



The Netherlands in Afghanistan: A 3-D Approach Defense, Development and Diplomacy

The Netherlands is a committed partner in the fight against terrorism and in the defense of common values such as freedom, democracy and the rule of law.

THE NETHERLANDS MISSION

The Netherlands mission in the Uruzgan province is of a military-civilian nature, and uses an integrated, comprehensive approach which is widely known as “3D” (Defense, Development and Diplomacy). This approach involves military, economic and political efforts and is crucial to achieving lasting peace, security and development.

Under this approach, the Netherlands stress *reconstruction where possible, military action where necessary.*

The emphasis of the mission is two-fold:

- To support and promote reconstruction efforts by the Afghan government and NGOs;
- To train and monitor Afghan security forces (both the army and police).

This stabilization and support mission is aimed at transferring responsibility to the Afghans. A key component is to ensure that the Afghan security forces gain effective control of the main populated areas and connecting roads. Over the course of the next two years, the Afghan Army will gradually assume more military tasks.

NETHERLANDS TROOPS IN URUZGAN UNTIL 2010

Since August 1, 2006, the Netherlands has been the lead nation in the Southern province of Uruzgan with a contribution of between 1,650 and 2,000 troops.

On November 30, 2007, at the request of the Afghan government and NATO, the Netherlands government decided to extend its commitment and remain in Uruzgan supporting Afghan authorities militarily and in reconstruction and governance. The decision to extend the mission stemmed from concerns about human rights and poverty reduction. The extension will last until 2010, at which time troop withdrawal will begin in August and be completed in December.

NUMBER OF TROOPS

The international partners currently make the following contributions:

- Australia (770 in Uruzgan) has deployed a Mentoring Reconstruction Task Force (MRTF). The MRTF consists of an Operational Mentoring and Liaison Team (OMLT) to

help train the Afghan Army, a security element and an engineer element. Australia also supports with surgical capacity in the Tarin Kowt hospital.

- France (70 troops) contributes with an OMLT and integrated security element,
- Slovakia (110) provides base-protection, PRT-personnel and OMLT capacity;
- Hungary (20) for OMLT duties (from Mid-2009 when 3rd IN Kandak is available);
- Singapore (22) provides medical personnel.

COMMAND OF RC SOUTH

On November 1, 2008, the Netherlands for the second time assumed command of ISAF’s Regional Command (RC) South under Major General M.C. (Mart) de Kruif. This is a rotating command among the Netherlands, Canada, and the UK. Prior to this appointment, MG de Kruif was Commander of the 43 (NL) Mechanized Brigade.

MILITARY COMPONENT

Over 1,400 of the Netherlands troops are currently based in Uruzgan, with the rest in Kabul and Kandahar.

The Netherlands military presence in Uruzgan is divided between Tarin Kowt, Deh Rawod, and Chora and consists of:

- Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT),
- Battle Group,
- Intelligence element,
- Engineer element,
- Logistical support,.

Police trainers are also deployed in Uruzgan, under both ISAF and the EU police mission (EUPOL).

The Netherlands also contributes with (5) Apache combat helicopters, (3-5) transport helicopters, 1 C-130 transport airplane, and 4 F16 fighter planes to ISAF.

CIVILIAN COMPONENT

The Netherlands has a substantial civilian component in Tarin Kowt. By August 2008, 13 diplomats and development staff will be present. In March 2009 the organization of the Provincial Reconstruction Team merged with the civilian structure under the Civilian Representative. This is the first time a civilian has led a military reconstruction team. The PRT consists of Dutch military and civilian personnel, working closely together, mainly on small projects that



are very important to the population, such as small hydroelectric power stations.

The PRT's success is enabling more development organisations to remain in Uruzgan in the long term. The number of organisations working in Uruzgan has grown fivefold since 2006, from six to thirty.

As a result, more inhabitants now have access to health care, and 50,000 children attend school – four times as many as in 2002.

Decisions pertaining to Netherlands activity in Uruzgan – whether military, diplomatic or development - are made at the Task Force Uruzgan (TFU) level between the Commander of the TFU (COMTFU) and the Civilian Representative (CIVREP). This formal consultative body is charged with coordinating military and civilian activities, although the COMTFU retains the ultimate responsibility for security-related issues and the everyday activities of the TFU.

DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE

The Netherlands remains concerned that long term security and stability is only achieved through investing in development, human right and poverty reduction.

In Afghanistan, the Netherlands invests in health, education, infrastructure, rural development (including alternative livelihoods to poppy cultivation), gender balance, human rights and conflict transformation.

Since 2001, The Netherlands has disbursed more than €540 million in official development assistance to Afghanistan. Since August 2006, more than €95 million has been committed in Uruzgan alone. Netherlands funds are channeled to Uruzgan through national programs and Afghan and international NGO's.

The Netherlands is committed to actively assisting Afghanistan by providing long term development cooperation. The assistance to date includes:

- €287 million to the World Bank's Afghan Reconstruction Trust Fund (ARTF) – Netherlands is the 5th largest donor
- €4 million to Equip for 2 years
- €6.3 million to the Microfinance Investment Support Facility for Afghanistan (MISFA) for three years
- €25 million to Law and Order Trust Fund for Afghanistan (LOTFA). The Netherlands is one of the main donors and is considering making a similar contribution this year.

In December 2007, the Netherlands signed a € 34 million contract with a development agency to improve market access for farmers, to set up small enterprises and cooperatives, to support the provincial and district administrations, and to organize the construction of an important road between Chora and Tarin Kowt to benefit trade and development in Uruzgan.

On June 12, 2008, at the International Conference in Support of Afghanistan in Paris, The Netherlands pledged €775 million for the years 2009-2011, of which €210 million is allocated for social and economic reconstruction programs, and €565 million for military spending in Uruzgan. This brings the total Netherlands expenditure for security and reconstruction from 2006 to 2011 to more than €1.5 billion.

Development programs are reaching more and more people in Uruzgan. Following the military operations in the Baluchi Valley and neighbouring Dorafshan, more development projects have been set up in this part of Uruzgan. The provincial governor, Asadullah Hamdam, and his public health director opened a new health care centre in the Valley. Since travelling times are lengthy in Uruzgan, patients rely on these stations for primary health care. Some 150 medical aid stations are now active in the province as a whole.

In 2009 The Netherlands started to lead and coordinate an agricultural training programme, at the request of the Afghan government. There is a wealth of Dutch knowledge in this area, which can be used to help Afghanistan rebuild its economy. Agriculture is the most important pillar of the Afghan economy. Long years of war have seriously damaged the sector; tracts of land suitable for farming use are now lying unused. Dutch agricultural experts, some from the University of Wageningen, will assist to reform the Afghan agricultural sector. A new training centre in Kabul will train extra teachers, who can then pass on their knowledge at regional level. Supporting agricultural projects in Afghanistan has long been one of the main aims of Dutch development cooperation. The Netherlands is already investing in irrigation projects designed to produce fertile ground and saffron cultivation. Improving the agricultural sector creates jobs and increases the export of agricultural produce from Afghanistan. It also offers an alternative to illegal poppy cultivation.

Under the auspices of the United Nations and the government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, The Netherlands hosted a high-level conference on the future of Afghanistan in The Hague on 31 March 2009. Building on the achievements of earlier conferences held in Bonn, London and Paris, this conference reaffirmed the solid and long-term political commitment of the international community in assisting the Afghan government in building a better future for Afghanistan and its people. Stimulating Afghanistan's economic independence was one of the priorities that was highlighted at the conference. The attendees included delegates from countries that border Afghanistan and the wider region, ISAF countries and other contributing countries to reconstruction in Afghanistan.

