



FOREWORD

Dear readers,

finally our headquarters and its staff have deployed to Kabul and we have started our first operational tour as International Security Assistance Force VIII rotation. This is the result of a long preparation and training started many months ago and we are now in Kabul as part of a 36-nation multinational force led by NATO to support and assist the government of Afghanistan in the reconstruction of the local institutions.

This mission represents the first priority for NATO and there are many challenges ahead of us; among them the parliamentary elections, the first in the country for more than 30 years, represent a fundamental step in the democratic process of a country devastated by 30 years of war. We will be here and we will be part of an historic moment for the future of this country. In addition our headquarters will be engaged in the preparations for the expansion of the mission to the south, taking over responsibility from the forces of the coalition.

The headquarters will remain in Afghanistan till May 2006 when it will hand over the lead of ISAF to HQ ARRC. NRDC-IT staff and personnel will stay in Afghanistan for nine months and you will read more about us in the coming issues of this magazine.

Best regards

Riccardo Cristoni
Ltc. IT Army
Chief PI



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Front page:

LTC Del Vecchio receives the ISAF flag from the hands of LTC Back.

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Commander Foreword

Lt Gen Mauro Del Vecchio

As foreword for this magazine, on the eve of deploying to Afghanistan to assume the command of ISAF VIII; I thought I would share with you all some of my thoughts for our duties and challenges of the upcoming tour.

From the first days of August, This Headquarters will be fully responsible for supporting the provisional government of Afghanistan in the reconstruction of its country.

Our Corps will provide the majority of the Headquarters for that operation, almost 200 staff officers and NCOs, and a support and communications contingent for a total of 800 men, of which a sizable number is already deployed in theatre.

The Italian contribution to the mission will also incorporate the Taurinense Brigade, as the Kabul Multinational Brigade (KMNB) and civil and military initiative "Provincial Reconstruction Team" (PRT) deployed to HEART.

The Corps will relieve its Turkish counterpart and will operate under Joint Force Command Brunssum in the Netherlands.

We are full aware that it will not be an easy task that faces us, in a country characterised by a complex social structure, devastated by the war and destruction that have plagued it for over a quarter of a century.

To illustrate my point, I would share with you a few figures about the country: as a result of the conflict, 42% of the population is made up of children under 15 years old. The country is in dire economic condition, and the population suffers from lack of life's basics. Barely 35%

of the population possesses a basic level of literacy. Infant mortality is 15% and the life expectancy of the average Afghan citizen is less than 46 years.

You will see that there is no shortage of work for us, but I have faith that our mission will benefit from the contribution of our capable and highly



motivated personnel and will enjoy excellent support as a result of our intensive preparation in the last six months, both in Italy and abroad under NATO's guidance and with national support.

But our Corps will not be reliant only on its own preparation and expertise; we will be able to count on the efforts of all the contributing nations, within NATO and otherwise, which, notwithstanding the historical, cultural and religious leaning of the country, will help Afghanistan support the process of democracy and the improvement of the lot of a beleaguered people.

I can personally promise, and will demand of you all that HQ NRDC-IT will uphold its principal rule of engagement of our tour; to put ourselves at the service of another people.

In a recent engagement, a local dignitary exhorted that I ensure that we "be able to look to the long term....." Well, I believe, that the real objective of our mission in Afghanistan is just that. We will try to look to the long term for the good of the whole international community.

