

A new chapter in NATO-Afghanistan relations



NATO's engagement in Afghanistan has started a new chapter. As from 2015, NATO's support to Afghanistan has consisted of three inter-related components: a NATO-led Resolute Support mission to train, advise and assist the Afghan security forces; a contribution to the broad effort of financial sustainment of the Afghan security forces; and an enhanced NATO-Afghanistan Enduring Partnership, which is being developed jointly with the Government of Afghanistan.

Resolute Support Mission

Resolute Support is a NATO-led, non combat mission. It was launched on 1 January 2015, following the conclusion of the previous NATO-led ISAF mission, and the assumption of full security responsibility by the Afghan National Defence and Security Forces (ANDSF). It is designed to help the Afghan security forces and institutions develop the necessary capacity to continue defending the country and protecting the population in a sustainable manner. It carries out training, advice and assistance activities at the security ministries and national institutional levels and at the higher levels of the Army and Police. This new mission has several functions. These include, amongst others:

- Supporting planning, programming and budgeting;
- Assuring transparency, accountability and oversight;
- Supporting the adherence to the principles of rule of law and good governance;
- Supporting the establishment and sustainment of processes such as force generation, recruiting, training, managing and development of personnel.

Resolute Support currently has approximately 12,000 personnel from NATO Allies and partner nations. It operates with one hub (Kabul/Bagram) and four spokes (Mazar-e-Sharif in the north, Herat in the west, Kandahar in the south, and Laghman in the east).



At their meeting on 1 December 2015, NATO Foreign Ministers and Foreign Ministers of Resolute Support Nations agreed to the continuation of the Resolute Support Mission and the sustainment of its current force levels, including in the regions of Afghanistan, during 2016. The mission, including its detailed configuration, will continue to be kept under review to ensure its effectiveness.

Financial sustainment of the Afghan security forces

NATO Allies and partner nations continue to play a prominent part in supporting the financial sustainment of the Afghan National Defence and Security Forces. This effort is carried out through the NATO-Afghan National Army (ANA) Trust Fund. The ANA Trust Fund is one of three funding streams used by the International Community to channel its financial support to Afghanistan's security forces and institutions. The other two are the Law and Order Trust Fund for Afghanistan (LOTFA), administered by the United Nations Development Programme, and the United States Afghanistan Security Forces Fund (ASFF). LOTFA is used to pay the salaries of police and justice personnel and to build the capacity of the Ministry of the Interior. The ASFF is subject to a US-Afghan bilateral agreement and pays for equipping and running Afghanistan's security forces.

Initially established in 2007, and as agreed at the 2012 NATO Summit in Chicago, the ANA Trust Fund has been adapted to make it more flexible, transparent, accountable and cost effective, and to include measures against corruption.

These notably stipulate that:

- The adapted ANA Trust Fund will continue to focus its activities on the Afghan National Army primarily, while retaining the existing flexibility to provide support to other elements of the ANDSF as necessary.
- Funds will be allocated against the Afghan security forces requirements plan, which the Afghan authorities will develop.
- The United States will continue to manage the Fund until 2017; any extension of this mandate after 2017 will be subject to future decisions.
- The use of the adapted ANA Trust Fund will be regulated by a yearly Implementation Plan which will include estimated costs, timelines and performance objectives.
- The management and implementation of the adapted Afghanistan National Army (ANA) Trust Fund will be subject to annual audit.
- An Afghanistan National Army (ANA) Trust Fund Board has been constituted to monitor the ANA Trust Fund and to review its cost effectiveness, financial integrity and accountability. The Board is composed of national representatives of donor nations and the Trust Fund manager. The ANA Trust Fund Board had its first inaugural meeting in Brussels on 1 September 2014. It met again in Brussels on 26 June 2015. Meetings in Afghanistan are scheduled on a quarterly basis in Kabul.





Contributions to the NATO – Afghan National Army Trust Fund to date amount to 1.27 billion USD. In addition, NATO Allies and partner nations have confirmed funding pledges until the end of 2017 of around 450 million USD per year. The lead responsibility for the financial sustainment of the Afghan National Security Forces rests with the Afghan government. At the Chicago Summit, the Afghan authorities agreed to provide at least 500 million Euros per year at the start, with their contribution increasing steadily over time. The Afghan authorities have committed to undertake full financial responsibility for the annual sustainment of their security forces no later than 2024.

At their meeting on 1 December 2015, NATO Foreign Ministers and Foreign Ministers of Resolute Support Nations agreed to continue working with the wider international community in order to secure the necessary pledges, including to the end of 2020, for the financial sustainment of Afghanistan's security forces.

NATO-Afghanistan Enduring Partnership

The Declaration on an Enduring Partnership was signed at the NATO Lisbon Summit in 2010, by NATO and the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. The Enduring Partnership provides a framework for long term political consultations and practical cooperation between NATO and Afghanistan.

The Enduring Partnership includes a series of agreed programmes and cooperation activities made available to Afghanistan. Many of these programmes are capacity building efforts, including professional military education programmes like NATO's Building Integrity (BI) programme and the Defence Education Enhancement Programme. BI more specifically helps provide Afghanistan practical tools to strengthen integrity, transparency and accountability, and reduce the risk of corruption in defence and security sectors. Other areas of practical cooperation include supporting the process to normalise the aviation sector; civil emergency planning and disaster preparedness and continued public diplomacy efforts. Other areas for cooperation may be added in the future.

At the NATO Summit in Wales in 2014, Afghanistan, NATO and Resolute Support operational partners agreed to strengthen the Enduring Partnership, by enhancing practical cooperation, which includes building the capacity of Afghan security institutions, and by initiating a political dialogue and regular consultations on a range of topics of mutual interest. On 2 December 2014 President Ghani and Chief Executive Abdullah met with Foreign Ministers from NATO and Resolute Support operational partners and agreed with them to set up a senior level task force to take the Enduring Partnership forward.

At the meeting of NATO Foreign Ministers in Antalya (Turkey) on 13 May 2015, ministers approved guidelines and principles for the enhancement of the Enduring Partnership with Afghanistan. This should include a continued presence of civilian and military personnel after the current Resolute Support Mission will have been concluded. NATO civilian and military authorities have now started planning for this temporary civilian-led civil-military presence aimed at fostering the further development of the Afghan security institutions. This enhanced Enduring Partnership is intended as a bridge towards a more traditional partnership between NATO and Afghanistan. The Government of Afghanistan, through its National Security Adviser, Haneef Atmar, has been involved in the planning of the enhancement of the Enduring partnership. Mr Atmar briefed the North Atlantic Council on the situation in Afghanistan and ideas for the future of the Afghanistan-NATO partnership in a meeting in Brussels on 11 November.

This recognises the strategic importance of NATO's engagement in Afghanistan and further underscores the commitment to global partnerships outlined in the 2010 NATO Strategic Concept.

End of ISAF

The end of 2014 marked the completion of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) mission. ISAF was established in 2001, at the request of the Afghan authorities and as mandated by the United Nations Security Council. Its task was to help the Afghan authorities provide security and develop new national security forces, so that Afghanistan never again becomes a safe haven for terrorists. NATO assumed responsibility for the ISAF presence in 2003.

Today, Afghanistan is no longer a safe haven for international terrorism. Over 350,000 Afghan National Defence and Security Forces are exercising full security responsibility across Afghanistan as agreed with the Afghan authorities at the NATO Chicago Summit in 2012 and reaffirmed at the NATO Summit in Wales in 2014.

Afghanistan still faces many challenges, including security challenges. As part of the International Community NATO Allies and Partners remain committed to Afghanistan and its people as they pursue a secure and stable future.



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