



## Security Council

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### **Letter dated 29 January 2007 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council**

I have the honour to convey the attached communication, dated 22 January 2007, which I received from the Secretary-General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would bring it to the attention of the members of the Security Council.

*(Signed)* **Ban Ki-moon**



**Annex**

**Letter dated 22 January 2007 from the Secretary-General  
of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization addressed to the  
Secretary-General**

In accordance with Security Council resolutions 1386 (2001) and 1510 (2003), I attach a report on the operations of the International Security Assistance Force covering the period from 1 August to 1 November 2006 (see enclosure). I would appreciate your making the report available to the Security Council.

*(Signed)* Jaap **de Hoop Scheffer**

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**Enclosure****Quarterly report to the United Nations on operations of the International Security Assistance Force****Introduction**

1. By its resolution 1510 (2003) the Security Council requested the leadership of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) to provide reports on the implementation of its mandate. This is the eleventh such report by NATO, and it covers the period from 1 August to 1 November 2006.

2. Prior to its expansion to Region South, ISAF had 10,177 personnel from NATO nations and 535 from non-NATO contributing nations. With the change of command of Regions South and East in effect, ISAF counted 32,886 personnel from the 26 NATO nations and 681 from non-NATO contributing nations as at 19 November 2006.

**Overall security situation**

3. Stage 3 expansion to the south and the transfer of authority from the United States-led coalition Operation Enduring Freedom took place on 31 July 2006. ISAF carried out over the summer a brigade-level operation (Operation Medusa) to re-establish the authority of the Government of Afghanistan near Kandahar, where there had been a significant Taliban resurgence. Stage 4 of the ISAF expansion occurred on 4 October, when Regional Command East came under ISAF authority, thereby concluding expansion across the country and paving the way for Phase 3, Stabilization. Operational successes by ISAF in the south were complemented by operations led by Afghan security forces in the east, where increased cross-border infiltration has been reported.

4. ISAF now executes its assistance mission across all of Afghanistan and provides a single point of interface with the Afghan Government and the international community. ISAF continues to put the development of Afghan national security forces at the forefront of its mission, with a particular focus on developing the Afghan National Army.

5. The Government's institutional capacity remains limited, affecting its ability to provide for the Afghan population. In partial response to this, President Karzai set up the Policy Action Group to ensure proper coordination of policies within the scope of its regional activities and regional focus.

6. Corruption continues to undermine the local population's trust of the Government, resulting in their reliance on traditional methods of governance at the local level. ISAF and provincial reconstruction teams therefore continue to deal with shuras at the local level, as well as with the officials appointed by the Government.

**Recent developments by geographical area**

7. In Regional Command Capital, Kabul remains the centre of gravity for both the Afghan Government and the international community. The capital, with its significant presence of foreigners, international organizations and Afghan Government institutions, remains a high-value target for possible attacks by opposing militant forces. With a relatively low level of support, the opposing

militant forces have relied on terrorist tactics of attacks such as suicide bombings, rocket launches and improvised explosive devices.

8. In Regional Command North, the overall situation is calm but unstable. Major security concerns are related mostly to criminal activity and factional fighting. Returning refugees have created ethnic tension, and there have been reports of infiltrations by opposing militant forces.

9. The situation in Regional Command West is generally calm. However, the threat level has increased in the southern province of Farah. This province is poor and has always been hampered by local power brokers acting outside the law. Governmental control over the area is thus limited. The reporting period has witnessed an increase in attacks on district centres, as well as roadside attacks by the opposing militant forces.

10. Taliban presence is significant in Regional Command South. Prior to the expansion of ISAF into the area, the Taliban had fortified and massed its forces west of Kandahar city, in Zharmi and Panjwayee Districts. This led to the operation described in paragraph 3, as the Taliban showed its intent to meet ISAF as a conventional force and threaten to take over Kandahar city. However, ISAF repulsed the insurgent force, which was driven out of the city and forced to resort to asymmetrical tactics. The Taliban sustained heavy losses during the confrontation.

11. In Regional Command East, the presence and activity of opposing militant forces remain high. The porous border area provides refuge for those forces, although Pakistan and ISAF are working on addressing this problem. The Government of Pakistan reached an agreement with local leaders in the area to give the tribal entities more autonomy and reduce the Government's military presence in the area. The agreement calls in return for the interdiction of support for cross-border fighters. The level of compliance with the agreement remains, however, difficult to assess.

12. Overall, the threat-level assessment for the winter months is lower than previously because of the harshness of the weather conditions.

#### **Programme Takhim-e-Solh (reconciliation)**

13. Recent reconciliation activity carried out under the banner of Programme Takhim-e-Solh in Regional Commands West and South has been promising but on a small scale. Professor Mujadeddi, the head of the programme, is particularly active and intends to open offices in the south shortly.

#### **Explosive remnants of war**

14. Explosive remnants of war have claimed fewer casualties among the local population over the past three months, possibly because of improved unexploded mine and ordnance risk education. ISAF maintains a close supporting relationship with the Afghan New Beginnings Programme to assist in overall destruction and relocation of explosive remnants of war. The availability of explosive remnants of war remains a contributing factor to the ease with which insurgents can manufacture improvised explosive devices.

### **Disbandment of illegal armed groups**

15. Although little significant progress has been made in the disbandment of illegal armed groups, the Government of Afghanistan has initiated a new strategy review programme with the participation of ISAF and the international community. Security conditions dictate which provinces are targeted.

### **Afghan police**

16. Officially, the Afghan National Police has almost reached its established strength of 62,000 personnel. Its actual strength is not known. A basic infrastructure has been established, and there is some police presence on the ground in most of the country. However, that presence is not sufficient in number or quality to translate into an effective contribution by the Afghan National Police to creating the necessary degree of stability, order and security. There is a general lack of trust in the police, and the concept of a community police force at the service of the people still needs to be established. The misuse of power and corruption seem to be widespread. Illiteracy, estimated at 60-70 per cent, and poor equipment and facilities lead to low public perception of the police. The probation of 14 out of 86 approved Afghan National Police generals during the reporting period was a clear signal that the Government and the international community are intent on improving police leadership.

17. If it is done properly, the establishment of the Afghan National Auxiliary Police in volatile regions of the country should mitigate shortfalls in those regions. In Zabul Province, the Afghan National Auxiliary Police has been fielded as a pilot programme. The next steps are to conduct similar exercises in Kandahar and Helmand Provinces. The creation of the Auxiliary Police has implications for the disbandment of illegal armed groups process, since means will have to be developed to ensure that a misperception does not emerge that it is a process of arming Pashtun militias with Government funding.

### **Counter-narcotics**

18. A recent report of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime showed that compared to 2005, poppy cultivation rose by 59 per cent in 2006, resulting in an all-time record of 6,100 tons of opium, with the most dramatic increase in the south of the country. While recognizing the potential for loss of consent and the negative effect on security, the Government of Afghanistan, assisted by the international community, is planning to conduct carefully targeted eradication operations. Security assessments will be conducted prior to the eradication operations in 2007 both inside and outside Afghan development zones. ISAF will support the provincial development committees in monitoring the efficiency of alternative livelihood investments.

### **Afghan National Army**

19. The army is at about half its target strength of 70,000 personnel. However, not all of those soldiers can be deployed to combat insurgency, according to the Afghan General Staff. In addition, the development of the army is limited by a shortage of equipment, the requirement to replace combat losses and reliance on external support. The intensive tempo of operations has affected the army, but the major sources of dissatisfaction among the troops are the salaries, proper patterns of

deployment with suitable warning times and the availability of adequate medical care. Work is under way to address those issues, and already new pay rates are thought to be reducing cases of desertion.

### **Judicial reform**

20. Infrastructure projects continue to receive significant donor support, and while there is still much scope for development, tangible progress is being made. Ongoing public awareness initiatives are in progress to promote the rule of law and the upholding of human rights. The newly appointed Chief Justice, Abdul Salam Azimi, and the Supreme Court officials appear to be seeking to moderate the influence of more conservative elements within the justice system. The Attorney-General, Abdul Jabar Sabit, appears committed to fighting corruption, which remains endemic. He has specifically sought ISAF assistance.

### **Neighbouring country support for the Government of Afghanistan**

21. Relations with Tajikistan have improved. The Islamic Republic of Iran, India and China have all initiated investment plans with Afghanistan. Coordination with neighbouring countries will become increasingly important, especially in the south and east, as insurgents seek safe havens over the winter. Meanwhile, there has been a rise in confrontational rhetoric between Kabul and Islamabad over the alleged harbouring of extremists by Pakistan in border areas. At the same time, steps have been taken to improve cooperation and confidence-building measures at the military level through the so-called Tripartite Commission. In this context, military liaison to improve coordinated border operations is currently under way.

### **Afghan national development strategy**

22. The Afghan national development strategy remains the key governmental mechanism for delivering coherent development assistance and meeting the developmental benchmarks of the Afghanistan Compact. Government ministries continue to own sectoral Afghan national development strategies, although their ability to monitor developments is assessed by ISAF as being weak, particularly in the security sector.

### **Summary**

23. Although the winter months may create a lull in the activities of opposing militant forces because of severe weather conditions, ISAF and international forces will remain a focus for insurgents. ISAF will continue to carry out its role in assisting the Government of Afghanistan in improving the security situation with a presence extended to the entire country. In addition, provincial reconstruction teams will engage the population at the local level to strengthen the perception that ISAF can provide security for reconstruction and development.