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BOFAXE



“A More Stable and Secure Afghanistan”

Follow-up of the 2010 London Conference

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Fokus

The 2010 London Conference for a more stable and secure Afghanistan aimed to move the international effort forward in three key areas:

- Security;
- Governance and Development; and
- Regional Support.

Resources:

<http://www.fco.gov.uk>
<http://afghanistan.hmg.gov.uk>
<http://unama.unmissions.org>
<http://www.president.gov.af>
<http://www.unodc.org>
<http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de>
<http://www.bmvg.de>
<http://bundestag.de>

Representatives from more than 70 countries and international organisations attended the London Conference on 28th January 2010. They came together “(...) to renew their mutual commitment towards helping Afghanistan emerge as a secure, prosperous, and democratic nation.” Their goal was to mobilise international resources – military and civilian – behind a clear political strategy. They met to deliver and coordinate support to enable Afghanistan’s President Karzai to meet the ambitions that he pointed out in his inauguration speech on 19th November 2009 – *inter alia* “(...) that by the next five years, the Afghan forces are capable of taking the lead in ensuring security and stability across the country.”

The international community agreed on several measures, in particular (1) to develop a plan for phased transition to Afghan security lead province by province to begin, provided conditions are met, by late 2010/early 2011; (2) targets for significant increases in the Afghan Army and Police Force supported by the international community; (3) confirmation of a significant increase in international forces to support the training of Afghan forces. Furthermore, some participating states, among Germany, assured additional voluntary contributions. Germany, subject to the Bundestag approval (still expected by the end of February 2010), provided such support in military, policing, reintegration, and development. This means *inter alia* an increase in troop numbers by 500 to almost 5,000 (with 350 more troops in reserve for possible deployment for i.e. securing of elections or for unforeseen events) as well as an increase from 123 police trainers to 200 by the middle of 2010 and EUPOL from 45 to 60 officers and experts.

The international community therewith agreed on a “comprehensive approach” which includes more civilian aid and intensified work to develop the Afghan security organs. The “road to more Afghan ownership” thereby serves as the most important step to move forward with the further development of Afghanistan. Still before the end of 2010 responsibility for security in particular parts shall be transferred to the Afghans. On his part, Germany pursues a “new strategy” to achieve a more stable and secure Afghanistan. The government aims to approach greater security for Germany by stabilising Afghanistan in the long term: assistance for civilian reconstruction shall be doubled; training of Afghan security forces shall be stepped up. The German Foreign Minister Guido Westerwelle pointed out that in 2011 German troops are to be gradually withdrawn; from 2014 Afghanistan is itself to be able to guarantee security.

The step-by-step approach is presumed to be a very ambitious, but unrealistic goal, because the time period seems to be too short to guarantee a more stable and secure Afghanistan. It is really unclear if the Afghan forces are capable to ensure security in certain provinces by the end either of 2010 or of taking the lead in ensuring security and stability across the country by 2014. In addition, the corruption in Afghanistan serves as another critical aspect. The UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) emphasises in its Report on Corruption in Afghanistan (January 2010), that corruption is one of the most significant factors undermining peace building in Afghanistan; 59 per cent of the Afghan people view corruption as a bigger concern than insecurity (54 per cent) and unemployment (52 per cent). At the London Conference the Afghan government was indeed committed to good governance, but it is disputable if they are going to fulfill this obligation.

The statement of the London Conference participants to support the national Peace and Reintegration Programme of the Government of Afghanistan demonstrated in fact a crucial step towards a more stable and secure Afghanistan. This programme, including a Peace and Reintegration Trust Fund, shall lure Taliban insurgents back to mainstream life with financial incentives and shall provide a basis to lay down their weapons. What they aim at with this support is to offer economic alternatives to those who renounce violence, cut links to terrorism and agree to work within the democratic process. However, the ongoing corruption in Afghanistan could be a serious threat to the success of this programme.

The Afghan Government will host a further conference in Kabul in spring 2010 to “(...) reiterate the mutual responsibilities and commitments of Afghanistan and the international community towards each other” (Karzai, Inauguration Speech, 2009). The upcoming steps of the London Conference participants, however, will show how they are serious about the goal of a secure, prosperous, and democratic nation. At this, the states are called to take more attention to the Afghan people, especially to the Taliban; the forthcoming process should therefore also include a long-term and intensive dialogue with the Taliban to achieve jointly a more stable and secure Afghanistan.

Verantwortung

Die BOFAXE werden vom Institut für Friedenssicherungsrecht und Humanitäres Völkerrecht der Ruhr-Universität Bochum herausgegeben: IFHV, NA 02/33, Ruhr-Universität Bochum, 44780 Bochum, Tel.: +49 (0)234/32-27366, Fax: +49 (0)234/32-14208. Die BOFAXE werden vom Deutschen Roten Kreuz unterstützt.

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