

Visit to Kabul

Background

- 6.1 Kabul is located in the eastern half of Afghanistan at 1800m above sea level, wedged between the Hindu Kush and situated in the narrow Kabul River Valley. Kabul has a population of approximately four million people. As the national capital of Afghanistan it is the economic and cultural hub of the nation and the home of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GIROA). The city also has the nation's key international airport, Kabul International Airport (KAIA). Kabul hosts key ISAF military HQs, UN HQ and international embassies, including the Australian Embassy.
- 6.2 The key ISAF HQ and units in which Australian personnel are embedded in Kabul are as follows:
- HQ ISAF, this is a Four Star General HQ located in Kabul City and is the senior NATO HQ in country which provides strategic guidance and interface between NATO, GIROA and the deployed forces.
 - HQ ISAF Joint Command (IJC), this is a Three Star General HQ located at KAIA and is NATO/ ISAF's senior tactical HQ coordinating the operations of ISAF throughout all the regional commands in Afghanistan.
 - HQ NATO Training Mission Afghanistan (NTM-A), this is a Three Star General HQ located in Kabul City and is responsible for the training and development of the Afghan security ministries and the training of the Afghan National Security Forces.
 - Counter Insurgency Academy.

- ANA School of Artillery.
- Consolidated Fielding Centre.
- HQ UN Assistance Mission Afghanistan (UNAMA), located in Kabul City and is tasked to assist Afghanistan to lay the foundations for sustainable peace and development.
- HQ JTF 633- Afghanistan (JTF 633-A), the Australian National Command element in Afghanistan.

Purpose and Conduct of Visit to Kabul

- 6.3 The purpose of the visit to Kabul was to visit the ADF units and embedded personnel based in vicinity of Kabul, to visit the Australian Embassy and to conduct a round table discussion with Afghan politicians at the Afghan Parliament House. These visits were intended to provide an opportunity to further develop an understanding of the issues affecting ADF operations and an understanding of the progress of development and governance in Afghanistan. Some of these briefings were of a classified nature and elements of these will not be discussed in this report.
- 6.4 The delegation was hosted by the Chief of Staff HQ JTF 633-A, LTCOL Marty Griffiths and the Australian Ambassador to Afghanistan, Mr Paul Foley. The conduct of the visit was as follows:
- The delegation flew by RAAF C130J aircraft from KAF to Kabul where it was met by LTCOL Marty Griffiths and Mr Paul Foley;
 - the delegation had afternoon tea with ADF personnel embedded at HQ IJC at KAIA;
 - received a detailed ISAF operational update brief from MAJGEN Michael Krause;
 - the delegation moved by ground convoy to the Afghan Parliament House to conduct its meeting with the Afghan Members of Parliament;
 - the delegation moved by ground convoy from the Afghan Parliament House to the Australian Embassy;
 - had dinner with the members of the Australian Embassy Staff and embed ADF personnel from HQ ISAF;
 - the delegation stayed overnight in Kabul;
 - the delegation moved by ground convoy from the Embassy to CAMP Alamo;

- visited the ANA School of Artillery and the Australian Army Artillery Training Team Kabul (ATT-K);
- moved by ground convoy from CAMP Alamo to KAIA; and
- departed KAIA by RAAF C-130J for AMAB via Kandahar.

Observations from the visit to HQ ISAF Joint Command

6.5 The key personnel hosting and briefing the delegation were as follows:

- Deputy Chief of Staff-Plans HQ IJC: Major General Michael Krause (Australian Army);
- Chief of Staff HQ JTF 633-A: Lieutenant Colonel Marty Griffiths;
- ADF personnel embedded at HQ IJC; and
- Members of HQ JTF 633-A.

Figure 6.1: Ms Gai Brodtmann MP meeting with ADF members at ISAF Joint Command



- 6.6 On arrival at HQ IJC, at KAIA, the delegation were hosted by MAJGEN Krause at afternoon tea to meet with ADF personnel based at KAIA. The delegation had an opportunity to meet with ADF personnel and members were impressed by their experiences and positive outlook on ISAF's operations in Afghanistan.
- 6.7 MAJGEN Krause provided an overview on ISAF operations. The key unclassified discussion points were as follows:

- Transition: There is an international expectation that the ANSF will take the lead throughout Afghanistan by 2014, however they will still require to have access to ISAF support for the key enablers such as:
 - ⇒ Close Air Support from fighter jets;
 - ⇒ Joint Fires coordination and control;
 - ⇒ UAVs; and
 - ⇒ Electronic Warfare.
- The enemy: The enemies of the Afghan People are:
 - ⇒ The insurgency: Not all attacks are made by the Taliban/Insurgents, some are criminal related.
 - ⇒ Poor leadership in the ANSF: ISAF/ Afghans have replaced 300 mid-level leaders within the ANSF in past 12 months, therefore there has been an improvement in security leadership.
 - ⇒ Criminal patronage networks: Linked to drugs and corruption. This is an Afghan issue needing an Afghan solution.
 - ⇒ Poor international practices: These alienate the people and include collateral damage and paying interpreters more money than key professionals such as doctors and teachers.
- Progress of operations and the ANSF:
 - ⇒ ISAF has taken 300% more weapons caches in the Christmas 2010 northern winter period than in any other previous period. This has had a marked effect on the insurgent capability. As a result the insurgency is now low on weapons and ammunition in some areas of Afghanistan.
 - ⇒ The ANSF is the real hope for the development of a secure society in Afghanistan. Both the ANA and ANP have improved markedly in past 12 months. There has been a large improvement in the ANP due to new leadership and improved pay.
- Key risks to the success of ISAF's efforts in Afghanistan:
 - ⇒ The development of ANSF capability will be a risk. The ANSF will require time to mature from the lowest unit through to higher command. This will require leadership, coaching and mentoring and will take years to professionalise the ANSF at all levels.
 - ⇒ Ineffective governance by the Afghan Government is a risk to the resources, time and effort of the international community and could negate all efforts by the ISAF.
 - ⇒ Porous borders with Pakistan allows for the infiltration and exfiltration of insurgents and their equipment, with ISAF unable to influence or halt the effect of the safe haven. The international

community needs to apply pressure on Pakistan to effectively control its borders.

⇒ The success or failure of the 2011 poppy season will have a direct influence on the funding of the Taliban and thus their success in insurgency action.

- 6.8 On the completion of the brief from MAJGEN Krause the delegation conducted a protected road convoy move from KAIA to the Afghan Parliament House.

Observations from the round table discussions with Afghan Members of Parliament

- 6.9 The key personnel at the round table were as follows:

- Deputy Speaker of Afghan Parliament: Khalid Pastoon;
- Chairwoman of the Defence and Territorial Affairs Standing Committee: Fawzia Koofi;
- Representing Uruzgan Province and Deputy Chair of the Defence and Territorial Affairs Standing Committee: Hasham Watanwal; and
- Australian Head of Mission: Mr Paul Foley.

- 6.10 On arrival at the Afghan Parliament House the delegation were met by the Afghan Delegation and moved to a committee meeting room for introductions and discussions.

- 6.11 Mr Paul Foley stated that this was the first formal meeting between an Afghan and Australian parliamentary delegation, which he hopes becomes a regular occurrence.

Figure 6.2: The Delegation meeting with the delegation of Afghan Members of Parliament in the Afghan House of Parliament, Kabul



6.12 The key points of discussion from the Afghan delegation were as follows:

- The group spoke of the importance of the military intervention to defeat terrorism, however they were concerned that the main focus is on security and that there is a lack of effort on developing civil capacity.
- Fawzai Koofi spoke of the importance of women's affairs in the development of the modern Afghan society.
- The group are concerned about the mixed messages regarding transition versus withdrawal of ISAF forces. Some nations are discussing their exit strategy as a conditional withdrawal linked with when local forces are capable of taking over security. Other nations have developed and discussed unconditional withdrawal plans based on a set date. This second plan provides no guarantee that security will be in place prior to their withdrawal.
- Fawzai Koofi is concerned that the 2014 withdrawal/exit strategy plan will have one of two effects on Afghanistan, which both will have a bad effect on the women of the nation:
 - ⇒ The re-Talibanisation of Afghanistan, which will result in the return of poor human rights for women; or
 - ⇒ Civil war between key power brokers.
- The Afghan people need the international community to be clear about what is meant by the military exit strategy. They must provide the Government and the people with some guarantees that international support will continue as required.
- The international narrative is focused on the transition of responsibility for security to ANSF leadership; however it is not clear how the ANSF

is going to be funded, as the Afghan Government will not have sufficient revenue to pay the ANSF post 2014.

- The Afghan parliamentarians acknowledged that up to 50% of aid money and national revenue is 'going into people's pockets' and they are concerned that the Government's Finance and Taxation Departments do not have the skills, processes or capabilities to build and maintain a budget.
- There is a need to train and develop the Afghan Financial Institutions to provide for the nation, rather than rely on aid.

6.13 The delegation discussed the following points:

- Emphasised Australia's support to Afghanistan, both in security and development and that Australia's military operations in Afghanistan had bipartisan support.
- Emphasised that Australia's planned military draw down date was expected to be 2014, however this is conditional on the standards of 4th ANA Bde in Uruzgan. The 2014 date will be military draw down only not a withdrawal of civil aid and support.
- Emphasised Australia's aid figures to Afghanistan, a total of \$165M with only \$30M earmarked for Uruzgan.
- Possible opportunity for Afghan MPs to visit Australia to view and discuss the Australian Parliamentary process in order to provide them a chance to see how our system worked.

6.14 After the completion of the round table discussion the two delegations moved to the Lower House and had a group photo session.

6.15 The delegation then conducted a protected road convoy to the Australian Embassy for dinner with embassy staff and ADF embedded staff from HQ ISAF. These embedded staff included two previous Defence Advisors to the Committee, Colonel Rupert Hoskin and Wing Commander David Ashworth.

6.16 AusAID raised legitimate concerns that the provision of agricultural advice seemed to be dominated exclusively by the Europeans. Considering Australia's significant expertise in agriculture, the delegation believes that AusAID should have the opportunity to contribute this Australian expertise.

Figure 6.3: The Delegation at the Australian Embassy with the Head of Mission, Mr Paul Foley (back row second from right) and two ex-defence advisors to the Committee, Wing Commander Ashworth (second from left) and COL Hoskin (back row first on right)



Observations from Visit to the Artillery Training Team-Kabul

- 6.17 On the morning of 18 May 2011 the delegation conducted a protected road convoy from their overnight accommodation to the Afghan Artillery School at CAMP Alamo, on the outskirts of Kabul, to visit the Australian Artillery Training Team Kabul (ATT-K).
- 6.18 Key Personnel at the Afghan Artillery School were:
- Commanding Officer ATT-K: Lieutenant Colonel Kane Mangin.
 - Regimental Sergeant Major ATT-K: Warrant Officer Class 1 (WO1) Shaun Graham.
 - Commanding Officer Afghan Army School of Artillery: Lieutenant Colonel Amin (ANA).
- 6.19 On arrival at CAMP Alamo LTCOL Mangin, LTCOL Amin and WO1 Graham met the delegation, took members on a tour of the classroom facilities and allowed the group to observe training. The delegation then conducted a round table discussion with LTCOL Mangin, LTCOL Amin and WO1 Graham followed by a meeting with Australian soldiers of ATT-K.

6.20 The key points observed and discussed were as follows:

- The ATT-K was established in mid 2010 by Lieutenant Colonel Richard Vagg, Royal Regiment of Australian Artillery, from scratch and is now considered a model ANA school.
- ATT-K is an Australian Artillery led coalition team with nine nations providing personnel and equipment. The Australian Army provides 20 personnel to the Team.
- The ATT-K mission is to facilitate the training, advice and mentoring of ANA Field Artillery soldiers and officers so that they become capable of sustaining a professional ANA Field Artillery independent of Coalition support.
- Key to training ANA to become Artillery soldiers and officers has been improving literacy. ATT-K has embedded literacy training throughout all of its courses and their model is now being exported by NATO Training Mission Afghanistan to all of the other ANA schools.
- Most Afghan soldiers arrive at basic artillery training without being able to read or write. By the end of their basic course they are able to read and write up to a grade 1 standard. Each subsequent course will increase this level of literacy.
- During the visit the delegation observed an ANA Gunner, aged in his fifties, write and read as part of his training. When this older man joined the ANA, some 10 weeks previously, he was unable to read or write.
- A key challenge for ATT-K is that the ANA do not respect or value their non-commissioned officers (NCOs), as is the practice in the Australian Army. This situation is mainly due to the previous Soviet influence on the ANA Officer Corps and the illiteracy of the NCOs.
- To address the issue of NCO respect, Lieutenant Colonel Mangin has requested that the ANA Commanding Officer and his Command Sergeant Major visit the Australian School of Artillery in Puckapunyal in order to see how important and respected NCOs are in the Australian Army and how a modern School of Artillery operates.

- 6.21 On the completion of the visit the delegation conducted a protected road convoy move from CAMP Alamo to KAIA, for return by RAAF C130J to AMAB via Kandahar. The road convoy moves throughout Kabul were of great benefit to the delegation as they provided a unique opportunity for the delegation to experience and observe the crowded city of Kabul and its environs.