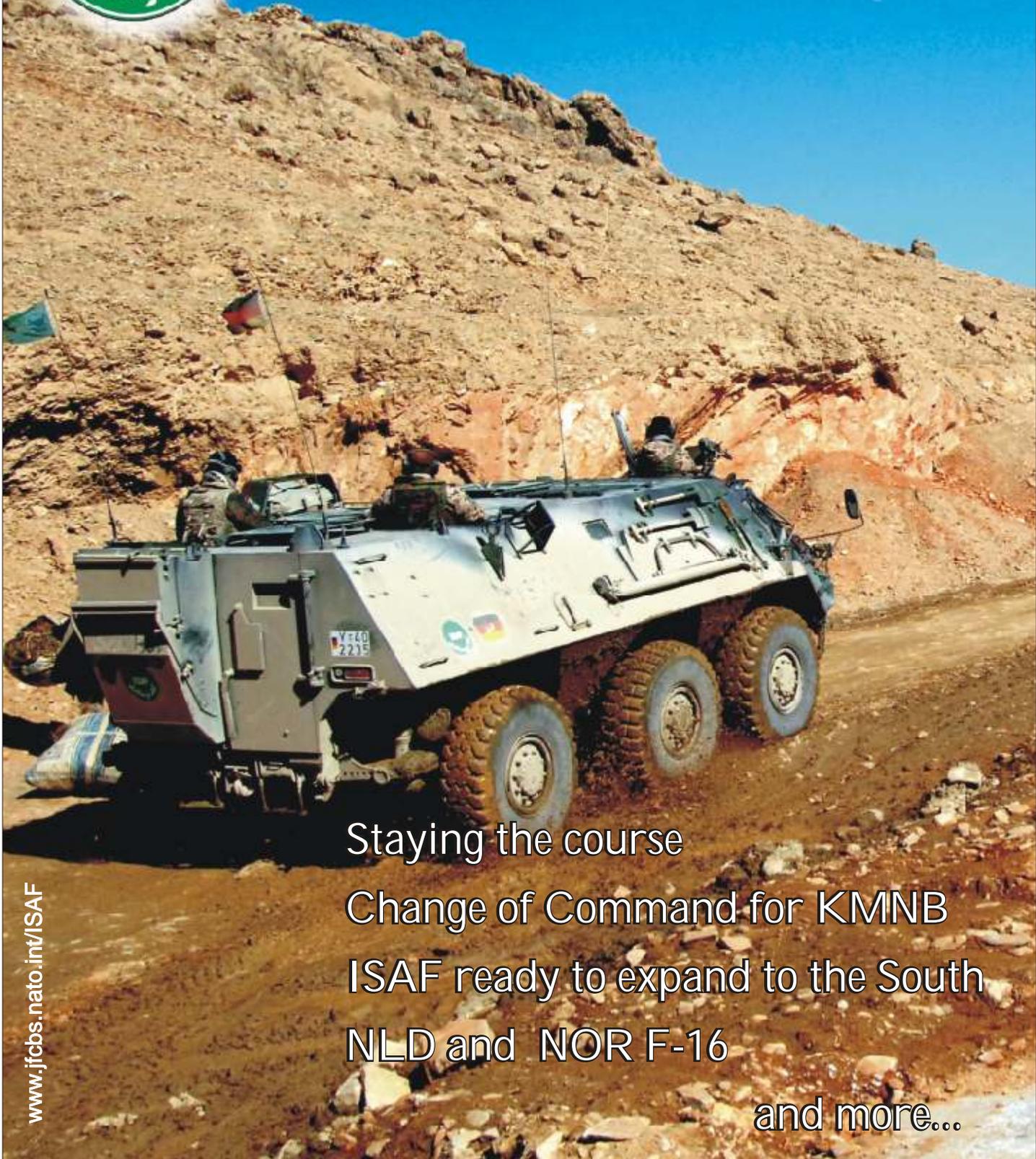




# ISAF MIRROR

Issue 25 February 2006



Staying the course

Change of Command for KMNB

ISAF ready to expand to the South

NLD and NOR F-16

and more...



## Contents

- 3: Staying the course
- 4: Change of Command for KMNB
- 6: ISAF and ANA joint exercise in Western Afghanistan
- 7: 1st Airborne Hussars` Regiment take up the french baton in KMNB
- 8: MeS collects more than 4000 weapons
- 9: ISAF builds two new schools
- 10: CJ8 controlling the purse strings
- 12: ISAF ready to expand to the South
- 16: Women`s Sport Club opened in MeS
- 17: A brighter future for Afghan childrens
- 18: NLD and NOR F-16 maintaining ISAF`s security
- 20: Dr. Masooda Jalal visits ISAF HQ
- 22: Working together to ensure security

**HAVE YOU GOT A STORY? HAVE YOU GOT A CAMERA?** Then you could be one of the ISAF MIRROR journalist! Send your articles and photos about ISAF activities and, who knows, you could be on the next issue!

ISAF MIRROR is a Public Information Office product. Contents are edited and prepared by the PIO Staff using submissions sent by you. Opinions expressed are those of the writers and do not necessarily reflect official NATO, JFC HQ Brunssum or ISAF policy. Photo credits are given to the authors of the submission, unless otherwise stated. Submissions can be e-mailed to:

[pressoffice@isaf-hq.nato.int](mailto:pressoffice@isaf-hq.nato.int)

Articles should be in MS Word format (Arial), photos should be at least 7 X 4.5 cm and 300 dpi resolution.

ISAF MIRROR is published monthly and aims to be available by the first Friday of the month.

For more information please call the Editor on HQ ISAF ext. 1230.

The Editor reserves the right to adjust submissions.

If you want to download this magazine check the following address: [www.jfcbs.nato.int/ISAF](http://www.jfcbs.nato.int/ISAF)

## Staff



**Publisher:**  
LTC Riccardo Cristoni  
Chief Public Information Office



**Editor:**  
LT Riccardo Costa  
Chief Internal Information



**Branch Photographer:**  
WO 1 Francesco Civitelli  
Chief Photographer/Video



**Branch Photographer:**  
WO 2 Riccardo Maldera  
Photographer



# Staying the Course

*Lt. Riccardo Costa*  
*Chief Internal Information*  
*ISAF HQ*

As the protests and demonstrations provoked by the controversial Danish cartoons of Prophet Mohammed reverberated around the world, ISAF and Coalition Forces in Afghanistan braced themselves for an upsurge in violence.

With the Government of Afghanistan a newly formed democracy and security, any opportunity for fundamentalists to jump on the bandwagon and create disturbances and violent rebellions was certainly going to be exploited. ISAF forces' strength, restraint and resolve would be tested.

The violence, when it came, was significant. On 7 Feb, a demonstration involving around 300 people took place outside ISAF's Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) compound in Meymaneh, Northern Afghanistan. The demonstrators set alight an adjacent government building and several ISAF vehicles, and six Norwegian troops were injured. Other incidents occurred in Pol-e-Khumri, Herat, and Kabul. The spike in activity spanned a tense and difficult ten-day period. ISAF troops maintained a calm and professional approach throughout, exercising maximum restraint to calm the situation, and using the minimum self-defence requirements.

As the uprising against the cartoons subsided, those that want to interfere with the democratic process in Afghanistan came back on the scene. An IED attack on an ISAF convoy in Kunduz demonstrated the desperate measures the terrorists are now resorting to. Detonating a bomb in a busy market town, they killed two afghan people and seriously injured another ten, including children. Such needless acts of violence serve only to strengthen everyone's determination to push forward on all fronts to assist the Government of Afghanistan and the Afghan security forces in creating a stable and safe country.

The visits of SACEUR on 26-28 February and President Bush on 1 March, underlined the total commitment of NATO through the 36 nations of ISAF, the United States and the whole international community to the importance of rebuilding the future of Afghanistan.

Speaking at a press conference with President Karzai in Kabul on 1 March, Mr. Bush incorporated the feeling of the entire international community: *"People all over the world are watching Afghanistan. We are impressed by the progress that your country is making. We can see democracy taking hold - a well trained military dedicated to the sovereignty of your country, an entrepreneurial spirit growing, girls being educated, a free press developing, and people going back to work rebuilding, developing and establishing good governance and institutions. You are inspiring others, and that inspiration will cause others to demand their freedom - and as the world becomes free, the world becomes more peaceful."*

On the same day, a peaceful solution was found to the riots in the Pol-e-Charki prison in Kabul, with the UN and ISAF providing a moderating voice with the negotiations.

Violence does not indicate a failing policy, but is an inevitable part of the process of the road to democracy. The preparations for Phase III expansion are well underway, and at this important moment for NATO, everyone is confident that perseverance and resolve will win.



# CHANGE OF COMMAND FOR KABUL MULTINATIONAL BRIGADE

## South Eastern Europe Brigade takes over HQ responsibilities for KMNB

*Ltc. Isik Saygat  
KMNB Chief P.I.O.*

The Kabul Multi National Brigade (KMNB) is under new command. A change of command ceremony took place at Camp Warehouse in February as Bulgarian Brigadier General Neyko Nenov, Commanding Officer of the South Eastern Europe Brigade (SEEBRIG), took over from Brigadier General Claudio Graziano, Commanding Officer of the Italian Alpine Taurinense Brigade that has had responsibility for running the HQ core staff of the Kabul Multi National Brigade for the past seven months.

SEEBRIG is a multi-national organization of 450 troops from seven European countries, Albania, Bulgaria, Greece, Italy, The Former Yugoslavian Republic of Macedonia, Romania and Turkey. 233 of the troops are from Romania. The Brigade was formed in 1999 between seven different NATO and PfP countries working together under NATO standards and procedures to foster good relations between the countries and ensure peace and security in South Eastern Europe. To date the SEEBRIG has conducted more than 25 NATO/NATO PfP exercises and it is well trained, equipped and experienced to take over the responsibilities of the Kabul Multi National Brigade in Afghanistan. Speaking at the Hand Over Ceremony,

ISAF Commander General Del Vecchio spoke of the very significant contribution made by the Italian Taurinense Brigade during their tour of duty and paid tribute to those who paid the ultimate sacrifice in the accomplishment of the ISAF mission. *"They came to Afghanistan to help this great country to achieve security and stability. They will not be forgotten."*

The Italian Brigade carried out over ten thousand patrols, working tirelessly day and night to reinforce security in Kabul and the surrounding areas. Over half of these patrols were carried out jointly with Afghan Security Forces. They carried out over fifty direct action operations, targeting weapon caches and destroying many tons of ammunition and different types of explosives. They also conducted a wide range of civil, military tasks that had a significant impact on the lives of local people.

General Graziano thanked his troops saying, *"The results we have achieved were worth the lack of sleep, patrolling in the burning heat or freezing cold, and other hardships that we had to endure on a daily basis. We became a real Brigade, a team sharing the same dust, the same sand, the same snow."*

The ceremony was attended by many civilian and military national and international representatives, underlining the commitment and



support of the Afghan people and international community in to do all within their means to influence and ensure security and law and order not only in Kabul and its surrounding environs, but throughout the whole of Afghanistan.

The Kabul Multi National Brigade has been operating in Kabul since the ISAF Mission was established in the country in 2002 . The 3000 strong Brigade is based on three Battle Groups, one led by France, one from Germany and one from Italy. The SEEBRIG takes over at a time of increasing challenges with the nature of insurgent attacks changing more towards IEDs and suicide bombers. The Brigade is well prepared for the tasks it faces and has conducted an intensive mission rehearsal training in Grafenwhor, Germany training with the NATO Joint Forces Training Centre, and achieving full operational capability in Exercise Seven Stars conducted in Constanta, Romania in 2004 .

The Commanding Officer of SEEBRIG, Brigadier General Neyko Nenov, said *“It is a privilege for SEEBRIG to take over this very*

*important role in Afghanistan. SEEBRIG will not only be fulfilling a vital task in Afghanistan, but it represents the much wider process of dialogue and co-operation with the European and Euro-Atlantic structures of NATO working together to ensure peace and security anywhere in the world. The Brigade was created to promote regional stability and security and to foster political and military trust as well as to develop military co-operation. It is a great accomplishment for this region, so troubled historically and divided for so long, to be now be included in this much wider European and global effort”.*



COMISAF Lt. Gen. Del Vecchio with Brig. Gen. Nenov, incoming KMNb Commander, and Brig. Gen. Graziano, outgoing Commander, during the ceremony.



## ISAF AND ANA CONDUCT JOINT EXERCISE IN WESTERN AFGHANISTAN

*Cpt. Massimo Cionfrini  
PRT Herat P.I.O.*

Training the Afghan National Army (ANA) is one of the five pillars of the government's Security Sector Reform package and is an important part of the work of ISAF. ISAF soldiers based in Herat, in Western Afghanistan, carried out an intensive two day combined training exercise with Afghan National Army soldiers in Shindand, in the southern area of Herat's province, at the border of Farah province, in January.

The exercise, which covered a wide area of varying terrain, was designed to give the ANA soldiers experience in patrolling operations, particularly the standardization of procedures, signals and manoeuvres, so that they can follow standard practices of security and stability operations. The ANA soldiers were trained by Spanish troops of the Western Afghanistan Quick Reaction Force (QRF) under the coordination of the Regional Area Coordinator West, based in Herat.

Over 26,000 troops have now completed basic training with the Afghan National Army at the Kabul Military Training Centre, and the exercise in Western Afghanistan was an opportunity for some of the qualified recruits to put their training into practice so that they can help ensure national security, law enforcement and defence for their country.

The Afghan and ISAF soldiers established a close bond of friendship and camaraderie as they worked and trained together. Lieutenant Jesus Sanz Lavin, Commander of the ISAF soldiers said, "*The ANA and ISAF soldiers really were 'joint' and they presented a united front in meeting and talking to the local people and villagers and in providing medical assistance to those who needed routine treatment.*

*The exercise was very successful in all respects. It also gave the soldiers the opportunity to see how poorly resourced Health and Education are in the region and how few teachers there are for the primary schools."*



On completion of the exercise, the Spaniards returned to the Forward Support Base (FSB), at the airport of Herat, and the ANA soldiers returned to Camp Victory, house of the 207<sup>th</sup> ANA Corps where they will continue their training with the United States' Embedded Training Team (ETT).

ISAF maintains a strong presence in the western region of Afghanistan with four Provincial Reconstruction Teams at Herat, Qual-e-Now, Chaghcharan and Farah. The four PRTs come under the Regional Area Coordinator West based in Herat.

Last month the Western QRF conducted several operations and patrols all around the western region, in the four provinces of Herat, Ghor, Badghis and Farah and re-inforced the PRT at Farah when it came under attack from small arms fire outside the compound on 20 February.



## 1<sup>st</sup> Airborne Hussars' Regiment take up the French baton in KMNB

**Capt. Denis Biojout**  
**FR P.I.O.**

Colonel Guillaume de Marisy, Commanding Officer of the 1st Airborne Hussars' Regiment, took over from Colonel Thierry Ducret, Commanding Officer of the "Regiment de Marche du Tchad", as Battalion Commander of the French Battalion of the Kabul Multi National Brigade, and French military representative in Afghanistan, at a hand over ceremony at Kabul International Airport on 7 Feb.

The ceremony was attended by Mr Koetschet, French Ambassador in Afghanistan, Lieutenant General Abdul Hamid Mohebullah, assistant for strategy and policy, Ministry of Defence, Major General Robert E. Durbin, Office for Security and Cooperation in Afghanistan (OSC-A), Brigadier General Neyko Nenov, Commanding Officer of the Kabul Multi National Brigade and representing COMISAF, General Del Vecchio, as well as numerous civilian and military, French and foreign dignitaries.

During the ceremony medals were awarded to Colonel Abdul Rahim, commanding the Kabul Military Training Center (KMTC) and Colonel Michele RISI, chief of headquarters of the KMNB.

Colonel Guillaume de Marisy, who took command of the incoming Pamir XIII elements, will also be in charge of the Epidote Detachment responsible for carrying out the training and military instruction of the Afghan officers. Pamir XIII will be in theatre for at least four months, and will prepare France's taking over Kabul Regional Command by summer 2006.

As in previous rotations, Pamir XIII will be responsible for carrying out ISAF security patrols in the North Eastern part of Kabul and in the plain of Shamali, North of the capital. The majority of the French detachment is composed of units from the 11th Airborne Brigade. The French Battle Group is composed of one squadron of recognition and investigation and one HQ coy from the 1st Airborne Hussars' Regiment from Tarbes. Pamir XII which arrived in Afghanistan in October 2005 was essentially composed of units of the 2nd Armoured Brigade of Orléans, in particular *the Régiment de*

*marche du Tchad* from Noyon – a company of which is currently participating in Operation LICORNE on the Ivory Coast.

On October 19th, at the very beginning of their tenure, three soldiers of the French Battalion were wounded by an Improvised Explosive Device, (IED), as they were patrolling in the plain of Shamali.

In total, Pamir XII led over twenty operations and carried out more than 1200 vehicle patrols and over 350 foot patrols. These operations recovered 8 military equipment caches and collected almost 50 tons of ammunitions and weapons, essentially rockets and shells that could have been used to prepare hand-made bombs.

Since October 2005, the Epidote Detachment, part of the Coalition, trained almost 600 Afghan officers, in the sectors of administration, intelligence and engineering, particularly mine clearance.

Speaking at the hand over ceremony Colonel Thierry Ducret praised the outstanding work done by the French troops in maintaining security in the North of Kabul and for their highly professional training of Afghan officers.



Colonel Guillaume de Marisy took over from Colonel Thierry Ducret.



## **Mazar-e-Sharif collects more than 4000 weapons**

**Yahya Najafizadah**  
**LN – MeS Media Ops**

The Disarmament of Illegal Armed Groups (DIAG) initiative has been particularly successful in Mazar-e-Sharif. The DIAG is a programme designed to disarm and demobilize armed militias operating outside the former Afghanistan Military Forces. Unlike the DDR programme, which was voluntary, DIAG is a mandatory process supported by Presidential Decree and national legislation on arms control. DIAG process officials in Mazar-e-Sharif, report that the Afghan central government has collected more than 4000 different kinds of weapons and artilleries in the province in recent months.

The Representative of the Afghan Defence Ministry at DIAG, General Manan said: *"Mazar-e-Sharif is the first city after Kunduz where we have collected significant caches of weapons."* General Manan added: *"what was particularly encouraging was that most of the local commanders participated in this process voluntarily."*

Mohammad Basir Arifi, DIAG chief in Mazar-e-Sharif said: *"we collected the weapons in Mazar-e-Sharif and its Districts."* He added: *"If some commanders are not willing to hand in their weapons to DIAG, the Afghan government has the ability to collect the weapons by force from these illegal commanders."*

The improved security situation with the presence of five PRTs, together with the DIAG process, has made a big difference to the quality of life in the northern cities

of Afghanistan. Sayed Sharif, a laborer for 40 years in the province said to Sada-e-Azadi that he could see a big change in the country. *"Especially in our town, Mazar-e-Sharif. Four years ago there were warlords rule here and everybody carried illegal weapons. But now we can see the rule of law."*

This Balkh citizen continued: *"We hope our government will collect other illegal weapons which some commanders still have as soon as possible."*

Ahmadshah Zaidi, a 50 year old teacher, also said: *"There is no warlord in our town now and all the people have the same rights according to the law, but the only problem is that there are still some illegal weapons in districts such as Char Bolak, Chimtal, Balkh and other rural areas."*

So far since the DIAG programme was introduced 17,655 weapons as well as 25,760 pieces of boxed and 72,253 pieces of unboxed ammunition countrywide has been handed over to the Government. While the DIAG programme is clearly achieving the aim, Zaidi said that there are still known armed militias, mujahedin and armed groups in the outlying rural districts around Mazar-e-Sharif and he urged ISAF and the Afghan Government to seek out and disarm these commanders as soon as possible.

## ISAF BUILDS TWO NEW SCHOOLS IN QARA BAGH DISTRICT

**Cap. Livio Cavallaro**  
**RAC West P.I.O.**

ISAF's Italian led Provincial Reconstruction Team at Herat, working in support of the Education Department in Herat Province, has completed work on an ambitious construction project to build and equip two schools in the Quara Bagh District of the province.

The project, the first of its kind in Herat, took six months to complete and was carried out almost entirely by the Italian PRT from planning through to final construction. The two schools cost over 200,000 dollars to build, a very significant expenditure for the PRT, and will enable 4000 children from Qara Bagh to attend full time education.

Speaking at the opening ceremony, organised by the Afghan Education Department, Italian Army Colonel Dario Ranieri, Commanding Officer of the PRT in Herat, said, *"We are proud to have played such a key part in the construction of these two new schools, and in the wider reconstruction programme to rebuild*



*the Afghan education system. Before the schools were built children in Qara Bagh were taught in tents."*

The opening ceremony was attended by the Governor of Gurlan District, the Governor of Herat, the Chiefs of Education, Agriculture, Water Supply and Irrigation; the Chief of Police, and the ISAF Regional Coordinator West, Brigadier General Danilo Errico. The Governor of Herat Province praised the Italian PRT for its commitment and tireless efforts in support of the both the city of Herat and the rural areas in the province. After the ceremony, Italian military personnel, and personnel from the Civil and Military Cooperation team distributed 1700 backpacks to the children. The Afghan children were delighted, and expressed their enthusiasm and appreciation for the new schools by sitting behind their new desks and repeatedly thanking the Italian soldiers.





# CJ8 Controlling the Purse Strings

*Col. Rosario Romano  
Chief CJ8 / Financial Controller*

The ISAF mission in Afghanistan is NATO's primary military operation and as such it commands a significant budget, in excess of 60 M Euro. This budget is approved by the North Atlantic Council (NAC) and is managed through Joint Force Command Brunssum, with ISAF HQ CJ8 Branch responsible for managing over 30 M Euro of this budget for 2006. This includes payment for everything, from fuel to run ISAF vehicles and aircraft to toilet paper, and everything in between!

The ISAF VIII CJ8 Branch is composed of 4 separate yet integral parts: our Administration Unit coordinates all the day to day running that keeps the Branch functioning; Budgeting and Disbursing maintains the books and ensure that suppliers are always paid on time, Fiscal approves all payments and ensure that our expenditures are in accordance with authorized funding levels and last but certainly not least is the Purchasing and Contracting cell that is two Sections with 5 personnel working at ISAF HQ and a 2 person detachment at Kabul International Airport (KAIA) responsible for all the purchases and contracts that make ISAF HQ and KAIA run.

The remainder of the budget is spent, on behalf of ISAF, by other NATO organizations, such as NATO Consultation, Command and Control Agency (NC3A) and NATO Maintenance and Supply Agency (NAMSA) based on the priorities received from theatre.

The NATO budget pays for the running

of ISAF HQ, KAIA, and all expenditures associated with the Theatre Psyops Support Element (TPSE), however there are a series of expenditures that are a national responsibility and thus are paid by each Nation for their soldiers that are taking part in this mission. These expenditures include military salaries, food, laundry and accommodation. ISAF must follow strict NATO Rules and Regulations before being able to approve the procurement of any goods or services as eligible for common funding.

In addition NATO has provided, to date, nearly 130M Euro in infrastructure funding under the NATO Security Investment Programme (NSIP) umbrella within the Area of Operations (AOO) since the start of the mission in 2003.

The Disbursing Section is tucked away in the back corner of the camp, however those who require funds certainly have been able to find them. ISAF operates in three currencies: Euro, United States Dollars, and Afghanistan Afghani. Their main task is to pay ISAF invoices but they also serve as our "bank account" and can finalize NATO claims and provide advances for those who legitimately require an advance of funds. The proper accounting for expenditures falls to the Fiscal Section who has the responsibility of determining where, within the NATO funding available, they can charge each expenditure; this can be difficult as NATO has over 400 different financial codes available to use.

Fiscal is also tasked with tracking the Nation Borne Costs (NBC) and ensuring that common funding are not being used for non-NATO purposes. In addition the Fiscal Section is responsible for the accuracy of the International Civilian Consultants (ICC) and Local Civilian Hires (LCH) payrolls and is involved in settling all Temporary Duty (TDY) claims for Military and Civilians.

Purchasing and Contracting (P&C) is our “glamour” office as they get all the credit, and of course all the blame, when contracts are not completed on time or when purchases do not arrive. They have managed over 3000 purchase orders in 2005 and maintained over 58 contracts and 39 NSIP projects in an attempt to ensure ISAF receive what they ordered for the best price and in the required time. This is sometimes very difficult based on the fact that Afghanistan does not always have the goods required available and in those instances we utilize the services of the

Purchasing and Contracting cell in the Joint Forces Command Brunssum.

Due to the importance of KAIA to the ISAF mission and the workload, P&C has a deployed 2-person detachment to respond to all KAIA contracting needs, ranging from de-icing products for the runway and the airplanes, filters for generators or trucks to simple things like bulbs and soap.

In conclusion the ISAF VIII CJ8 Branch is completely dedicated to serving the ISAF mission, whether it be in ensuring that the budgets for future ISAF missions are appropriate, spending the current funds allocated in the most efficient manner, or ensuring that ISAF (both HQ and KAIA) enter into contracts that are the most advantages to ISAF in both price and quality. In doing so we must also remember that we are spending money coming from 26 Nations, which have already committed part of their Military Budget just to participate in the ISAF operation.



*ISAF HQ CJ8 Staff*

# **ISAF ready to expand to the South**





## ISAF ready to expand to the South with a very capable and determined Force

**Cdr. Sue Eagles**  
**Chief Media Ops – ISAF HQ**

Speaking during a recent visit to Afghanistan, General Jones, NATO's Supreme Allied Commander Europe, said that ISAF is ready to expand to the south with a very capable and determined Force. *"The Taliban are in for a severe shock"*, said General Jones. *"36 nations coming together is a very powerful statement. The growing number of IED attacks in recent months is a clear demonstration that the insurgents are increasingly desperate. They realize that Afghanistan's growing democracy has reduced their ability to terrorize and dominate the population. NATO has the political will, the capability and the military muscle to take this on"*.

ISAF's role in the south will continue to be one of support to the Government of Afghanistan, the Afghan Nation Army, the Afghan Police and the Afghan security forces in enforcing security and stability. ISAF's presence in the south will help extend the authority of the Government across the breadth of security sector reform – the establishment of law and order, the disbandment of illegally armed groups, counter narcotics, development and training - creating the climate and conditions for reconstruction and growth in all areas of the community.

General Jones stressed that ISAF would not be taking on the role of counter terrorism. The Coalition working under a more aggressive mandate as part of Operation Enduring Freedom will

continue to undertake counter terrorism/counter insurgency operations. *"I want to make it quite clear that ISAF and the Coalition have distinctively different missions, they are two separate missions, but they will be working together towards the same end state – to restore security and stability and provide a safe environment for the people of Afghanistan"*.

During his visit to the country, SACEUR discussed the final details of the Phase III expansion into southern Afghanistan planned for this summer. He had talks with President Karzai, and particularly reassured the president and his ministers that NATO will ensure that nations participating in the ISAF expansion will have effective and robust rules of engagement to support the mission. 6000 additional ISAF forces will be deployed to southern Afghanistan by June 2006 bringing the total number of ISAF forces in the country to 15,000. The Provincial Reconstruction Teams in southern Afghanistan, currently part of Operation Enduring Freedom, will become ISAF led and the US forces will concentrate and consolidate their efforts in the more troubled Eastern part of the country along the border with Pakistan.

*"Even though there will be a gradual draw down of US forces in the south, the arrival of additional ISAF forces will mean the Afghan people will have more security, not less"* said General Jones. The first contingent of British Forces arrived in February. Canada, Great

Britain, The Netherlands and Australia have all committed to providing forces for the ISAF expansion.

Mr. Cetin, ISAF's Senior Civilian Representative in Afghanistan, representing NATO Secretary General, Jaap de Hoop Scheffer, said *"the key to the success of the ISAF mission is providing professional training to Afghanistan's own security forces and to helping the Government of Afghanistan extend the rule of law by appointing strong, effective governors in the provinces. It will take time, but I am very optimistic. Afghanistan is a proud*

*country and the Afghan people are very capable. NATO is fully committed to helping this country and will stay the course until the job is done. It is my belief that it will be sooner, rather than later"*.

A party of businessmen accompanied SACEUR on his visit to hear about development projects and reconstruction plans across the country. They also discussed viable economic alternatives to poppy cultivation and future funding and investment opportunities.



*SACEUR meets President Karzai during his visit*



**Yahya Najafizadah  
LN – MeS Media Ops**

**Women’s sports club opened in Mazar-e-Sharif**

A new sports club for women, equipped by the International Red Cross, has opened in Mazar-e-Sharif. It’s the first sport club in Mazar-e-Sharif, specifically for women, and is one of only three such clubs for women throughout the whole of Afghanistan.

Wida Besharat (30), the club trainer said, *“It is a very positive step towards women’s rights and equal participation in society. We have over 20 members and it is very liberating for the girls to be able to train and play sports together without any fear. A range of sports are available including Tae-kwon-do and Gymnastics. We are very grateful to the Red Cross for providing the fitness equipment.”*

Rahela, a 21, year old, trainee with the club said, *“I became interested in sports many years ago, but we weren’t allowed to do sports so it’s really a big*

*success and opportunity for the women to come and exercise here.”*

Mohammad Ebrahim Osmany, Chief of the Olympic Department in Mazar-e-Sharif expressed his pleasure and support for the opening of the women’s club and for the great advances in sports development generally, in Mazar-e-Sharif.



# A Brighter Future for Afghan Children

**Yahya Najafizadah**  
**LN - MeS Media Ops**

In addition to the 26 NATO countries supporting the ISAF mission in Afghanistan, a further ten non-NATO countries are also playing a key role, among them Japan. The Japanese organization, Japan International Cooperation Agency, working together with the Afghan NGO, HARIROD, has renovated and equipped seven new schools in Mazar-e-Sharif. The schools, which cost over 5 million US dollars, were officially opened in a grand opening ceremony.

Sahar Banoo, a happy 19, year old, student, said: *“Four years ago, girls couldn’t go to schools to study, but now it’s the best condition for us that the Government of Afghanistan supports us to study.”*

Farhad Azimi, Chief of the Provincial Council, thanked the Japanese International Cooperation Agency and said: *“It’s a real turning-point, and a great highlight for us, to see such positive reconstruction in Afghanistan after many years of war.”*

He added: *“We are very grateful to the people of Japan who have not only assisted with restoring education in our country, but they have also helped with development, including building two important new roads in Mazar-e-Sharif.”*

The opening ceremony for the schools was attended by Junchi Sumi, the Japan ambassador advisor in Afghanistan, Atta Noor, the Governor of Balkh, Colonel Mike McMahan, Commander of the PRT at Mazar-e-Sharif, and many other military, civilian and NGO representatives from the region.





**Capt. Inge van Megen  
PIO NLD NCC - HQ ISAF**

## **Dutch and Norwegian F-16s maintaining ISAF's security presence round the clock**

ISAF's detachment of F-16 aircraft, based at Kabul International Airport, provide a strong security presence and show of force in the country. The detachment of eight aircraft, regularly carry out reconnaissance and close air support missions, and are on notice 24 hours a day to provide air support for troops on the ground.

For the past six months, the detachment has been a combined Dutch-Belgian detachment with four aircraft provided by each nation. On Feb 10, the Belgian detachment returned to its airbase in Belgium and was replaced by a Norwegian detachment.

The new Dutch-Norwegian detachment, the Dutch Norwegian European Expeditionary Air Wing (NDL/NOR EEA F16 ISAF), will be under the command of Dutch Lieutenant Colonel, Jos Leenders. The Norwegian detachment commander, Lieutenant Colonel Jarle Nergard, said *"We are proud to be part of this combined detachment and look forward to working together in close cooperation and partnership for the next twelve months. No sooner had we arrived, than we took off for our first mission! The F16 is a highly capable aircraft and we expect to have a busy deployment."*

The presence of the Dutch and Norwegian jets underlines the commitment of The Netherlands and Norway to the ISAF mission, and particularly expansion into the south of the country in the summer. Other ISAF air assets based at Kabul include C-130 and C160 transport helicopters from the UK and Germany respectively, CH-47 Chinooks and AB-212s from Italy, and AS 532 and AS 332 helicopters from Spain.



*"We are proud  
to be part  
of this combined detachment"*





## Dr. Masooda Jalal visits ISAF Headquarters

*Cdr. Sue Eagles*  
*Chief Media Ops – ISAF HQ*

Dr. Masooda Jalal, the Minister for Women's Affairs, visited the ISAF Headquarters on 1 March, to give a presentation on women's issues and the work of the Ministry of Women's Affairs, and to meet and talk to many of the women working in the Headquarters.

In 2002, the Government of Afghanistan allotted 160 of the 1,450 seats in the *loya jirga* to female delegates and, despite high levels of illiteracy, thousands of women participated in the 2004 general elections, accounting for about 40 percent of the voters. In theory at least, the women of Afghanistan have the same rights as men, and equal participation in society, but as Dr. Jalal explained, the reality is quite different. Many of the problems that the women of Afghanistan face, are deep rooted. Their rights are silenced. Religious beliefs and customs still prevail. The average age of marriage is still 15, with many young girls sold into forced marriages. Birth control is still unacceptable and Afghan women usually have seven or eight

children in their lifetime, adding a million babies to the population every year.

The average life expectancy of Afghan women is 44. The levels of violence against women are also unacceptably high. Under the Taliban regime women were prohibited from working, and girls were prohibited from going to school. Forced to stay at home, and only allowed out in public under the total cover of the burqa, many women suffered rape, degradation, mental and physical trauma and depression. These sorts of problems take years to work through, but the Ministry of Women's Affairs is doing all it can to address them on every level.

*"Every day we can see real differences to women's lives,"* said Dr. Jalal. *"We have established an Afghan Women's Network with over 600 councils across the country."* By the end of the year they hope to have nearly 1000 councils in the major cities and across all the provinces. Initially the councils were primarily focused on providing shelter and aid, but as the Ministry begins to

establish formal policies on the areas to be addressed, increasingly the issues of literacy and education, health, family planning, training in employment skills and advocacy, including running a legal rights programme for women, and vocational, computer skills and degree course places at university, will become more readily available. *“We need women to take up managerial positions, we need to empower them and help them take up positions of leadership and power in the emerging government institutions and to have their voice heard”* said Dr. Jalal. *“Then improvements will begin to be felt very quickly.”* Many of the NGOs working in Afghanistan have specific programmes furthering the promotion and protection of women’s rights, and after the presentation Dr. Jalal joined representatives from several

NGOs and agencies, together with women from different nationalities serving with ISAF, for dinner. COM ISAF, General Mauro Del Vecchio thanked the Minister very much for her presentation, and for her dedication and energy in the face of many challenges. On 3 March, Dr. Jalal achieved an unprecedented and historical step forward for women’s rights when she and a group of women were invited by the Deputy Minister of Religious Affairs to go to Hazrat Ali mosque in Khair Khana. Traditionally women do not go to Friday prayers and no provision is made for women. The Mullah of the mosque fully supported the historical initiative, a very positive sign that cultural values are slowly but surely changing, and that women are claiming their rightful place in their communities and in the future of their country.



*Dr. Masooda Jalal meets COMISAF, General Del Vecchio*



## Check-Point Control - working together to ensure security

**Yahya Najafizadah**  
**LN – MeS Media Ops**

Police reform, namely the establishment and training of the Afghan National Police (ANP), is one of the five pillars of the Afghan Government's Security Sector Reform. In response to an increased number of incidents and reports about criminal activities around Mazar-e-Sharif, in northern Afghanistan, the Afghan National Police (ANP) and Afghan National Army (ANA) conducted a combined vehicle check point operation with ISAF and Coalition forces in the Chintal district of the province on January 17<sup>th</sup>.

The aim of the operation was threefold, firstly, to enforce the rule of central government, ANA and ANP in and around Mazar-e-Sharif, secondly to demonstrate to the NGO community and other reconstruction organizations that they can work safely in Afghanistan now, and finally – to improve the daily life of ordinary Afghans.

Besmella, an ANA soldier said: *“we are here to support the Afghan Government and help our people to live in a stable condition.”* He added: *“stopping and searching vehicles is one of the fundamental tasks for us in this operation. Check point control deters people from*

*criminal activity and like border control is a good way to stop the movement of drugs or illegal weapons”.*

Besides stopping terrorists and thieves, check-point control can also find cars that have been stolen and give them back to their owners. Abdurrahman and Sakhi, and other ANA soldiers, joined Besmella saying, *“We are ready to take on any mission that is given by the government. Before too long we hope to be able to bring law and order throughout all the cities of Afghanistan with the help of ISAF.*

Major Stuart Lane speaking at a press conference at the PRT in Mazar-e-Sharif said, *“Working together and sharing information in combined exercises like this will help the ANA and ANP enforce security and prevent criminal activities”.*

Major Lane asked the people of Mazar-e-Sharif to inform the PRT, ANA, and ANP if they know anything about criminal and terrorist activities. *“The best way to interdict terrorists is people themselves providing information. Being vigilant and observant, noticing anything unusual in your own community and reporting suspicious people and*

*events is often the best way to prevent and deter criminal activity”* he said.

He added: *“If the people work together with the ANA and ANP, it enables them to do their job much more effectively.”*

Combined exercises involving the ANA, ANP, Coalition Forces, and ISAF are becoming a regular feature of life in Afghanistan now. Earlier this month at Mazar-e-Sharif,

the ANA and ANP controlled the traffic while ISAF forces conducted a medical exercise. The more the forces work together, the more second nature procedures and communications become. Mazar-e-Sharif is one of seven Regional Training Centres for police training and ISAF is closely involved with everyone working and training there to make Afghanistan a safer and better place to live.



*Being vigilant and observant is often the best way to prevent and deter criminal activity*

