

Quarterly Report on Progress towards the Implementation of the ISAF Mandate

SUMMARY

The German/Netherlands led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) III finished its six month mission on August 11, 2003. ISAF III, which comprised of forces from 30 nations, performed its mission within the relevant provisions of the UN mandate as formulated in UNSCR 1386(2001), 1413(2002) and 1444(2002), the Bonn agreement, and the MTA.

The overall Afghan security situation remained a point of concern throughout the period. Opposing forces retained the capability to cause a sense of insecurity among the Afghan population and the international community. However, although ISAF suffered casualties due to attacks and other incidents, it managed to improve security in the Area of Responsibility (AOR). By pro-active operations and close co-operation with the Afghan security organisations ISAF diminished the rocket threat. Situational awareness improved significantly, and Psychological, Information and Media operations contributed significantly to the results ISAF III achieved. All in all, the ISAF AOR, i.e. the Kabul region, remained relatively safe compared to some other parts of the country.

ISAF III also contributed to the development of new Afghan security structures. Especially the Security Sector Reform (SSR) working group and the Joint Co-ordination Body (JCB) proved themselves as important instruments to enhance the Afghan Transitional Authority's (ATA) effectiveness in managing the security situation in Afghanistan. In addition to the co-ordinating role ISAF assumed in these bodies, ISAF contributed to the development of Afghan security structures by training support to the Afghan National Army (ANA), the police and the border police. Although ISAF was ready to support the process of Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR) within its AOR, the implementation of the process itself has been delayed beyond the ISAF III mission timeframe. The constitutional process (e.g. the holding of a Constitutional Loya Jirga) on the other hand, is still on track, including ISAF's role in support of security planning.

The development of Kabul International Airport (KIA) remained a key challenge for ISAF III. Its importance as ISAF's major Line of Communication is evident. However, KIA as an international hub and national gateway to the capital of Afghanistan is crucial to the establishment of permanent and reliable communications with the world. Under the standards set by ISAF several commercial airlines have become interested in regular flights to Kabul to commence as early as August 2003.

Thus ISAF has successfully maintained and enhanced the security in its AOR and has substantially contributed to the development of the various security structures. The most significant indicator for this success may be the continuing massive support to ISAF by the population of the greater Kabul area.

I. INTRODUCTION

This report is submitted pursuant to UN Security Council Resolution 1386 (2001) and 1444 (2002). It covers the period since the submission of the first report by ISAF III, but includes simultaneously the final assessment of HQ ISAF III before the command is handed over to ISAF IV.

II. TRIBUTE

Since ISAF III took over, five soldiers and one local Afghan interpreter lost their lives due to accidents and attacks in theatre, two soldiers died of natural causes, and sixty-two were killed in a plane crash, while redeploying after completion of their tour of service. Additionally, a significant number of ISAF personnel has been injured, some of them seriously. ISAF III wants to pay tribute to them and in particular to those who paid the highest price for the support of peace and stability in a new Afghanistan.

III. FRAMEWORK ISAF III

a. Mandate and mission

Mandate and mission of ISAF remain unchanged compared to the previous report. Based upon the Bonn Agreement of 5 December 2001, United Nations Security Council Resolutions 1386(2001) and 1444(2002), the Military Technical Agreement and a Memorandum Of Understanding (MOU) concerning command arrangements and related matters in the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) the Federal Republic of Germany and The Kingdom of The Netherlands, jointly acting as "lead nation" for the force, formulated the mission for ISAF III as follows:

ISAF III is to assist the Transitional Authority of Afghanistan in maintaining security within the ISAF area of responsibility (AOR) so that the Transitional Authority of Afghanistan as well as personnel of the United Nations can operate in a secure environment to enable the build-up of security structures in Afghanistan in accordance with the Bonn Agreement and as agreed in the Military Technical Agreement.

b. Participating nations

ISAF currently consists of contingents of various size from 30 participating nations. During the last 6 months the Czech Republic left, Luxembourg and Canada joined ISAF. In total, the operational establishment of ISAF is about 5,400 personnel. The Kabul Multinational Brigade (KMNB) remains the main operating force of ISAF, consisting of approximately 3,100 personnel of 26 different nations. With these forces ISAF is able to conduct its current military tasks within the Kabul AOR and to assist the Afghan authorities in providing security.

c. ISAF III structure

The ISAF III command and organisational structure in theatre consists of the HQ-ISAF with its own Communication- and Information Systems (CIS) and Staff Support Battalions, a CIMIC Co-ordination Centre, Force Liaison

elements, HUMINT teams, a Special Reconnaissance unit, an InfoOps-/PsyOps unit, the KMNB and a Task Force organised to operate the military part of KIA. The Bundeswehr Operations Command with its bi-national German and Netherlands manned ISAF Operation Coordination Centre (IOCC) functions as the higher echelon for HQ-ISAF.

IV. SECURITY

a. Overall security situation

The lack of sufficient security in many parts of the country remains the largest impediment to the Bonn process. Outside the ISAF AOR, especially in southern and southeastern provinces, the number of incidents has risen, including a significantly increased number of lethal attacks compared with the months before. This is especially the case since the end of bad winter weather conditions. Elements opposed to the peace and stabilization process regrouped and are trying to hamper the process of reconstitution, reconstruction, and reconciliation. Factional fighting, clashes between Afghan military forces and Taleban, violent and organized crime (especially narcotics related) as well as fighting between coalition forces and remnants of Al-Qaeda and Taleban created a perception of insecurity within the population as well as within the international assistance community. Despite those activities in some parts of the country, many provinces in the center, the north and the west remain relatively calm and stable.

On the other hand the number of incidents in the ISAF AOR within the reporting period decreased. Still, the suicide attack on an ISAF bus on 07 June 2003 was the most serious incident in 20 months of ISAF existence and represented a new type of attack directly aimed at ISAF. Together with the shooting at two ISAF soldiers in the north of Kabul and two mine incidents killing one ISAF soldier and injuring three others, these events demonstrated that even in the ISAF AOR the threat is still very substantial.

Nevertheless, ISAF succeeded in keeping the AOR relatively calm by maximizing its highly mobile and flexible security operations. ISAF also produced positive results in managing the security in the Kabul area by improving the co-operation between various Afghan security institutions. The threat of rockets has been reduced significantly: not a single attack on Kabul occurred since 30 March 03..

b. Threat assessment

The Opposing Militant Forces (OMF) consisting of Taleban, Hezb-e Islami Gulbuddin (HiG) and small Al Qaeda cells will remain dedicated to violence. Primary targets may remain "soft" governmental and NGO installations and vehicles, but also Afghanistan Militia Forces (AMF) checkpoints, convoys, and Anti Terror Coalition (ATC) installations and patrols throughout the country and possibly ISAF forces and facilities in Kabul. The ultimate objective is to destabilise the situation, to reduce the influence of the Afghanistan Transitional Authority and to set the conditions for the Taleban/HiG to regain political power.

According to ISAF assessment the Taleban still are in a process of reorganising their command and control capabilities. Reports released by the Taleban state that they have established a new council, led by Mullah Omar, to reorganise their activities in Afghanistan including Kabul. Taleban activities are expanding from areas of traditional support in the south-eastern and southern provinces to the central provinces. Their financial means – in stark contrast to the poor living conditions in the rural areas – allow them to gain more support among the population.

Other causes of instability are anti-government and anti-International Community propaganda, the population's perception of slow progress with regard to reconstruction and unemployment, continuing tribal and religious violence, and especially the countrywide criminal activities related to narcotics. These will remain serious concerns. Poppy cultivation is still increasing; the assessed production of raw opium will reach up to 6.000 metric tons in 2003 after approximately 3.500 tons in 2002. The increasing production of heroine within the country aims at widening the narcotics related profit base. The OMF and criminal organisations will benefit from the profits of drug trafficking to increase their military capabilities, enhance their influence and to "buy" supporters for own activities.

The OMF threats to Kabul City continue to originate from the southern and eastern regions into the ISAF AOR. The Afghan/ISAF joint security assessment identified the area east of Kabul City (Surobi District) to be of significant importance for the security of Kabul and ISAF. This 'key terrain' close to, but outside ISAF's AOR allows the control of the main routes from the Pakistan border into the AOR and continues to provide the OMF and criminal elements an intermediate staging base from which to plan and prepare operations.

Afghan security forces have made progress in establishing improved security measures mainly as a result of better co-operation between agencies. However, the situation of AMF and police units in Kabul continues to be problematic since their training level is generally insufficient and their salaries are paid irregularly.. ISAF will have to continue to provide training support and to monitor payment of these units. ISAF III sees the need to phase ANA units into the outer security cordon of the AOR after the Constitutional Loya Jirga to begin replacing AMF forces eligible for DDR.

In summary, the security situation within the ISAF AOR has improved slightly and is assessed as relatively calm, whereas the overall number of incidents in the country has risen significantly. Since it is expected that this surge of destabilising activities will ultimately focus on the capital, ISAF IV will have to take measures to prevent this from spilling over into the AOR.

c. ISAF Security Activities

ISAF III forces were deployed to maximum extent to enhance security. The conduct of operations was intelligence driven, the guiding principle being to make maximum use of the entire spectrum of ISAF's forces and capabilities. The core of these security operations was the deliberate execution of military patrols and joint vehicle checkpoints (JVCP) in co-operation with the Kabul City Police (KCP). Since the last report ISAF III has again increased

the average number of daily patrols. On average 80 security patrols have been conducted in a 24-hour period with a surge capability of over 130. A quarter of these patrols have been jointly conducted with the Afghan police. The patrols in the centre of Kabul have been executed primarily on foot. On a random basis zone covering operations and observation posts were conducted in order to disrupt terrorist activities and to demonstrate ISAF's commitment and capabilities in establishing a secure environment.

ISAF constantly improved its situational awareness in the AOR employing a Special Reconnaissance Unit, Field HUMINT teams and technical reconnaissance assets. ISAF's broad based liaison organization/network contributed significantly to solid co-operation, co-ordination and intelligence gathering with ATA security ministries and agencies.

Beyond the core operations ISAF III forces continued to provide a variety of security assistance (advisory) services for public events and direct support, conducting checks for explosive ordnance and operating Joint Command Posts with Afghan security authorities for international conferences, fairs and visits of foreign dignitaries.

The ISAF explosive ordnance disposal teams and the engineering staff successfully continued to assist in the collection of weapons and ammunition, including rockets and unexploded ordnance. In the reporting period ISAF explosive ordnance disposal teams focused on KIA and common safety. The destruction of AS-10 air-to-surface missiles, which posed a significant obstacle to urgently needed improvements of the Kabul International Airport, cleared the path to safer and more effective air operations. EOD also began removing the most dangerous mine fields in the vicinity of the airport. In total ISAF collected and destroyed more than 50,000 rounds of unexploded ordnance, like rockets, grenades, mines, mortar shells and other kinds of ammunitions (small arms' rounds not counted). During ISAF III in total 118,000 unexploded ordnance were destroyed.

Medical support to the local population continued during the reporting period to be an excellent instrument for confidence building among the population.

In order to get a better estimate of its reputation, ISAF, assisted by students of the Kabul University, conducted an opinion poll among the Kabul population. Results will be available before the end of our mission and provide valuable feedback for our successors.

d. Contingency Planning

The last report explained that HQ ISAF had developed contingency plans in case of a humanitarian disaster or deterioration in the security environment and revised the contingency plan on ISAF extraction. No further requirements for contingency planning were identified during the last three months, but our existing plans have been refined, with the aim of handing them over to the ISAF III successors.

V. COOPERATION WITH AFGHAN AUTHORITIES

a. Civil Military Co-operation (CIMIC)

As was mentioned in the previous report, ISAF's CIMIC structure allowed for extensive liaison and co-operation with Afghan authorities from ministry level down to the local level. Besides permanent contacts to the security related AFG ministries and agencies this included in particular relationships with authorities in the sectors of education, health and agriculture, but also with UNAMA, and other IOs and NGOs.

ISAF CIMIC teams conducted more than 530 village assessments, approximately 80% of the total number of villages in ISAF AOR. Overall assessments on the areas of water, food, health, education, electric power supply and returnees were updated and an additional assessment on the labour market was started. The results are maintained in a database, which is shared with the international community via the Afghanistan Information Management Service (AIMS).

ISAF projects focused on education, water and health, their sizes ranged from small, quick impact projects to high visibility projects demanding budgets of up to 50,000 Euro. The main donors were the European Commission and several European countries. As of 20 July, 17 larger projects have been completed, 20 are still ongoing and 66 are planned. Of the planned and ongoing projects, 29 are expected to be completed before the Transfer of Authority to ISAF IV.

b. Contribution to development of the security structures

The ATA retains prime responsibility for security in Afghanistan. The various mechanisms (Joint Co-ordinating Body, Security Sector Reform Working Group and Joint Security Assessment Group) through which ISAF co-operated and co-ordinated with its partners and focused its assistance to the ATA, continue to function as previously reported. In addition, ISAF started to advise and assist in the development of a Joint Security Co-ordination Centre (JSCC). This multi-agency Afghan organisation is supposed to direct security operations at the Kabul entry points and in the security belt around Kabul, but is not yet fully operational. HQ ISAF assisted the respective Afghan authorities in producing an agreed 'Implementing Directive', including tasks, definitions, and agreed target dates for initial and full operational capability.

Recognising the need to bridge the gap between the German Police Project delivering fully trained National Police Force officers and NCOs and the present requirements, ISAF III designed and implemented a basic training package tailored to meet the needs of the policemen on the streets right now. This training was provided to 577 policemen from 10 Police Districts throughout the city. Meanwhile, responsibility for this work was handed over to the International Police Training Mission. In view of the preparations for national elections and Constitutional Loya Jirga consultations this approach might be helpful to enhance the short term capabilities of the ATA to provide security in strategic locations by deployment of new police units outside Kabul.

Regarding the Afghan Border Police, President Karzai recently decreed that it would take over responsibility for security at KIA. HQ ISAF together with the Afghan Ministry of the Interior, Ministry of Defence and the German Police Project is about to finalise preparations for this take-over.

The last few months saw improvements to the training of the Afghan National Army (ANA). ISAF III was requested to provide some specialist training to complement the overall ANA training effort delivered principally by US as Lead Nation, supported by France and the UK. This specialist training consists of a standardised follow-on training programme for ANA battalions, conducted according to "Train the Trainer" principles. The training ranged from driving and vehicle maintenance training, medical training to communications training. Up to now six battalions have participated, and the results have been greatly appreciated. Additionally ISAF started platoon level training of the tank battalion of the armoured brigade.

Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR) will not start until a reform of the Ministry of Defence has been completed. Some experts assess that substantial MOD Reform will require 3 months to achieve. Although this delay will not hamper preparations for the DDR process, the onset of winter may pose problems further on.. If need arises, a possible solution might be to conduct a pilot DDR before winter, identify lessons learned, and recommence in spring.

c. Specific Challenges

Kabul International Airport (KIA)

The strategic importance of KIA for the conduct of ISAF's operations has always been evident. Nevertheless, ISAF achieved remarkable progress over the last months to develop KIA on the civilian side. Although it will still require a significant amount of time and effort until the ultimate objective is achieved, the ATA is well on track to establish an airport in line with IATA standards.

Due to frequent contacts and intensive negotiations with the main participants in air-operations over Afghanistan, i.e. the Coalition Forces Air Component Commander (CFACC), the Ministry of Civil Aviation and Tourism (MoCAT) and the Afghan Air Force, a higher standard of Flight Safety has been accomplished. Paramount was the firm and rigid watch by ISAF authorities over the compliance with international and local flight regulations. This has led to a remarkable degree of discipline by all users of KIA's airspace in the conduct of air traffic.

The realisation of minimum requirements with regard to navigational aids and radio equipment is on track and will most likely be established by the end of the year. The renovation of the runway and taxiways, including the lighting system, is under way; it will be completed in mid-2004 and will mark a milestone. In the interim, ISAF carried out minor, but necessary, runway-repair measures to establish safe flying operations over the critical winter season.

Overall the developments at KIA within the past 6 months are reassuring and have already led to an interest of major European air lines to fly into KIA on a regular basis.

Constitutional Process

The process of nationwide consultations on the draft Constitution is in full swing. On 15 July President Karzai issued a decree on the convening of the Constitutional Loya Jirga. Being represented at both the Inter Agency Working Group (IAWG) and the Key Leaders Seminar, ISAF III is prepared to give full support to the logistical and security preparations for the Constitutional Loya Jirga , before handing this work over to ISAF IV who will see it through to a successful end.

Operation Enduring Freedom

Although OEF and ISAF are distinctly separate operations, improvement of co-ordination and co-operation between the two headquarters has been achieved. A bi-monthly co-ordination working group has been established, and joint procedures have been developed for co-ordinating several aspects of daily and emergency operations. Both commanders meet on a regular basis.

VI. OVERALL JUDGEMENT

ISAF's III assessment continues to consider security as the main issue - not just for Kabul but also for the development of the entire country.

ISAF III has focused its operations along the lines of its campaign plan. Wherever needed and possible, ISAF III has sought to enhance effectiveness of its operations. The focus on improvements in KIA operations, including the employment of Afghan Border Police at the civilian part of the airport, has paid its dividend. In particular, ISAF is pleased with the progress that has been achieved in co-operation with Afghan security officials and in the promotion of better co-ordination between the various Afghan security services. This progress is the result of intensive high level contacts with Afghan authorities and employment of ISAF manpower and expertise.

Regular contacts with the Afghan authorities, the United Nations SRSG and US military authorities have ensured permanent ISAF III input into all major processes related to security (Constitutional Loya Jirga, training of ANA and National Police, DDR etc.).

In view of the steady progress with the training of the ANA and National Police, the increasing momentum in the relationship between the central government and leaders in the provinces, the gradual increase in Provincial Reconstruction Teams and the imminent personnel reforms within the Ministry of Defence as the key precursor to the actual start of the DDR process, the prospects for the continued implementation of the Bonn peace process seem to have improved lately. ISAF III has managed to contribute actively and broadly to this situation.

ISAF III can look back on a successful six-month period.. As preparations for the hand over to ISAF IV are well under way, sufficient operational capacity

during the transition period will remain available to ensure the population will not see any difference in the level of ISAF engagement.

ISAF III made full use of the possibilities within its mandate. Through its continuous support ISAF II encouraged and enabled the Afghan Transitional Authority to move ahead towards peace and stability. The urgent request of 80 aid agencies and human rights organizations to the UN Security Council to extend the mandate of ISAF across the country can be interpreted as a clear signal of trust and confidence in the capabilities and posture of the force.

VII. WAY AHEAD

Most of the planned activities of ISAF III, beyond its daily patrolling operations, will carry over into ISAF IV's mission to ensure consistency and continuity. This will also be the case in the period of the hand over. For a successful completion of the peace process, however, achieving security and stability outside of Kabul is of vital importance. Without this, timely completion of the Bonn process will be endangered as will be the positive results already achieved in the Kabul area. The deployment of newly trained Afghan police and ANA units to strategic locations throughout the country would be one essential step into the right direction.