



**SUPREME HEADQUARTERS ALLIED POWERS  
EUROPE**

**GRAND QUARTIER GÉNÉRAL DES PUISSANCES ALLIÉES  
EN EUROPE**

**B-7010 SHAPE, BELGIUM**



Our ref: 1305/SOC/SCT

Tel: +32-(0) [REDACTED] (Operator)

Tel: +32-(0) [REDACTED] + ext

NCN: [REDACTED] + ext

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Fax: +32-(0) [REDACTED] (Registry)

TO: NATO HEADQUARTERS, SITUATION CENTRE

SUBJECT: SHAPE Weekly Report on NATO-led Operations

**INTERNATIONAL SECURITY ASSISTANCE FORCE (ISAF) – AFGHANISTAN**

**Overview**

1. Security. The southern half of AFG is halfway through the poppy harvest and continuing ANSF and ISAF operations have maintained pressure on insurgents (INS). Most of the kinetic activity occurred in RC(E), although this is expected to change back to RC(SW) towards the end of May. INS continue to avoid direct contact with ISAF and to a lesser degree ANSF, preferring to target GIRoA.
2. On 07 May, the INS attempted to execute their first spring offensive-related complex attack in Kandahar City. At least 4 Suicide Vehicle Borne Improvised Explosive Devices (SVBIED) and 14 Person Borne IEDs (PBIED) were used as the INS tried to attack nine key GIRoA buildings<sup>1</sup>. Although the attack appeared more complex and better coordinated than any previous one, it still failed to outmanoeuvre the ANSF. ISAF intelligence reporting indicates INS commanders have expressed disappointment over the outcome of the attack considering the amount of planning effort involved and resources expended. The INS had 17 killed and 20 captured, resources and personnel that will be difficult to replicate within the next few weeks.
3. During the past winter, cache finds have been featured regularly in reporting from Theatre. However, since March, the number of cache discoveries has decreased significantly. Reporting indicates the INS have adjusted tactics—rather than storing materials in a few large caches they are beginning to store smaller quantities of materials in more dispersed locations to prevent significant loss and captures from a single ANSF or ISAF find. Although this might make the caches harder to find, a significant disadvantage to the INS is that it prevents caches from being readily available for large events, thereby requiring them to control more area for effective dispersion.

<sup>1</sup> The Provincial Governors Palace, NDS HQ, Old Corps HQ and Police District Sub Station 1, among others.

4. In RC(SW), Sangin remains one of the most volatile districts in Helmand Province, although due to the poppy harvest and associated tax collection, kinetic activity decreased during the past few weeks. ISAF assesses that the fighting season in Sangin will commence in earnest after the poppy harvest. Reporting indicates that INS continue to prepare for summer operations, to include an extensive intimidation campaign, executing attacks against off duty ANSF members and their families and use of out of area fighter reinforcements. Sangin District will likely continue to be one of the most contested areas for the insurgency this summer. However, ISAF assesses that GIRoA's improvements in Helmand Province are gaining support among local nationals, even as INS commanders continue to reinforce the area with fighters and increase kinetic activity during the summer.
5. In RC(S), Operation MOUNTAIN JAGUAR began during this reporting period. It aims to disrupt INS preparation for the summer offensive and achieved effects across the region. Notably, INS finance and logistic networks were significantly affected by two air assault operations in the troublesome Zharay and Maiwand Districts. The air assaults, executed by Task Force SPARTAN (10<sup>th</sup> MTN DIV), resulted in the seizure and destruction of 7 ½ tons of hashish, 150 kg of homemade explosives, 120 kg of opium and a large quantity of IED-making materials. Intelligence sources indicate that key INS leadership has taken notice of the operation and expressed concern about its effects.
6. Governance. On 30 Apr 11, municipal elections were held in Laskar Gah, the capital of Helmand in RC(SW). The ANSF took the lead, planning and executing a highly effective plan that saw the ANP running security and the Operational Coordination Centre - Province (OCC-P) delivering coherent command and control for the ANA and ANP. ISAF assisted by conducting an initial search of facilities and providing a quick reaction force. 1,900 Elders and notables from every mosque elected a 25 member municipal body (including two women) which will improve the resolution of disputes and help bridge the communication gap between the mayor and the people. Although ANSF and ISAF made headway by removing the INS from Laskar Gah, certain key malign local (non INS) actors<sup>2</sup> remain in place. The abuse of their position presents the most insidious threat to further improving governance.
7. Development. The Ministry of Communications and Information Technology (MCIT) is collecting the biggest portion of the revenues for the AFG government, approximately US\$ 129 million for 2010 and an estimated US\$ 150 million this year. Approximately 85% of AFG population currently has access to telecommunication services. The telecommunications network is planned to expand to the remaining 15% of the population, which include some of the country's less secure areas such as Zabul and Helmand provinces, by the end of 2011. To date, a total of US\$ 1.5 billion has been invested in the AFG telecommunications sector, which is the largest foreign direct investment in any sector.

## Current Issues

8. Insurgency Largely Unaffected by Osama bin Laden's (OBL) Death. A number of factors since 2001 have strained the relationship between Al Qaida and the Taliban, including conflicting strategic visions, isolation of organizational leadership, geographic separation, and Al Qaida's reduced capacity to provide financial and operational support

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<sup>2</sup> Examples: Senator Sher Mohammad Akhundzada, related to President Karzai through marriage. He is the single most powerful powerbroker in Helmand and is known to be involved in narcotics activities. Abdul Rahman Jan is a key powerbroker in Marjeh and former Chief of Police of Helmand, and is also involved in narcotics.

following counter terrorism strikes in PAK's tribal areas. These tensions as well as the Taliban's ability to draw upon alternate financial sources of support will ensure that OBL's death will have a limited impact on the Taliban's ability to sustain their campaign. Furthermore, ISAF sources estimate that only about 100 or so Al Qaida militants currently operate in AFG, mostly in the remote mountainous areas along the northeastern frontier with PAK. Areas such as Nangahar, Nuristan, and Kunar retain Al Qaida connections through the Haqqani Network (HQN), which remains a key enabler for Al Qaida to operate in AFG.

9. The Taliban's relationship with Al Qaida has not been a key factor influencing the senior leadership's opposition to a political settlement with the AFG government and their demand for the withdrawal of foreign troops. OBL's death offers an opportunity for the Taliban to highlight that they were not harboring OBL, in an attempt to detach themselves from international terrorism and increase their political and moral legitimacy.

10. Following the successful operation against OBL, an increase in operational security (OPSEC) in the short term might limit the operational communications of Al Qaida and Taliban. Due to the decentralized nature of the AFG insurgency, this potential disconnect with their leadership is unlikely to translate into a reduced operational tempo.

11. Private Security Companies (PSC). After signing the PSC bridging strategy, ISAF continues to support the AFG Government with the implementation of the plan. To accelerate the AFG Public Protection Force (APPF) growth and to minimize the chances of further disruptions to new and ongoing projects, ISAF is assisting the Ministry of Interior (MOI) in developing APPF training procedures and directives to relicense legal PSCs, register vehicles and weapons, issue visa and implement the bridging *tashkil*<sup>3</sup> procedures. The unresolved issue on APPF ownership within the AFG government remains a concern.

## OPERATION UNIFIED PROTECTOR (OUP)

### Overview

12. Security. The situation on the ground remains strategically unchanged over the past week. The arms embargo and no fly zone remain effective, and the air campaign continues to degrade the regime's capability to threaten the civilian population and population centers through the use of kinetic strikes against deliberate and dynamic targets, along with non-kinetic methods.

13. In the East. There are no significant strategic changes in the disposition of pro-Gadhafi and opposition forces along the coastal strip from Brega to Ajdabiyah. Regime and opposition forces continue to conduct tactical probes likely aimed at determining the disposition of each other's forces in this area.

14. Misurata. The Misurata port re-opened on 04 May after the sea mine threat from 29 Apr was minimised. Despite continued hit and run indirect attacks against Misurata by regime forces, 4 ships entered the port in the past 7 days bringing urgently needed supplies and enabling more evacuations. During 05 to 07 May, pro-Gadhafi helicopters conducted night operations at the port, and reportedly dropped landmines on port facilities, hitting the piers. Mines were also thought to have been fired from artillery, possible BM-21, over the city. Mines that fell in the water are not considered a threat to shipping. Similarly, on 06-07 May, a large fuel storage tank was set on fire at the Steel and Iron

<sup>3</sup> Afghan "tashkil" refers to table of equipment.