



## Security Council

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### Letter dated 28 November 2014 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to transmit the attached letter, dated 24 November 2014, from the Secretary-General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, Jens Stoltenberg, forwarding the final report on the International Security Assistance Force operations in Afghanistan (see annex).

I should be grateful if you could bring the present letter and its annex to the attention of the members of the Security Council.

(Signed) **BAN** Ki-moon



## **Annex**

### **Letter dated 24 November 2014 from the Secretary-General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization addressed to the Secretary-General**

In accordance with Security Council resolutions 1386 (2001) and 2120 (2013), I attach a final report on the operations of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) (see enclosure). I would appreciate your making this report available to the Security Council.

You will recall that at the Chicago Summit of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) on 21 May 2012, the Government of Afghanistan invited NATO to continue its support beyond 2014. In particular, we agreed to work towards establishing a new NATO-led non-combat mission to train, advise and assist the Afghan National Security Forces. You will wish to know that we are finalizing our plans to launch such a mission on 1 January 2015.

*(Signed)* Jens **Stoltenberg**

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## Enclosure

### **Final report to the Security Council on the International Security Assistance Force**

#### **I. Introduction**

1. The present report is in response to the request to the leadership of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) under Security Council resolution 2120 (2013) that the final report on the implementation of the ISAF mandate should be a comprehensive one.

2. ISAF was established under the authority of Security Council resolution 1386 (2001) initially to assist the Afghan Interim Authority in the maintenance of security in Kabul and its surrounding areas. It was also called upon to provide assistance to help the Afghan Interim Authority in the establishment and training of new Afghan security and armed forces.

3. Over more than a decade, in accordance with successive Security Council resolutions, the ISAF mission has evolved. It has helped the Government of Afghanistan to establish new Afghan security and armed forces. And it has led operations to provide the necessary security for Afghanistan as its security institutions developed in capacity and capability. These efforts were in support of the wider international goal of rooting out terrorism.

4. The achievements of ISAF have enabled fundamental changes to take place in Afghanistan. ISAF and the Afghan National Security Forces, together, have reduced the threat posed by Al-Qaida and its affiliates. The Afghan forces have made remarkable progress from an effective strength of virtually zero in 2001 to becoming a professional and capable force providing security across Afghanistan. They excel at the tactical level. Afghanistan has continued to make steady progress in developing the institutional capability necessary to direct and sustain the Afghan forces at the operational and strategic level. Since June 2013, the forces have been in the lead for security throughout Afghanistan, and are assessed as ready to assume full responsibility for security when ISAF concludes its mission at the end of 2014, as agreed with the Government of Afghanistan. Afghan capability in the security sector was ably demonstrated by the Afghan forces, which, with minimal assistance, provided the security which facilitated the 2014 presidential and provincial council elections.

5. This progress has come at a high cost to the 51 ISAF contributing countries which, as of November 2014, had sustained 31,773 casualties, including 2,729 killed in action and 502 other fatalities.

6. While the core objectives of ISAF have been achieved, more remains to be done to develop self-sustainable and fully capable Afghan security forces. The Afghan forces still have capability gaps and development shortfalls, especially in the Air Force. Equipment procurement, financial management and accountability procedures need to improve. Endemic corruption persists. Further progress is required in the participation of women in security institutions and forces, in securing women's rights, and in the protection of children in armed conflict, especially in eliminating the recruitment of child soldiers.

7. In accordance with decisions taken at the Chicago Summit of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in May 2012 together with the Government of Afghanistan, NATO and NATO partner countries will continue to provide training, advice and assistance to the Afghan forces after 2014. This support is part of a broader effort by the international community to help the Government of Afghanistan to sustain the Afghan forces, including financially.

## **II. Achievements of the mission**

8. In August 2003, NATO assumed responsibility for the ISAF operation, and in October 2003 the Security Council, by resolution 1510 (2003) expanded the Kabul-centric operation of ISAF to the entire country.

9. The expansion of ISAF occurred in four stages through the establishment of regional commands and the establishment of provincial reconstruction teams throughout the country. The provincial reconstruction teams consisted of military and civilian personnel carrying out a range of activities to support the development of security, governance and the economy in different parts of Afghanistan. Stage 1 of the ISAF expansion started during December 2003 in Kunduz Province. By 1 October 2004, ISAF had expanded its presence to Mazar-e-Sharif, Meymana, Feyzabad and Baghlan, resulting in the establishment of Regional Command North. The establishment of Regional Command West formally began on 31 May 2006, when ISAF assumed responsibilities in relation to the provincial reconstruction teams in Herat and Farah, as well as the forward support base in Herat. Further provincial reconstruction teams were established in Uruzgan and Bamyan, Ghor and Baghdis Provinces. ISAF also provided 2,000 additional troops to support the provincial and parliamentary elections of September 2005. Stage 3 expanded the ISAF mission into the South in 2006. On 31 July 2006, Regional Command South assumed security responsibility for six provinces, almost doubling the forces under ISAF to about 20,000 personnel.

10. Stage 4 of the ISAF expansion occurred on 5 October 2006, when international forces in the remaining eastern provinces transferred to ISAF, creating Regional Command East and adding another 15,000 troops to the mission. In that year, ISAF started fielding operational mentoring and liaison teams to provide direct assistance to Afghan National Army units operating alongside ISAF forces. In June 2007, the European Union Police mission began operations to develop specialized law enforcement skills in the Afghan National Police. A comprehensive approach to the development of the Afghan forces as a whole was critical as neither the national army nor the national police could secure the population at the time, even with assistance from ISAF.

11. 2008 marked a significant change in the conduct of the campaign. A full counter-insurgency approach was implemented to integrate the use of conventional and special operations forces for security, with a greater focus on subnational governance and economic development. This shift coincided with a marked increase of personnel committed to the ISAF mission and included the initiation of operational and tactical coordination of military campaign plans and operations with the Afghan Ministry of Defence and the Ministry of the Interior and all Afghan forces' senior headquarters. ISAF also increased its formal coordination with the

Afghan Government's Independent Directorate of Local Governance and the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA).

12. The establishment in 2009 of three key headquarters was strategically decisive in improving the coherence and impact of ISAF operations and activities. First, the establishment of the ISAF Joint Command provided a single headquarters to focus on the operational level planning, synchronization and execution of counter-insurgency operations in coordination with Afghan forces and regional and local government authorities. This allowed ISAF headquarters to focus on strategic-level planning and coordination with the Afghan Government, Afghan security institutions and the international community represented in Afghanistan. Second, the NATO Training Mission in Afghanistan, combining and building on existing international efforts and structures, provided a single focal point for advice to the Afghan forces, incorporating security force assistance to Afghan National Police and Afghan security institutions for the first time under ISAF responsibility. Other advisory efforts that complemented the NATO Training Mission in Afghanistan came from ISAF Special Operations Forces, and from the NATO Special Operations Component Command-Afghanistan, also newly established, which provided training and advisory support to Afghan security institutions, Afghan special police units and Afghan Special Operations Forces. These advisory efforts were strategically decisive in building the Afghan forces into a credible security force that could both secure the Afghan people and counter the insurgency.

13. Following a comprehensive assessment in the late summer of 2009, the ISAF campaign plan was revised to include the newly established headquarters and several other initiatives that were undertaken to improve support to the development of Afghan governance capacity, to counter corruption, and to improve the rule of law in Afghanistan. This comprehensive assessment also led to a significant increase, over several years, of military forces as well as civilian advisers, the latter focused on building Afghan Government capacity at national and subnational levels. In 2010, NATO, in conjunction with the Afghan Government, decided to develop a plan for a security transition whereby, based on a joint assessment process, the lead responsibility for security operations would be gradually transferred from ISAF to the Afghan forces. The plan foresaw periodic joint assessments which would allow semi-annual tranches for selected provinces and districts which had met pre-set criteria to be transferred. The first phase of the five-phase process began in March 2011.

14. On 18 June 2013, President Hamid Karzai announced the fifth and final tranche of security transition, at which point the Afghan forces assumed lead security responsibility throughout the country for all of Afghanistan's 30 million citizens. In the year that followed, the forces successfully secured all of the major population centres in Afghanistan, in addition to securing the Loya Jirga held in November 2013, the Ghazni Islamic Festival in February 2014, and the Afghan elections in April and June 2014. The increased capability of the Afghan forces, and their demonstrated ability to prevail even when heavily engaged, enabled the progressive reduction of the ISAF Force. By the final month of its mission, December 2014, ISAF will have reduced from a high of over 130,000 personnel in 2011 to fewer than 15,000.

15. By November 2014, the Afghan forces were leading 99 per cent of all operations and carrying out over 90 per cent of their own training. The only

unilateral operations that ISAF continued to conduct were ISAF force protection, route clearance and redeployment. The Afghan forces are responding effectively to the majority of security incidents and throughout 2013 they launched several successful operations to disrupt planned attacks in Kabul and elsewhere. A total of 72 per cent of Afghans report confidence in the Afghan National Police, and 88 per cent in the performance of the Afghan National Army; confidence in the national police's role in improving security rose 5 per cent from 2012 to 2013. Confidence in the national army's role in improving security rose 4 per cent from 2012 to 2013.<sup>1</sup>

### **III. Support provided to the Government of Afghanistan to improve and sustain Afghanistan's capacity and capability to address continued threats to its security, stability and integrity**

#### **Training and mentoring the Afghan forces**

16. The development of the Afghan National Army started in 2003 with the creation of a force that was initially expected to comprise 60,000 soldiers. The first ISAF efforts to build the Afghan forces began under the provincial reconstruction teams, which focused on the long-term building of institutional capacity in the provinces where they were located. The focus of Afghan force development in the first few years of the NATO Training Mission in Afghanistan was on the rapid growth of the force, followed by the professionalization of the force. Once built to size, the Afghan forces could develop the institutional capability necessary to link strategic plans and policy, and their associated institutional support functions, to the forces in the field. Because of operational urgency, the initial focus was on creating a force that could fight battles as a necessary first step towards developing the institutions that would enable the Afghan forces to win campaigns. The Afghan forces have grown from virtually zero to around 350,000, the strongest in Afghan history. They are on target to assume full responsibility for securing their own country at the end of 2014, as jointly agreed with the Afghan authorities at the NATO Summit in Lisbon in 2010 and reaffirmed at subsequent NATO Summits in Chicago in 2012 and in Wales in 2014.

#### **Empowering the Afghan forces by providing logistical support/capacity-building**

17. One of the greater challenges facing the Afghan forces is developing an effective logistics and sustainment system. A lack of trained maintenance technicians and spare parts, and a logistics system that struggles to resupply units in the field, adversely affect every branch of the Afghan forces. The Afghan National Army has relied heavily on ISAF and contractors for logistic support, but work is in progress to allocate a Combat Service Support kandak (battalion) to each army brigade.

18. The Afghan forces have progressively assumed ownership of the maintenance and management of their assets. However, there remain significant concerns with respect to centralized logistics supply chain management, with cultural and

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<sup>1</sup> 2013 Asia Foundation Survey, 5 December 2013 (see annex D for results).

procedural issues often proving an obstacle to efficient logistics processes. ISAF considers this issue to be a high priority and has aimed to develop logistics systems and management processes that will enable the forces to manage their own sustainment in the longer term.

19. ISAF provided significant help to the Afghan forces by supplying their initial equipment and training. After this, the Afghan security institutions became responsible for acquiring or maintaining any additional and/or replacement equipment. Capacity-building continues through ISAF logistics and medical support, although the forces' own capacity is growing in these areas. The logistics system of the Afghan forces has evolved from a nascent capability to one that, while still requiring development, has begun to respond to the challenges that the long lines of communication in Afghanistan pose.

#### **Building the Afghan forces' ability to operate under civilian leadership**

20. The Afghan security institutions have transformed from sole dependence on military manpower to developing a civil service that will be an instrument for long-term professionalization in the institutions and their processes. This is largely attributable to ISAF mentorship across both the military and civilian domains over the years. This has developed the cooperation and interaction needed for an effective civilian leadership and staff to lead, build, develop and sustain the Afghan forces. By building an effective professional civilian cadre, they will be able to maximize the number of personnel in their fighting forces, while creating continuity and expertise in the Afghan security institutions necessary to sustain the forces themselves.

21. ISAF advisory efforts have consistently promoted civilian control over the Afghan forces. These efforts have been linked to the establishment of a civilian cadre within the security institutions.

#### **Developing the Afghan forces' ability to operate in accordance with the rule of law**

22. ISAF has helped to create the conditions in which the development of the rule of law in Afghanistan can further progress. On 9 June 2011, the NATO Rule of Law Field Support Mission was created by NATO Defence Ministers at their meeting in Brussels. The purpose of the NATO Rule of Law Field Support Mission was to provide essential field capabilities and to liaise with Afghan and international technical assistance providers to build Afghan criminal justice capacity, increase access to dispute resolution services, fight corruption and promote the legitimacy of the Afghan Government. The NATO Rule of Law Field Support Mission worked in coordination with the NATO Senior Civilian Representative and UNAMA to support and strengthen governance and the rule of law. While the NATO Rule of Law Field Support Mission did not provide direct support to justice sector development, it provided support to Afghan officials and international actors to help them to do so.

#### **Encouraging the Afghan forces' respect for human rights**

23. The Taliban left a legacy of widespread abuse and disregard of human rights, particularly those of women. In accordance with Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), ISAF established a robust structure, including the Gender Adviser's Office, in order to support and promote women's integration in the Afghan forces. There are

now best practices in place which can be built on in the years ahead. Much has been achieved but considerable work still needs to be done. Women's integration in the Afghan forces (including recruitment, training, assignment, promotion and retention) has been slow and inconsistent. In spite of a female accession management policy at the Ministry of Defence and a "Strategy for the management of the affairs of Afghan National Police female personnel" in the Ministry of the Interior, by October 2014 there were fewer than 800 women in the Afghan National Army and the Afghan Air Force, while just over 2,100 women were serving in the Afghan National Police. The Afghan forces are taking steps to improve educational and professional opportunities for women in the force. NATO will continue to work with the Afghan forces in their efforts to comply with Security Council resolution 1325 (2000). NATO undertook a review of the practical implications of resolution 1325 (2000) for the conduct of NATO-led operations and missions, which included ISAF. The review provided a comprehensive assessment of the efforts NATO had made to date and serves as a reference for further advances in the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) and related resolutions.

24. Afghanistan is on the United Nations list of those countries whose security forces continue to recruit and use children. ISAF, in accordance with Security Council resolution 1612 (2005) on children and armed conflict and related resolutions, has been working closely with UNAMA to assist Afghanistan to implement the "Action Plan on Prevention and Response to under 18 Recruitment" and the "Road Map to Compliance". ISAF has also addressed other matters related to children and armed conflict, and interacted with the Ministry of Defence and the Ministry of the Interior on children and armed conflict matters. In this work, ISAF has maintained close cooperation with both UNAMA and the United Nations Children's Fund.

#### **Counter-narcotics**

25. ISAF has supported the Afghan Government's counter-narcotics strategy, including through programmes to develop the enforcement capacity of the Afghan forces. However, since drug cultivation and trafficking is a complex phenomenon, it cannot be solved through military means. In October 2008, at the request of the Afghan Government, and consistent with the appropriate Security Council resolutions, NATO agreed that ISAF could act in concert with the Afghan authorities against facilities and facilitators supporting the insurgency, in the context of counter-narcotics, subject to the authorization of the respective countries. Illicit narcotics production remains a great challenge to the Afghan society and more needs to be done.

## **IV. Cooperation between ISAF and the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and between ISAF and UNAMA**

26. ISAF has maintained a close relationship with the Government of Afghanistan, especially its Ministry of Defence and Ministry of the Interior. At the regional command level, ISAF military forces were crucial in providing assistance to provincial and district governance and in encouraging the coordination of Afghan civil and military efforts to stabilize the security environment.

27. ISAF has had a strong relationship with the Military Advisory Unit of UNAMA since the beginning of the Mission in 2002. The Military Advisory Unit maintains a permanent liaison presence in ISAF headquarters on such matters as information-sharing and coordination on human rights and gender issues. In addition, the Commander of ISAF regularly meets with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations to ensure that the coalition's actions remain closely coordinated with UNAMA.

28. NATO established the Office of the NATO Senior Civilian Representative in 2003. The Senior Civilian Representative represents NATO in Kabul and coordinates with representatives of the international community and other organizations engaged in Afghanistan, especially UNAMA and the European Union. In 2008, NATO expanded the role of the Senior Civilian Representative to better coordinate the NATO civilian strategy with the ISAF military strategy. Both ISAF and the Senior Civilian Representative's Office have benefited from close proximity and coordination, as well as a mutual dialogue with UNAMA and with the wider international community in Kabul.

## **V. The future of security support to Afghanistan**

29. There will be three strands to the future support of NATO to the Afghan Government and security institutions. The first strand will be the Resolute Support Mission, a non-combat training, advisory and assistance mission focused at the institutional level in Kabul, but also providing continued advice to the Afghan forces at the corps level in the regions. The second strand will focus over the medium term on the financial sustainment of the Afghan forces through the adapted NATO-Afghan National Army Trust Fund. This NATO contribution is an integral part of the broader international community effort to help to sustain the Afghan forces. The third strand is the NATO-Afghanistan Enduring Partnership, which will strengthen the relationship of NATO with Afghanistan and provide capacity-building and practical cooperation in support of Afghan security institutions over the long term.

## **VI. Assessment and concluding remarks by the Commander of ISAF**

30. For over a decade, the International Security Assistance Force has carried out its responsibilities, namely, assisting the Afghan authorities in maintaining security and developing new Afghan security forces. ISAF has fulfilled and honoured its mandate through the comprehensive assistance that its troops have provided to the Afghan forces and the Afghan security institutions. The sacrifices and achievements of ISAF reflect a huge investment in Afghanistan. Thanks to the security platform ISAF has built and the strong Afghan forces that ISAF has trained, Afghanistan has come a very long way. This is an accomplishment of which ISAF contributing countries, and the military and civilian personnel who have served with ISAF, can rightly be proud. Afghanistan now has a strong foundation on which to build a secure future.