

A new chapter in NATO-Afghanistan relations



NATO's engagement in Afghanistan is firm and is evolving. As of 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 and institutions; a contribution to the broad international effort of financial sustainment of the Afghan security forces; and the 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 focuses primarily on training, advise and assistance activities at the security-related ministries and at national institutional levels and at the higher levels of the army and police. The mission performs supporting functions in several areas. These include, amongst others: operational planning; budgetary development; force generation process; management and development of personnel; logistical sustainment; and civilian oversight to ensure that the Afghan security forces and institutions act in accordance with the rule of law and good governance.

Resolute Support currently has almost 13,000 personnel from NATO 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). Resolute Support works closely with different elements of the Afghan army, police, and air force.

The Commander of the mission has a degree of flexibility in the use of personnel and assets at his disposal. This will ensure that training, advise and assistance functions are delivered in the most effective way, as the ANDSF continue to improve their effectiveness and become more sustainable.

At their meeting on 1 December 2015 Foreign Ministers of Resolute Support Nations agreed to continue the Resolute Support Mission and sustain its current force levels, including in the regions of Afghanistan, during 2016. They also agreed to keep the mission, including its detailed configuration, under review to ensure its effectiveness. NATO Defence Ministers assessed the work of the Resolute Support Mission when they met on 10 February 2016. They agreed that training, advice and assistance for the Afghan security forces and institutions remain essential for the stability of Afghanistan.

At their meeting on 20 May 2016, NATO Foreign Ministers expressed their commitment to sustain the Resolute Support Mission beyond 2016. NATO Heads of State and Government are expected to make a final decision in this regard by the time they meet at the NATO Summit in Warsaw, on 8-9 July 2016.



Financial sustainment of the Afghan security forces

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 USD per year at the start, with their contribution increasing steadily over time.

At the same time, NATO and partner nations continue to play a prominent part in supporting the financial sustainment of the ANDSF. One of the principal ways this effort is carried out is through the NATO-Afghan National Army (ANA) Trust Fund, initially established in 2007. 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.

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 financial management 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 and more recently on 11 May 2016. Meetings in Afghanistan are scheduled on a quarterly basis in Kabul.

The total cumulative contributions to the NATO-Afghan National Army Trust Fund to date exceed 1.4 billion USD. NATO and partner nations have confirmed funding pledges until the end of 2017 of around 450 million USD per year to the ANA Trust Fund.

At their meeting on 1 December 2015, Foreign Ministers of Resolute Support Nations agreed to continue working with the wider international community in order to secure the necessary pledges through 2020, for the financial sustainment of Afghanistan's security forces. They reiterated this point at their recent meeting in Brussels on 20 May 2016. By the Warsaw Summit in July this year we should be able to announce firm commitments to continue funding for the Afghan security forces through 2020.

We also expect the Afghan authorities to continue abiding by their commitment to contribute to the financing of their 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 specifically provides Afghanistan with 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 normalisation of the aviation sector, civil emergency planning and disaster preparedness, and continued public diplomacy efforts.

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.

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 on the ground after the current Resolute Support Mission concludes.

At their last meeting on 20 May 2016, NATO Foreign Ministers reaffirmed their commitment to a long-term political partnership and practical cooperation with Afghanistan, including through strengthening the Enduring Partnership within and alongside the NATO-led Resolute Support mission. This enhanced Enduring Partnership is intended as a bridge towards a more traditional partnership between NATO and Afghanistan in the longer term.

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.

Afghanistan still faces many challenges, including security challenges. As part of the international community, NATO and our partners remain committed to Afghanistan and its people as they pursue a secure and stable future.

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