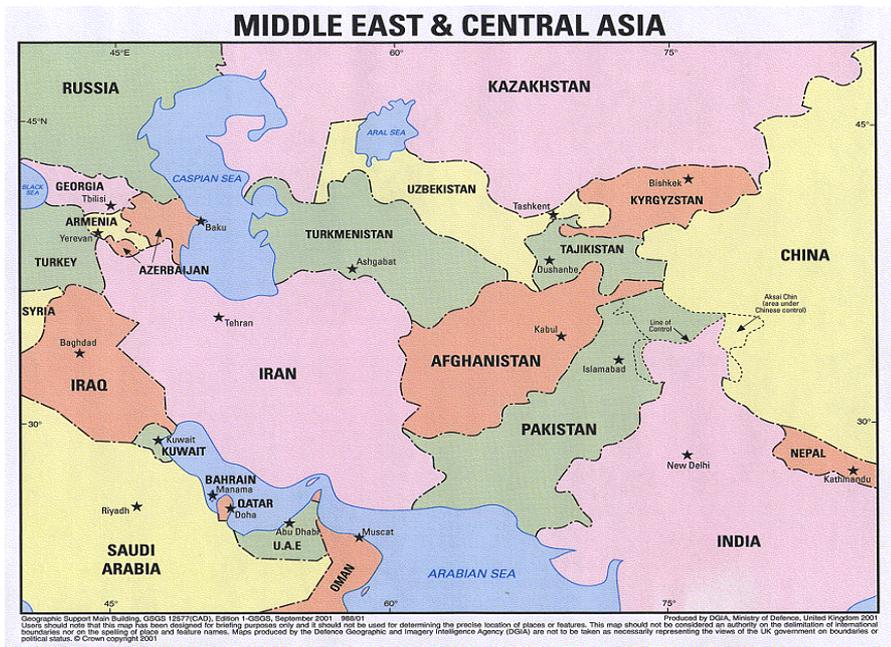
<sup>111</sup> “Defence Ministers visit central Asian countries”, *MoD defence news*, 28 February 2012

<sup>112</sup> “The logistical nightmare of leaving Afghanistan”, *Der Spiegel online*, 4 March 2012

<sup>113</sup> “France to begin Afghanistan withdrawal in July: President”, *Defense news*, 9 June 2012

<sup>114</sup> “Honeywell Wins U.S. Military Contracts To Manage Logistics For Equipment Withdrawal From Afghanistan”, *Honeywell newsroom*, 16 April 2012

<sup>115</sup> “Statement of General William Fraser, USAF Commander, United States Transportation Command”, *House Armed Services Committee*, 7 March 2012



### **The Northern Distribution Network**

The Northern Distribution Network (NDN) is a series of air and ground transportation routes that carries non-lethal supplies from Europe to Afghanistan via Russia, the Caucasus and Central Asia. The network includes the central Asian nations Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan. Turkmenistan does not allow its territory to be part of the network.<sup>116</sup> The NDN's railway routes carry more than 40% of all cargo heading into ISAF's theatre.<sup>117</sup>

There are three principle land routes:

1. Georgian Black Sea port of Poti, through Baku, Azerbaijan, across the Caspian Sea, and into Central Asia
2. Latvian port of Riga through Russia, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan
3. Latvia through Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan<sup>118</sup>

The Pentagon said in April 2012:

Maintaining the NDN LOCs remains critical to ongoing operations in Afghanistan. Efforts are underway to diversify the Northern Distribution Network, with new over-flight permissions and expanded ground transit agreements including "reverse" transit and transits of wheeled armoured vehicles.<sup>119</sup>

NATO already has a reverse transit agreement with Russia and signed new reverse transit agreements with three Central Asian countries on 4 June 2012. NATO's Secretary General, Anders Fogh Rasmussen, said:

<sup>116</sup> "Afghanistan: Post-Taliban Governance, Security, and U.S. Policy" *Congressional Research Service* RL30588 4 April 2012 p58

<sup>117</sup> "NATO signs 'reverse transit' deal with three Central Asian countries", *Jane's Defence Weekly*, 7 June 2012

<sup>118</sup> Central Asia and the Transition in Afghanistan", *Majority staff report prepared for the use of the Committee on Foreign Relations United States senate*, 19 December 2011 p6. The [Guardian website](#) has an interactive map showing the routes.

<sup>119</sup> "Report on progress towards security and stability in Afghanistan", *US Department of Defence*, April 2012 p106

We also reached agreement on reverse transit from Afghanistan with three Central Asian partners: Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan. These agreements will give us a range of new options and the robust and flexible transport network we need. I thank all three partner countries for their support. And NATO will continue to actively engage with Afghanistan's neighbours to build wider support for the country's stability.<sup>120</sup>

He refused to be drawn on the details of the transit arrangements, except to say "we have concluded agreements that are of mutual satisfaction of the involved partners."

There are reports that the US military may 'gift' equipment to a number of Central Asian nations as part of a wider agreement to transport equipment back to America.<sup>121</sup>

The MoD is actively pursuing land transit agreements with several central Asian states. The Defence Secretary visited Kazakhstan in late February 2012 and signed an over-flight access agreement. The two countries agreed to start negotiations on a land transit arrangement. He also visited Uzbekistan during the same trip, while Armed Forces Minister Nick Harvey visited Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan in early March 2012.<sup>122</sup>

A report for the US Senate Committee on Foreign Relations identified some of the challenges of using this network:

In many cases, the US Government is forced to rely on highly corrupt, authoritarian governments in countries whose populations are suspicious of US intentions.<sup>123</sup>

Using the NDN costs more than the Pakistan route. It costs the US roughly an additional \$10,000 per twenty-foot container to ship via the NDN instead of Pakistan.<sup>124</sup>

Use of the network is further limited by the requirement that only non-lethal equipment and goods may be transported. Currently, Russia does not allow the shipment of lethal equipment into Afghanistan although there are reportedly discussions with Russia to allow some lethal equipment to transit its territory. There are a number of other factors to be taken into account when moving equipment by land. The routes traverse difficult and dangerous terrain, for example the Salang Tunnel at the Salang Pass in northern Afghanistan is a 2.6km bottleneck at 11,100 ft and an avalanche risk. In addition, lethal equipment has to be concealed when transported.

Despite the reopening of the Pakistan ground supply routes, a Pentagon spokesman said:

The Northern Distribution Network is still a viable, vital method through which logistics flow in and out of Afghanistan. One of the things that we're looking at, more [now] than we were in November when the [Pakistani ground supply routes] closed, was retrograde -- the need to get material out of Afghanistan. So the Northern Distribution Network will still remain vital as we move forward.<sup>125</sup>

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<sup>120</sup> "Monthly press briefing by NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen", *NATO newsroom*, 4 June 2012

<sup>121</sup> "Central Asia: Closed-Door Talks Underway To Leave Pentagon Goodies Behind", *Eurasia Review*, 17 June 2012

<sup>122</sup> "Defence Ministers visit central Asian countries", *MoD news*, 28 February 2012

<sup>123</sup> Central Asia and the Transition in Afghanistan", *Majority staff report prepared for the use of the Committee on Foreign Relations United States senate*, 19 December 2011 p2

<sup>124</sup> Central Asia and the Transition in Afghanistan", *Majority staff report prepared for the use of the Committee on Foreign Relations United States senate*, 19 December 2011 p6

<sup>125</sup> "Reopened Supply Routes Mean Cost Savings, Spokesman Says", *US Department of Defence*, 5 July 2012

### **The Pakistan route**

Pakistan has been the dominant transit route into Afghanistan. In 2009, about 90% of US non-military supplies transited through the Pakistani port city of Karachi.<sup>126</sup> The Commander of US Transportation Command (USTRANSCOM) told the House Armed Services committee that in 2011 more than 35,000 containers were delivered on the PAK GLOC by surface transportation. General William Fraser told Representatives “when open, the PAK GLOC remains the quickest and most cost-effective route.”<sup>127</sup>

The US Department of Defence described the closure of the Ground Lines of Communication (GLOC) by Pakistan in November 2011 as a “strategic concern” and warned “failure to settle the GLOC issue will also significantly degrade redeployment and retrograde operations in support of the drawdown of coalition forces.”<sup>128</sup>

The US State department announced Pakistan is re-opening its border to NATO supply convoys on 3 July 2012.<sup>129</sup> Pakistan had demanded an apology from the US for the killing of its troops and US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said she expressed her “deepest regrets” over the incident and “acknowledged the mistakes that resulted in the loss of Pakistani military lives. We are sorry for the losses suffered by the Pakistani military.”<sup>130</sup>

The US said there will no additional fees for transiting the border – there had been speculation Pakistan was demanding significant sums as transit fees. The US is releasing \$1.1 billion in funds frozen since the closure.<sup>131</sup>

Hillary Clinton also said:

Foreign Minister Khar has informed me that, consistent with current practice, no lethal equipment will transit the GLOC into Afghanistan except for equipping the ANSF.<sup>132</sup>

A senior Pentagon spokesman said the US had spent about \$100 million more per month on resupplying forces in Afghanistan during the seven closure of the Pakistan route, estimating using the reopened routes will save \$70 million to \$100 million per month.

Kirby noted that Defence Secretary Leon E. Panetta had told Congress that since Pakistan had closed the routes in November, resupplying forces in Afghanistan had been costing the United States about \$100 million more per month than before the closure.<sup>133</sup>

The reopening of the Ground Lines of Communication was welcomed by the Foreign Secretary, William Hague, who said it “underlines Pakistan’s commitment in helping to secure a stable and peaceful Afghanistan.”<sup>134</sup>

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<sup>126</sup> “Central Asia and the Transition in Afghanistan”, *Majority staff report prepared for the use of the Committee on Foreign Relations United States senate*, 19 December 2011

<sup>127</sup> “Statement of General William Fraser, USAF Commander, United States Transportation Command”, *House Armed Services Committee*, 7 March 2012

<sup>128</sup> “Report on progress towards security and stability in Afghanistan”, *US Department of Defence*, April 2012 p6

<sup>129</sup> “US apology leads Pakistan to re-open important NATO supply route”, *Defence News*, 3 July 2012; “Inside the US ‘apology’ to Pakistan”, *The Cable blog*, 3 July 2012

<sup>130</sup> “Statement by Secretary Clinton on her Call With Pakistani Foreign Minister Khar”, *US State Department*, 3 July 2012

<sup>131</sup> “Will Congress scuttle the new US-Pakistan deal?”, *The Cable blog*, 6 July 2012

<sup>132</sup> “Statement by Secretary Clinton on her Call With Pakistani Foreign Minister Khar”, *US State Department*, 3 July 2012

<sup>133</sup> “Reopened Supply Routes Mean Cost Savings, Spokesman Says”, *US Department of Defence*, 5 July 2012

<sup>134</sup> “Foreign Secretary welcomes reopening of the ground lines of communication into Afghanistan”, *FCO*, 4 July 2012

## **Air options**

The Transit Centre at Manas International Airport in Kyrgyzstan is the primary transit point for ISAF personnel entering and leaving Afghanistan. The current agreement between the US and the Kyrgyz Republic allowing the US to operate the Centre expires in July 2014. The Pentagon says access to the Transit Centre beyond the current agreement “remains an ongoing political issue”.<sup>135</sup> Kyrgyzstan requested, and received, a significant increase in lease payments from the US in 2006 after renegotiating the agreement.

US and coalition forces have been granted over-flight rights by most governments in central Asia and by Russia since 2009. However airlifting supplies directly into Afghanistan remains the most expensive option at \$40,000 per twenty-foot container for the US.<sup>136</sup> On the other hand, as General William Fraser, Commander of US Transportation Command says, “Afghanistan’s mountainous terrain and poor infrastructure require an increased reliance on aerial delivery.” He said “in 2011, over 80 million pounds of cargo were airdropped, up 20 million from 2010, making 2011 a record year.” He said in 2011 the US began commercial multimodal operations which use commercial seaports and airports in Dubai in the United Arab Emirates and in Aqaba, in Jordan to ship equipment to before it can be airlifted into Afghanistan. He said these “proved invaluable” when Pakistan closed its border in November.<sup>137</sup>

Defence analyst Francis Tusa says relying solely on the air option is unrealistic. He told the Defence Select Committee that it would take the best part of three complete years to draw all the equipment out of Afghanistan relying solely on the airlift the UK could reasonably call on, excluding personnel and assuming a lot of the equipment would be sold or thrown away. He compared it to the draw-down from Kuwait, Operation Brockdale, which cost a minimum of £170 million with the use of a secure base in Kuwait and a free port within 120 km, with slightly fewer than 4,000 containers.<sup>138</sup>

## **8.2 Leaving equipment behind?**

It has been suggested the UK, along with other nations, could leave some equipment behind for the benefit of the Afghan National Security Forces.

Lord Astor, the Lords Spokesman on Defence, said in response to a question on this subject in May 2012:

We are currently examining options for the future of equipment procured as urgent operational requirements for Afghanistan, but no decisions have yet been made and we will not dispose of equipment that is required as part of the future contingent capability.<sup>139</sup>

Armed Forces Minister Nick Harvey said in February 2012:

It is too early to state what equipment we plan to retain and whether any will be gifted to the Afghans. We are conscious that uncoordinated gifting could put ANSF

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<sup>135</sup> “[Report on progress towards security and stability in Afghanistan](#)”, *US Department of Defence*, April 2012 p106

<sup>136</sup> *Central Asia and the Transition in Afghanistan*, *Majority staff report prepared for the use of the Committee on Foreign Relations United States senate*, 19 December 2011 p6

<sup>137</sup> “[Statement of General William Fraser, USAF Commander, United States Transportation Command](#)”, *House Armed Services Committee*, 7 March 2012

<sup>138</sup> Defence Committee, *Securing the future of Afghanistan*, uncorrected oral evidence HC 413-i, 26 June 2012 Q25

<sup>139</sup> HL Deb 17 May 2012 c622

sustainability at risk; the underlying requirement is that all gifted equipment is sustainable in terms of cost of ownership, support and enduring training. Our approach on gifting will, therefore, be co-ordinated with that of NATO and ISAF. Decisions will be made on a case-by-case basis using the principles of operational priority and value for money to the UK taxpayer.<sup>140</sup>

The Government's policy on the gifting of surplus MOD assets can be found in chapter 16 of the *Joint Service Publication (JSP) 462: Financial Management Policy Manual: Policy, rules and guidance on the conduct of financial management in the MOD*. Gifts over £250,000 require Treasury and Parliamentary approval. Parliamentary approval can either be sought through Main or Supplementary Estimates or, more usually, by laying a Departmental Minute. The MOD has delegated authority from the Treasury for gifts up to that amount.<sup>141</sup> Gifts cannot be made to individuals, companies or charities but can be given to foreign governments. The following rules are also relevant:

7. As part of the gifting approval process, gifts of export controlled equipment made to a foreign government or overseas end user must be assessed on a case-by-case basis against the Consolidated EU and National Arms Export Licensing Criteria, taking into account relevant arms embargoes. This is to ensure that gifts are scrutinised according to the same standards as export licence applications. This process is managed by Export Policy and Assurance (EPA), in the Capability area of MOD Head Office, who should be contacted when gifting is being considered.

8. Some departmental or cross-governmental funds, such as the Global Conflict Prevention Pool, the Stabilisation Aid Fund or the Defence Assistance Fund may be used to fund or subsidise the procurement of equipment for gifting to other nations. All such cases still require formal approval as gifts from FMPA Finance Policy, and from Treasury and Parliament if the gift exceeds £250,000 in value.

9. In certain circumstances, such as major overseas exercises or in operational theatres, gifting of non-warlike equipment may be undertaken where this offers a cost effective alternative to local sale or return to UK, or where such gifting is coherent with the aims of a particular operation. Delegated authority for such gifting may be granted by FMPA Finance Policy to in-theatre Civil Secretaries; in the absence of any delegation, all cases should be referred to FMPA Finance Policy and are subject to the normal requirement for Treasury and Parliamentary approval.<sup>142</sup>

A number of countries have already donated a considerable amount of equipment to Afghan forces under the NATO Equipment Donation Programme. Set up in 2006, it provides a mechanism through which Allies can donate equipment and is coordinated by NATO's Allied Command Operations (ACO). A list of donations since 2006 is provided by NATO, the most recent being up to December 2011. The Czech Republic, for example, has donated 12 helicopters while Luxembourg has donated 2,000 body armour kits and helmets.<sup>143</sup> The US Marines Corps recently transferred US\$85,000 worth of consumable medical supplies to the Afghan National army.<sup>144</sup>

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<sup>140</sup> HC Deb 23 February 2012 c933W

<sup>141</sup> ["Joint Service Publication \(JSP\) 462: Financial Management Policy Manual: Policy, rules and guidance on the conduct of financial management in the MOD"](#), *MOD website*, issue 8, April 2012, Chapter 16 part 1

<sup>142</sup> ["Joint Service Publication \(JSP\) 462: Financial Management Policy Manual: Policy, rules and guidance on the conduct of financial management in the MOD"](#), *MOD website*, issue 8, April 2012, Chapter 16 part 1. *Annex C* provides a flow-chart

<sup>143</sup> ["Afghan National Security Forces \(ANSF\): Training and Development"](#), *NATO media backgrounder*, December 2011

<sup>144</sup> ["US Marines transfer excess supplies to Afghans"](#), *Defense News*, 25 June 2012

The *Daily Mail* reported in May that an initial review by the military has identified 1,200 protected trucks and personnel carriers are likely to be left for the Afghan security forces. It suggests just 700 vehicles have been listed for 'recovery' (return to the UK) and there are more than 1,900 protected vehicles in southern Afghanistan. The article suggests the vehicles that could be left behind include Wolfhound personnel carriers, Snatch Land Rovers and Vector armoured personnel carriers.<sup>145</sup> Nick Harvey has confirmed the government intends to bring back "all serviceable Mastiff, Ridgback and Foxhound vehicles from Afghanistan".<sup>146</sup>

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<sup>145</sup> "Our war legacy to Afghans: £1bn of military vehicles will be given to national army when British troops pull out", *Daily Mail*, 11 May 2012

<sup>146</sup> HC Deb 19 Apr 2012 c525W

## Appendix: British forces in Afghanistan

The UK force deploying to Afghanistan from April 2012 - October 2012 on Operation HERRICK 16 includes elements of the following Royal Navy, Royal Marines, British Army and Royal Air Force units:<sup>147</sup>

- [12th Mechanized Brigade Headquarters and Signal Squadron \(228\)](#)
- [Elements of 19th Light Brigade Headquarters](#)
- [Headquarters 102 Logistic Brigade](#)
- [857 Naval Air Squadron](#)
- [The King's Royal Hussars](#)
- [The Light Dragoons](#)
- [Elements of 1st Royal Tank Regiment](#)
- [Elements of The Royal Wessex Yeomanry](#)
- [19th Regiment Royal Artillery](#)
- [Elements of 5th Regiment Royal Artillery](#)
- [Elements of 12th Regiment Royal Artillery](#)
- [Elements of 16th Regiment Royal Artillery](#)
- [Elements of 32nd Regiment Royal Artillery](#)
- [Elements of 39th Regiment Royal Artillery](#)
- [Elements of 40th Regiment Royal Artillery](#)
- [26 Engineer Regiment](#)
- [Elements of The Royal Monmouthshire Royal Engineers \(Militia\)](#)
- [Elements of 21 Engineer Regiment](#)
- [Elements of 33 Engineer Regiment \(Explosive Ordnance Disposal\)](#)
- [Elements of 36 Engineer Regiment \(Search\)](#)
- [Elements of 38 Engineer Regiment](#)
- [Elements of 42 Engineer Regiment \(Geographical\)](#)
- [Elements of The Military Stabilisation Support Group](#)
- [Elements of 170 \(Infrastructure Support\) Engineer Group](#)
- [16th Signal Regiment](#)
- [Elements of 10th Signal Regiment](#)
- [Elements of 14th Signal Regiment \(Electronic Warfare\)](#)
- [Elements of 21st Signal Regiment \(Air Support\)](#)
- [1st Battalion The Grenadier Guards](#)
- [1st Battalion The Welsh Guards](#)
- [1st Battalion The Royal Anglian Regiment](#)
- [3rd Battalion The Yorkshire Regiment](#)
- [1st Battalion The Royal Welsh](#)
- [3rd Battalion The Rifles](#)
- [Elements of The London Regiment](#)
- [Elements of 3rd Battalion The Royal Anglian Regiment](#)
- [Elements of 4th Battalion The Yorkshire Regiment](#)
- [Elements of 3rd Battalion The Royal Welsh](#)
- [Elements of 6th Battalion The Rifles](#)
- [Elements of 3 Regiment Army Air Corps](#)
- [Elements of 4 Regiment Army Air Corps](#)
- [Elements of 6 Regiment Army Air Corps](#)
- [Elements of 9 Regiment Army Air Corps](#)
- [Elements of Joint Helicopter Support Squadron](#)
- [Elements of Allied Rapid Reaction Corps Support Battalion](#)
- [4 Logistic Support Regiment, The Royal Logistic Corps](#)
- [10 The Queen's Own Gurkha Logistic Regiment](#)

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<sup>147</sup> "Operations in Afghanistan: British Forces", *MOD website*, accessed 28 June 2012

- Elements of [9 Regiment, The Royal Logistic Corps](#)
- Elements of [11 Explosive Ordnance Disposal Regiment, The Royal Logistic Corps](#)
- Elements of [17 Port and Maritime Regiment, The Royal Logistic Corps](#)
- Elements of [23 Pioneer Regiment, The Royal Logistic Corps](#)
- Elements of [24 Regiment, The Royal Logistic Corps](#)
- Elements of [27 Regiment, The Royal Logistic Corps](#)
- Elements of [29 Regiment, The Royal Logistic Corps](#)
- Elements of [88 Postal and Courier Regiment \(Volunteers\), The Royal Logistic Corps](#)
- Elements of [148 Expeditionary Force Institute Squadron \(Volunteers\), The Royal Logistic Corps](#)
- Elements of [152 Transport Regiment \(Volunteers\), The Royal Logistic Corps](#)
- Elements of [159 Supply Regiment \(Volunteers\), The Royal Logistic Corps](#)
- Elements of [162 Movement Control Regiment \(Volunteers\), The Royal Logistic Corps](#)
- Elements of [166 Supply Regiment \(Volunteers\), The Royal Logistic Corps](#)
- Elements of [151 Transport Regiment \(Volunteers\), The Royal Logistic Corps](#)
- Elements of the [Catering Support Regiment \(Volunteers\), The Royal Logistic Corps](#)
- Elements of the [Operational Headquarters Support Group \(Volunteers\), The Royal Logistic Corps](#)
- [4 Medical Regiment](#)
- [22nd Field Hospital](#)
- Elements of [254 Medical Regiment \(Volunteers\)](#)
- [4th Close Support Battalion Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers](#)
- Elements of [104 Force Support Battalion Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers](#)
- [174 Provost Company Royal Military Police](#)
- Elements of [160 Provost Company Royal Military Police](#)
- Elements of [Special Investigations Branch United Kingdom](#)
- Elements of [The Military Provost Staff](#)
- Elements of [1st Military Working Dog Regiment](#)
- Elements of [1st Military Intelligence Battalion](#)
- Elements of [2nd Military Intelligence Battalion](#)
- Elements of [3rd Military Intelligence Battalion](#)
- Elements of [4th Military Intelligence Battalion](#)
- Elements of [5th Military Intelligence Battalion](#)
- Elements of [The Defence Cultural Specialist Unit](#)
- Elements of [15 Psychological Operations Group](#)
- [604 Tactical Air Control Party](#)
- [614 Tactical Air Control Party](#)
- [621 Tactical Air Control Party](#)
- [632 Tactical Air Control Party](#)
- [II \(Army Cooperation\) Squadron, Royal Air Force](#)
- Elements of [24 Squadron, Royal Air Force](#)
- Elements of [30 Squadron, Royal Air Force](#)
- [12 \(Bomber\) Squadron, Royal Air Force](#)
- Elements of [5 \(Army Cooperation\) Squadron, Royal Air Force](#)
- Elements of [32 Squadron, Royal Air Force](#)
- Elements of [28 Squadron, Royal Air Force](#)
- Elements of [216 Squadron, Royal Air Force](#)
- Elements of [101 Squadron, Royal Air Force](#)
- Elements of [39 Squadron, Royal Air Force](#)
- Elements of [27 Squadron, Royal Air Force](#)
- Elements of [18 Squadron, Royal Air Force](#)
- [617 Squadron, Royal Air Force](#)
- Elements of [99 Squadron, Royal Air Force](#)
- Elements of [78 Squadron, Royal Air Force](#)
- [Number 5 Royal Air Force, Force Protection Wing Headquarters](#)

- Elements of [Number 2 Royal Air Force Police Wing](#)
- Elements of [Number 3 Royal Air Force Police Wing](#)
- [51 Squadron, Royal Air Force Regiment](#)
- Elements of the Tactical Supply Wing, [Royal Air Force](#)
- Elements of 1 Air Mobility Wing, [Royal Air Force](#)
- Elements of [1 Air Control Centre, Royal Air Force](#)
- Elements of [90 Signals Unit, Royal Air Force](#)
- Elements of 2 (Mechanical Transport) Squadron, [Royal Air Force](#)
- Elements of 5001 Squadron, [Royal Air Force](#)
- Elements of 3 Mobile Catering Squadron
- Elements of [Tactical Medical Wing](#)
- Elements of 1 (Expeditionary Logistics) Squadron
- Elements of [93 \(Expeditionary Armaments\) Squadron](#)
- Elements of [Tactical Imagery-Intelligence Wing](#)
- Elements of [5131 \(Bomb Disposal\) Squadron](#)

## Appendix two: ISAF Command and Control Structure

Since 2003 overall command of the NATO operation has rested with Allied Command Operations at SHAPE in Belgium; while Allied Joint Force Command (JFC) Headquarters Brunssum has served as the NATO operational HQ for ISAF. Headquarters ISAF, located in Kabul has served as NATO's theatre level command for the operation, working with the Government of Afghanistan, the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, international organisations and non-governmental organisations in implementing their mutual goals in the country. Since February 2007 HQ ISAF had been configured as a composite HQ with staff drawn from existing NATO Standing HQ and contributing ISAF nations, in contrast to the previous situation which saw the rotation of command between existing Corps HQ.<sup>148</sup>

In August 2009 NATO Member States agreed, however, to adjust the ISAF upper command structure to reflect the evolution in ISAF's scope and scale of responsibilities in those last few years, and the increasing need for greater co-operation with the Afghan authorities and other international partners. The decision was subsequently taken to separate the strategic and the day-to-day operational functions of ISAF with the establishment of a second intermediary HQ.

The ISAF command structure now comprises a higher operational headquarters, ISAF HQ, commanded by a four-star General (COMISAF – currently General John Allen)<sup>149</sup>; and a subordinate three-star headquarters, ISAF Joint Command (IJC) HQ, both located in Kabul:

- **HQ ISAF** –COMISAF focuses on the strategic political-military aspects of the ISAF mission, co-ordinating those ISAF operations with the work of the Afghan government and other international organisations in the country.

COMISAF is dual-hatted as the Commander of ISAF and of US Forces in Afghanistan (COMUSFOR-A) thus ensuring the continued co-ordination of ISAF operations and Operation *Enduring Freedom*. COMISAF has command responsibility over the IJC Commander, the Commander of the NATO Training Mission-Afghanistan<sup>150</sup> and Special Operations Forces.

- **ISAF Joint Command HQ** – COMIJC is responsible for executing the full spectrum of tactical operations throughout the country, on a day-to-day basis, and has command of the six Regional Commands, the Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRT) and other

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<sup>148</sup> A list of those rotations is available in Library Standard Note SN/IA/4854, *The International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan*, 9 February 2009

<sup>149</sup> General David Petraeus handed over command of ISAF operations on 18 July 2011. He had replaced General Stanley McChrystal as ISAF Commander and head of US forces in Afghanistan in June 2010 (formally assuming command on 4 July 2010). General McChrystal resigned in June following an article in [Rolling Stone](#) magazine in which he criticised the Obama administration. A full list of previous commanders is available on the [ISAF website](#)

<sup>150</sup> In October 2009 NATO announced that it would establish a new NATO headquarters to oversee higher level training and mentoring for the ANSF in order to achieve a more co-ordinated and effective approach to training. Under the new organisational structure, the US-led training and mentoring programme of Combined Security Transition Command – Afghanistan (CSTC-A) was integrated with ISAF efforts into a common HQ: NATO Training Mission – Afghanistan (NTM-A). The key elements of NTM-A will include the provision of training and mentoring teams to the ANA and the ANP, the institutional training of the ANA and ANP reform at the district level and below. CSTC-A will continue to mentor the Afghan Ministries of Defence and Interior and will be responsible for developing the Afghan National Air Corps, the logistics command and the Afghan national military hospital.

theatre enablers. In addition COMIJC ensures the co-ordination of ISAF and ANSF operations.

The US acts as framework nation for the first manning of the ICJ HQ which achieved full operational capability in November 2009.

There will be a balanced representation of US and NATO personnel at both HQ.

In March 2010 the Pentagon announced its intention to integrate nearly all of the remaining 20,000 US troops operating in Afghanistan under Operation *Enduring Freedom* into ISAF. Only small detachments of US Special Forces and a detention unit remain outside of the NATO command structure.<sup>151</sup>

### **Regional Commands**

At the end of May 2010 the North Atlantic Council gave formal approval for the reorganisation of ISAF's Regional Command South into two regional commands: RC South West and RC South in order to allow commanders to focus on geographically smaller areas, ensure greater partnering between ISAF and the Afghan National Security Forces and deliver the objective of increased governance, development and security in those regions.

Under IJC HQ there are now six Regional Commands (RC) which incorporate Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRT) and several Forward Support Bases (FSB). The RC command all ISAF units in their area of responsibility and coordinate all regional civil-military activities conducted by the military elements of the PRT. Command of each RC is assumed by a lead nation and is composed of a Command and Control (C2) HQ and a Forward Support Base (FSB) which provides a supply, medical and transport hub in each region.

The RC are located, and led, as follows:

- **Regional Command North** – HQ RC (N) and the FSB are located at Mazar-e-Sharif and led by Germany. There are five PRT under RC (N) command led by Sweden, Germany, Hungary, Norway and Finland.
- **Regional Command Capital** – located in Kabul and is currently led by Turkey. RC Capital is a distinct entity from HQ ISAF.
- **Regional Command West** – located at Herat. Since July 2008 Italy has been the lead nation, assuming command responsibility from Spain. There are four PRT under RC (W) command led by Italy, Spain, the US and Lithuania.
- **Regional Command South** – Located in Kandahar. The UK initially retained command responsibility of RC South after the division of RC south into two commands. The transfer of command responsibility to the United States subsequently took place on 2 November 2010, ending a five-year practice of rotating the command among Britain, Canada and the Netherlands. RC South now has three PRT led by the US and US/Australia, and control of an ISAF force of approximately 35,000 personnel in Kandahar, Daykundi, Uruzgan and Zabul provinces. The UK handed over command of Kandahar airfield to the US in November 2010. Kandahar continues to be the base of 904 Expeditionary Wing, including the UK's Tornado and Hercules

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<sup>151</sup> "Most US enduring freedom troops to join NATO's Afghan wing", *Agence France Presse*, 16 March 2010

contingents; while security for the base remains the responsibility of the RAF Regiment.

- **Regional Command South West** – Established in June 2010 and has responsibility for Helmand and Nimroz provinces. The US has assumed command of RC South West in the first instance, which in the longer term had been expected to operate as a rotational command between the US and UK.<sup>152</sup> The UK-led PRT at Lashkar Gah, and therefore the majority of British forces in Afghanistan, now fall within this command. In total RC South West has approximately 32,000 troops.
- **Regional Command East** – located at Bagram and led by the US. There are 13 PRT under RC (E) command led by the US, the Czech Republic, New Zealand, France, Turkey and South Korea.

On the division of RC South and the subsequent changes in command and control, Major General Gordon Messenger, Strategic Communications Officer to the British Chief of the Defence Staff, commented:

This command and control change makes complete sense and is welcome. The span and complexity of the command challenge in southern Afghanistan has increased enormously in recent months and these changes provide the best command support to the troops on the ground.

The change will also align the ISAF military structure in the south with the structure of the Afghan National Army, enabling a greater partnering capacity between ISAF and Afghan forces.

The UK has been closely involved in the preparations for this change and entirely agrees with its rationale. We are well accustomed to operating within a multinational coalition command structure and we are entirely content that the best interests of the UK force will be maintained under the new arrangements.<sup>153</sup>

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<sup>152</sup> HC Deb 26 May 2010, c4WS

<sup>153</sup> MOD Press Release, 21 May 2010