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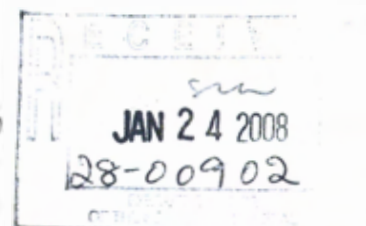
NATO

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SECRETARY GENERAL
LE SECRÉTAIRE GÉNÉRAL
Jaap de Hoop Scheffer

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SG(2008)0045

23 January 2008

Dear Secretary General,

In accordance with UN Security Council Resolutions 1386 and 1510, I attach a report on ISAF operations covering the period from August to November 2007. I would appreciate your making this report available to the UN Security Council.

Yours sincerely,

Jaap de Hoop Scheffer

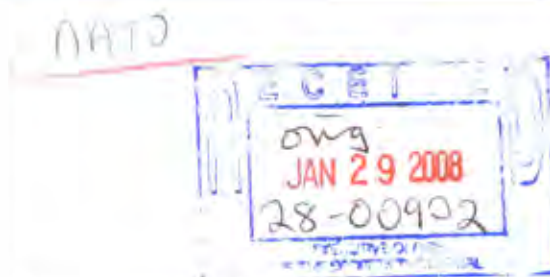
Encl.

His Excellency
Mr Ban Ki-moon
Secretary-General
United Nations Headquarters
United Nations Plaza 2
New York 10017
U.S.A.

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SECRETARY GENERAL
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QUARTERLY REPORT TO THE UNITED NATIONS ON ISAF OPERATIONS

Introduction

1. Resolution 1510 (2003) of the United Nations Security Council requested the leadership of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) to provide reports on the implementation of its mandate. This is the 15th such report by NATO and it covers the period from August to November 2007.
2. As of 28 October 2007, ISAF had 35,523 personnel from 26 NATO nations and 1,806 from 13 non-NATO nations.

Overall Assessment

3. Throughout the reporting period, ISAF has continued to assist the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GIROA) in accordance with UNSCR 1386 (2001), 1510 (2003) and 1776 (2007). From 1 August to 31 October 2007 ISAF suffered 356 casualties in total; 39 Killed in Action, 283 Wounded in Action, 4 Non Battle Deaths and 30 Non Battle Injuries.

a. Military Operations: Country-wide military operations involving ISAF and the increasingly competent Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) continued. While the capacity and capability of the ANSF are still not sufficient for them to conduct fully independent operations, ISAF continued to support the ANSF as the latter increase their numbers and capabilities. In some cases, the Afghan National Army (ANA) has taken a lead role for specific operations.

b. Outlook: ISAF will continue to engage in a continuum of operations through the winter months into 2008. Having been planned and coordinated in cooperation with the GIROA and the ANSF, these operations will continue to assist in establishing an improved security situation, and support better governance, thus facilitating further reconstruction. ISAF will seek to prevent a possible resurgence of violence following the end of the winter period, and encourage the authority of the GIROA to further take hold nationwide.

Security Situation

4. Opposing Militant Forces (OMF)¹ have continued their attempts to disrupt, frustrate and destroy the process of establishing peace and security in Afghanistan. OMF activity throughout Afghanistan follows along already established patterns, and overall support for the OMF is proportional to the lack of GIROA and ISAF security presence and levels of sustained influence, in particular in Pashtun areas. Reported OMF activity continues to be highest in the Southern and Eastern portions of Afghanistan, where ANSF and ISAF continue to increase their operational presence.

¹ Across this document, the term "Opposing Militant Forces (OMF)" refers to any of the four primary OMF groups: the Taliban, the Haqqani Network, the Hezb-e-Islami Gulbuddin, and Al Qaeda and affiliated groups.

Due to increased losses and tactical setbacks, the OMF focused on asymmetric tactics during the reporting period with an increased use of kidnappings, hostage takings and suicide attacks in an effort to intimidate the population and undermine the GIRoA's ability to govern the country. Improvised Explosive Devices (IED) remain the preferred asymmetric weapon. In many incidents, the OMF have increased the risks to the civilian population by hiding among them, operating from civilian dwellings and using civilians as human shields. During the reporting period security situations in the Regional Commands (RCs) were as follows:

- a. RC Capital: The situation in RC Capital was assessed as tense but stable, notwithstanding that planned attacks against selected high profile targets are expected to continue, particularly in Kabul.
- b. RC North: In RC North, the security situation was relatively calm but with pockets of instability, with increased suicide and IED attacks, most notably in Kunduz, Meymanah and Baghlan in early November. However, the main cause for instability continues to be opposition to the authority of the GIRoA by regional powerbrokers and criminal elements.
- c. RC West: The security situation remains relatively calm but fragile. OMF have continued to exploit the limited ISAF and ANSF footprint to expand their influence. OMF attacks along the Ring Road continued in an effort to disrupt ISAF and GIRoA Lines of Communication (LOCs) and maintain OMF freedom of movement.
- d. RC South: RC South continued to see high levels of OMF activity. OMF continued to undertake low-scale conventional operations as well as increased asymmetric attacks throughout RC South in an attempt to increase their credibility and create shadow governments. OMF activities were also focused on disrupting ISAF and ANSF movements along Highway 1.
- e. RC East: OMF operations continued at high levels during the reporting period, benefiting from suitable grounds in Pakistan and from their illegal movement from Pakistan to the eastern provinces of Afghanistan. Meanwhile Pakistan Armed Forces have increased their operations in Pakistani border regions. This, coupled with the onset of winter, has contributed to a downward trend in cross-border movements of the OMF. By early December 2007, these cross-border movements reached their lowest levels since March 2006. OMF tactics continued to include small-scale conventional attacks on ISAF and/or ANSF border positions and LOCs as well as attacks on soft targets, including GIRoA officials, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and Reconstruction and Development (R&D) contractors.

Counter Narcotics (CN)

5. The link between the illicit narcotics industry and insurgency has been apparent over this reporting period, further fuelling instability and the corruption that threatens all levels of governance including police authority and the wider Rule of Law. Ultimately this also prevents meaningful reconstruction and development.

a. The existing CN policy must be underpinned by a joint coherent underlying delivery mechanism involving the international community and driven by the Afghan government across the 8 pillars of its National Drug Control Strategy.

A piecemeal approach will only result in limited short-term CN progress.

b. Within its mandate, resources and operational plan, ISAF continues to fully support the implementation of the GIRoA CN strategy.

Afghan National Army (ANA)

6. The ANA development into a capable and competent fighting force continues, even in the midst of considerable rebuilding and organisation. Their marked improvements in the ability to plan operations, and their significant gains in the ability to undertake operations are evidence of ANA steady and positive growth.

a. Capability. ANA Combat units continue to improve with over half being considered capable of performing counter-insurgency operations with external support. Collective combat skills also continue to improve. However, work still remains to be done in the training of headquarters and support units in order for the ANA to eventually achieve a true independent capability.

b. Manning. The current ANA strength is approximately 38,500 with approximately 21,000 available for operations as of 31 Oct 07².

c. Equipment. The overall ANA equipment situation is improving, albeit there are still significant shortages that need to be rectified. Although some national contributions are being made, more needs to be done to ensure the ANA is fully resourced.

d. Training. The pivotal role that both Operational Mentoring and Liaison Teams (OMLTs) and the US Embedded Training Teams (ETTs) play in the development of the ANA cannot be overstated. Therefore, generating OMLTs in sufficient numbers as the ANA grows remains a matter of priority for NATO.

Afghan National Police (ANP)

7. ANP still falls behind the desired level of capability. Coordination among international bodies involved in ANP development through the International Police Coordination Board (IPCB), as well as training and equipping of the ANP, are critically important to extending the authority and reach of the GIRoA. Underdevelopment in this area results in greater reliance on ISAF forces whereas ANA and ANP should hold the ground cleared by ISAF forces and offer the population continuity in security.

² These figures reflect solely the manning of the 5 ANA Corps. Ministry of Defence, General Staff, Intermediate Commands and Sustaining Institutions personnel are not counted here, neither are the Air Corps and the Commando kandaks counted in the original 70,000 personnel target. 50,274 would be the authorized number of all 5 ANA Corps as of end state in 2008.

a. With a current strength of 75,500 personnel, the ANP requires more Police Mentor Teams, which – as with OMLTs for the ANA – are essential elements in achieving success. NATO welcomes the Focused District Development (FDD) programme which the Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan (CSTC-A) has developed. Commencing on 1 November 2007, the programme aims at enhancing ANP capabilities, transforming the Afghan Uniformed Police (AUP) into a service loyal to the Afghan people and Afghan national interests, building a “prosecutor-driven justice system”, strengthening the AUP linkage to provincial, regional, and national leaders and staff, and developing Afghan Ministry of Interior (Mol) capabilities by mentoring its leadership.

b. Against the background of the existing substantial United States' efforts and the bilateral efforts conducted through the ISAF Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs), NATO has also welcomed EU's decision to launch an ESDP Police Mission - European Police Mission (EUPOL) – which will be fully deployed by March 2008 with its 160 mentors and trainers to help further develop much needed ANP capacity.

Neighbouring Countries

8. The political situation in Pakistan was volatile during the reporting period. The political instability does nothing to assist in the provision of a more enduring and stable security environment in the region. Mass returns of Afghan refugees from Iran and Pakistan, due to the closure of refugee camps might cause complications for the ISAF mission.

9. NATO welcomed the Turkish initiative, following the “Ankara Declaration”, to further encourage the development of tri-lateral relations with Afghanistan and Pakistan, including the establishment of the “Istanbul Forum” which will constitute a multiplier for the relations in terms of economic gains. The first meeting took place in Istanbul, and the second is scheduled to take place in Islamabad in January 2008.

10. The continuing lack of control over the Afghanistan/Pakistan border areas is a major obstacle to achieving overall security and stability in Afghanistan. The next tripartite Commission³ will focus in more detail on the synchronisation of operations in response to OMF activity in the border region.

Programme Takhim-e-Sol (PTS) - Strengthening Peace

11. The PTS programme remains ongoing, although there were no PTS Commission meetings during the month of October due to Ramadan and the unavailability of the PTS Commission president. As of 01 Oct 07, 4,599 have reconciled via the programme. ISAF remains committed to supporting PTS within means available.

³ The Tripartite Commission (TPC) is a military forum to discuss common matters of concern to the three parties (Afghanistan, Pakistan and ISAF, each at four-star level). The TPC was established initially under Operation ENDURING FREEDOM, and since October 2006 has been under ISAF auspices. With the aim to improve security along the Afghan-Pakistan border, the TPC normally meets every three to four months; however, the last meeting was in late May 07.

12. President Karzai made reconciliation calls to the OMF, offering non-conditional talks. Whilst hard-line OMF continued to demand the departure of the UN mandated international forces from Afghanistan as a precondition, there were indications that others were considering whether to accept the notion that a military solution alone cannot be reached and would therefore be willing to increase their dialogue with the GIRoA. It remains as yet unclear who amongst the OMF groups might be convinced, or under what conditions they would be willing to commence meaningful reconciliation. However, it is essential that any reconciliation efforts must not permit power-sharing or carving out of "protected areas". Any former Taliban members must recognise the constitution and the authority of the democratically-elected government, refrain from criminal activity and have no association with al-Qaida.

Judicial Reform (JR) and Rule of Law (RoL)

13. ISAF estimates that across Afghanistan, widespread corruption combined with a general lack of awareness and understanding of the RoL results in 70% to 90% of Afghans reverting to tribal and Sharia law.

a. Under-resourced and with a limited reach, the formal state institutions of justice require a renewed, more coherent and robust restructuring effort. The establishment of an effective justice system not only requires overcoming such obstacles, it also demands a coherent vision for Afghanistan's justice institution. ISAF can only be partially successful in its task of assisting the GIRoA to establish security in the country, when the necessary structures to maintain the RoL are absent.

b. The National Justice Strategy (NJS), which is currently under development, sets out a more focused and integrated strategic approach to developing the GIRoA's justice system. The legal advisor to COM ISAF is a direct participant in the International Coordination Group for Justice Reform (ICGJR) responsible for developing the NJS and the related National Justice Programme (NJP). ISAF planning will remain aligned with priorities for justice reform developed in the post-Rome process.

Disbandment of Illegal Armed Groups (DIAG)

14. The DIAG process has so far failed to produce tangible results. The District DIAG Implementation (DDI), which aims at implementing DIAG at a more practical level by addressing those districts that can more easily be brought and held under DIAG compliance, has been introduced and this initiative is currently in its second implementation round:

a. When combined with the first round, 52 - out of a total 398 - districts in 22 provinces will have been affected by the DDI; 12 districts having already been declared compliant. To assist with the enforcement process, the GIRoA is creating a DIAG Enforcement Unit. However, the GIRoA has put additional DIAG Enforced Compliance operations on hold at the political level.

b. It should also be noted that the DIAG process is less effective in those areas of Afghanistan that are struggling to cope with security and narcotics challenges, and the process is further challenged where there is a lack of sustained ISAF and/or ANSF presence.

c. The GIRoA is on the verge of legislating on Private Security Companies (PSC), to legitimise the weapons they hold under the regulatory control of the DIAG structure. The draft regulation is currently in the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) which is refining its implementation details.

d. ISAF support to DIAG remains unchanged. While GIRoA still sets the pace of the programme and establishes programme direction, ISAF representatives attend weekly DIAG Joint Secretariat meetings to ascertain the support and assistance required from ISAF. Such support is offered within ISAF resource availabilities.

Governance

15. The legitimacy and authority of the GIRoA has continued to be eroded by the wide experience of corruption at all levels and throughout all government institutions, including the Police and the Judiciary.

a. The development of fair, robust and sustainable government institutions at national and sub-national levels is critical to establishing and maintaining the legitimacy and authority of the GIRoA across the country. It is hoped that the creation of the Independent Local Directorate for Local Governance will successfully address the hitherto problematic area of sub-national government. However, the complex ethnic and historical landscape, the lack of institutional and human capacity, coupled with ineffective and corrupt officials mean that the pace of governmental reform will be slow.

b. ISAF makes every effort to facilitate the efforts of those local Afghan officials known as honest and supportive of the GIRoA to extend the writ of governance in their areas. This support is underpinned by RCs and PRTs development and reconstruction activities, often with funding provided by ISAF Troop Contributing Nations.

c. ISAF HQ has continued to work closely with the GIRoA and with the International Organisations in those ad hoc structures, including the Policy Action Group, that support and coordinate the efforts of the IC and the GIRoA.

Development

16. Afghanistan continues on a slight upward trend with regard to macro economic indicators and most basic social programmes such as education and health, yet there are still numerous difficulties associated with gaining the popular support of the average Afghan citizen.

a. Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) remain a key mechanism for delivering development and extending the reach of the GIRoA and the IC to the majority of the provinces. In order for this to be effective, security and development effort must be aligned with the priorities of the Afghan

Government and the capabilities of the IC. To this end, NATO has increased the focus on mechanisms for coherence of PRTs with the GIRoA's development priorities as outlined in the Afghan National Development Strategy. The recently established Japanese funding mechanism, coupled with national funds and the Post Operational Humanitarian Relief Fund (POHRF) continue to be key programmes for positively assisting the local populace and supporting the overall security situation.

b. The Afghan Country Stability Picture (ACSP) continues to be an important tool for civil information management. NATO is presently testing a web-based prototype version of the ACSF and anticipates having a system accessible to the IC on the worldwide web within the year. Simultaneously, ISAF is in the process of transferring the know-how and the responsibility for the database to the Afghan government through a USAID funded project.

Conclusion

17. The reporting period has seen improved liaison with the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) including ISAF assistance to UNAMA campaign planning. Welcome as these developments are, a critical gap remains in identifying a single, suitably-empowered and capable agency, or individual, to better synchronise and co-ordinate the pan-Afghanistan development efforts of the IC. This is essential if we are to maintain momentum with successful security operations quickly followed by effective Reconstruction and Development (R&D) initiatives.