

Thursday 16 December 2010

A new strategy for Afghanistan

P7_TA(2010)0490

European Parliament resolution of 16 December 2010 on a new strategy for Afghanistan (2009/2217(INI))

(2012/C 169 E/11)

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on Afghanistan, in particular its resolutions of 8 July 2008 on the stabilisation of Afghanistan ⁽¹⁾, of 15 January 2009 on the budgetary control of EU funds in Afghanistan ⁽²⁾, and of 24 April 2009 on women's rights in Afghanistan ⁽³⁾,
- having regard to the EU-Afghanistan joint political declaration signed on 16 November 2005, which is based on shared priorities for Afghanistan such as the establishment of strong and accountable institutions, security and justice sector reform, counter-narcotics, development and reconstruction,
- having regard to the Afghanistan Compact of 2006, which set out the Afghan Government's three main areas for activity for the subsequent five years: security; governance, rule of law, human rights; and economic and social development, as well as a commitment to the elimination of the narcotics industry,
- having regard to the London Conference on Afghanistan held in January 2010, where the international community renewed its commitment to Afghanistan, and which laid the foundations for an international consensus on a strategy entailing a 'non-military' solution to the Afghan crisis, as well as establishing that the transfer of security responsibilities to Afghan forces would begin in 2011 and be largely completed by 2014,
- having regard to Resolution 1890 (2009) of the UN Security Council, which extends the authorisation of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan under Chapter VII of the UN Charter, as defined in Resolutions 1386 (2001) and 1510 (2003), for a period of 12 months beyond 13 October 2009, and calls on the UN member states participating in ISAF 'to take all necessary measures to fulfil its mandate',
- having regard to the proposed 'Peace and Reintegration Trust Fund' to which London Conference participants pledged an initial sum of USD 140 million, with the aim of integrating Taliban and other insurgents,
- having regard to Afghanistan's National Consultative Peace Jirga held in Kabul at the beginning of June 2010, which set out to find a national consensus on the issue of reconciliation with enemies,
- having regard to the Kabul Conference held on 20 July 2010, which assessed progress in implementing decisions taken at the London Conference, and provided a fresh opportunity for the Afghan Government to show leadership and ownership of the process, with the cooperation of the international community, in strengthening security, reinforcing the capabilities of the Afghan security forces and improving good governance and the rule of law, and to chart the way forward, including on combating drug production and trafficking and corruption, and on peace and security, economic and social development, human rights and gender equality; having regard to the conclusions of the Kabul Conference establishing that control of military operations in all provinces is to be transferred to the Afghan forces by the end of 2014,

⁽¹⁾ OJ C 294E, 3.12.2009, p. 11.

⁽²⁾ OJ C 46E, 24.2.2010, p. 87.

⁽³⁾ OJ C 184E, 8.7.2010, p. 57.

Thursday 16 December 2010

- having regard to the presidential decree of 17 August 2010, which set a four-month deadline for private security companies present in Afghanistan to disband, with an exception for private security firms working inside compounds used by foreign embassies, businesses and NGOs,
- having regard to the presidential elections held in Afghanistan in August 2009, to the critical final report of the EU Election Observation Mission published in December 2009, and to the parliamentary elections held on 18 September 2010,
- having regard to all the relevant Council Conclusions, in particular the GAERC Conclusions of 27 October 2009 and the Council's Action Plan for Enhanced Engagement in Afghanistan and Pakistan, and the Foreign Affairs Council Conclusions of 22 March 2010,
- having regard to the appointment, as of 1 April 2010, of a 'double-hatted' EU Special Representative/ Head of EU Delegation to Afghanistan, and having regard to the Council decision of 11 August 2010 extending the mandate of Special Representative Vygaudas Usackas until 31 August 2011,
- having regard to the Council declaration of 18 May 2010 extending the European Union Police Mission in Afghanistan (EUPOL Afghanistan) for three years, from 31 May 2010 to 31 May 2013,
- having regard to the Country Strategy Paper for 2007-2013 which sets out the Commission's commitment to Afghanistan until 2013,
- having regard to the general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2010,
- having regard to the United Nations 2009 Human Development Report, which ranks Afghanistan 181st out of 182 countries,
- having regard to Afghanistan's own National Risk and Vulnerability Assessment 2007-2008 and its estimates that the cost of eliminating poverty in Afghanistan by lifting all those below it up to the poverty threshold would be some USD 570 million,
- having regard to the 2008 report by the Agency Coordinating Body for Afghan Relief (ACBAR), 'Falling Short – Aid Effectiveness in Afghanistan', which highlights the vast sums of aid ending up as corporate profits for contractors (as much as 50 % per contract), the minimal transparency in procurement and tendering processes, and the high cost of expatriate salaries and allowances,
- having regard to the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) report of August 2010 on 'Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict',
- having regard to the recommendations of the Peace Dividend Trust, which advocate an 'Afghan first' policy, encouraging local Afghan procurement of goods and services, as opposed to importing them, with the aim of benefiting Afghans first and foremost,
- having regard to the NATO/ISAF counter-insurgency strategy for Afghanistan and its implementation under the command of General David Petraeus, and to the strategy review announced by President Obama for December 2010,
- having regard to the US Congressional Majority Staff report entitled 'Warlord, Inc: Extortion and Corruption Along the US Supply Chain in Afghanistan' (Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, US House of Representatives, June 2010),
- having regard to the work of the United Nations Office for Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and, in particular, its October 2009 report on 'Addiction, Crime and Insurgency – the transnational threat of Afghanistan opium' and its World Drug Report 2010,

Thursday 16 December 2010

- having regard to Rule 48 of its Rules of Procedure,
- having regard to the report of the Committee on Foreign Affairs and the opinion of the Committee on Development (A7-0333/2010),
- A. whereas the international community has repeatedly reaffirmed its support for the relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions upholding the security, prosperity and human rights of all Afghan citizens; whereas, however, the international community has implicitly recognised that nine years of war and international involvement have not succeeded in eliminating the Taliban insurgency and bringing peace and stability to the country; and whereas a new counter-insurgency policy has been introduced as of 2009 and around 45 000 troops have been dispatched as reinforcements,
- B. whereas there is no obvious end in sight in Afghanistan, with a coalition of international forces in place but unable to defeat the Taliban and the other insurgents, and an insurgency and Taliban movement unable to prevail against these military forces,
- C. whereas, in 2009, General Stanley McChrystal stated that he did not see indications of any large Al-Qaeda presence in Afghanistan, and senior American officials confirm that Al-Qaeda is now hardly present in Afghanistan,
- D. whereas security and living conditions have deteriorated, eroding the popular acceptance the coalition's presence enjoyed at one stage, and whereas the coalition is being increasingly perceived by the population as an occupying force; whereas a new, broader partnership with the people of Afghanistan is needed, involving unrepresented groups and civil society in peace and reconciliation efforts,
- E. whereas the EU is one of the major donors of development assistance and humanitarian aid to Afghanistan; whereas it is a committed partner in reconstruction and stabilisation efforts,
- F. whereas, under the 2006 Afghanistan Compact and at the Kabul Conference, donors agreed to channel an increasing proportion of their aid, up to 50 %, through the Afghan Government's core budget, either directly or through trust-fund mechanisms, wherever possible, but whereas only 20 % of development aid is channelled through the government budget at present,
- G. whereas the lack of sufficient coordination is undermining the effectiveness of EU aid contributions to Afghanistan,
- H. whereas between 2002 and 2009 a sum of over USD 40 billion in international aid was channelled towards Afghanistan; whereas the number of children attending school has increased over this period but whereas, according to UNICEF estimates, 59 % of Afghanistan's children under the age of five still do not get enough to eat, and five million children are unable to attend school,
- I. whereas the situation of women in the country remains a matter of great concern; whereas, according to UN reports, Afghanistan's maternal mortality rate is the second highest in the world, at nearly 25 000 deaths per year, and whereas only 12,6 % of women over the age of 15 are able to read and write, and 57 % of girls are married off below the legal age of 16; whereas violence against women continues to be a widespread phenomenon; whereas the discriminatory Shia Personal Status Law is still in place and, amongst other points, criminalises women for denying their husbands sexual intercourse and forbids women from leaving the house without their husband's consent,
- J. whereas Afghanistan is a party to several international conventions protecting women's and children's rights, notably the 1979 UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the 1989 UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, and whereas the Afghan Constitution, in Article 22, stipulates that 'the citizens of Afghanistan, men and women, have equal rights and duties before the law'; whereas the Afghan Family Code is currently under revision in order to harmonise it with the Constitution,

Thursday 16 December 2010

- K. whereas in July 2010 the US Congress called for an audit on billions of dollars of past funding for Afghanistan and voted for a provisional cut of almost USD 4 billion in aid to the Government of Afghanistan,
- L. whereas Afghanistan's Finance Minister, Omar Zakhilwal, has criticised, firstly, NATO/ISAF contracting practices for not benefiting the local Afghan economy and, secondly, ISAF's one-sided interpretation of the rules on tax-free provisions in the ISAF-Afghan Government agreement, and whereas the Minister has blamed foreign contractors for taking the bulk of ISAF-financed contracts, amounting to up to USD 4 billion, and reportedly causing a constant outflow of money from the country; whereas the Afghan Government is calling for an international investigation,
- M. whereas it has become obvious that no military solution is possible in Afghanistan, and whereas the US has stated that it will start to withdraw its troops from Afghanistan in summer 2011, other countries have either already withdrawn or are making plans to do so, and others still have not indicated an intention to withdraw; whereas, however, the withdrawal of the military has to be a gradual and coordinated process in the framework of a political project that guarantees a smooth transition of responsibility to the Afghan security forces,
- N. whereas the Kabul Conference stipulated that the Afghan National Army should reach a personnel complement of 171 600 and the Afghan National Police 134 000 by October 2011, with the necessary financial and technical support from the international community,
- O. whereas the main objective of the EUPOL Afghanistan mission is to contribute to the establishment of an Afghan police system in accordance with international standards,
- P. whereas Afghanistan is not only the world's leading source of opium production and the main supplier to heroin markets in the EU and the Russian Federation, but also one of the world's leading cannabis producers, according to a recent UNODC report; whereas, however, opium production in Afghanistan has dropped by 23 % in the last two years and by a third since its peak in 2007; whereas UNODC has established that there is a clear correlation between opium cultivation and the territories where the insurgency is in control, and that in the parts of Afghanistan where the government is more able to enforce the law nearly two-thirds of farmers have said they do not grow opium because it is banned – whereas in the southeast, where the authorities' reach is weaker, just under 40 % of farmers have cited the ban as a reason for not cultivating poppies,
- Q. whereas, according to a recent UNODC report, the number of Afghan citizens addicted to drugs has increased sharply in recent years, a trend which will have major social repercussions for the country's future,
- R. whereas the EU has played an active role in supporting counter-narcotics efforts from the outset of the reconstruction process, without achieving any significant results in restricting the pervasive influence of the drugs industry on the economy, the political system, state institutions and society,
- S. whereas some poppy eradication in Afghanistan has been carried out using chemical herbicides, and whereas this practice results in serious harm to people and to the environment in terms of soil and water pollution; whereas, however, there is now a consensus on the need to concentrate repressive measures on the drug trade and heroin-producing labs, and not on farmers; whereas the main effort is currently focused on providing alternative livelihoods for farmers,
- T. whereas Afghanistan has remarkable natural resources, including rich mineral reserves such as gas and oil, estimated at a value of USD three trillion, and whereas the Afghan Government is relying on these resources to spur economic development after peace and security have been established in the country,

Thursday 16 December 2010

A new EU strategy

1. Is aware of the set of factors hampering progress in Afghanistan but has chosen to focus in this report on four main areas where, it believes, efforts expended could result in improvements: international aid and coordination; the implications of the peace process; the impact of police training; and the elimination of opium cultivation through alternative development;
2. Expresses support for the new concept of a counter-insurgency strategy geared to protecting the local population and rebuilding areas where security has been ensured, and for the EU's Action Plan for Afghanistan and Pakistan;
3. Believes, therefore, that the EU strategy for Afghanistan will have to take as its starting point two premises: an acknowledgement of the continuing deterioration in security and socio-economic indicators in Afghanistan despite almost a decade of international involvement and investment; and the need to further encourage the shift in the mindset of the international community – which in the past, and in particular prior to the counter-insurgency strategy, has all too often shaped plans and decisions with scant regard for Afghan involvement – so that in future its plans and decisions are shaped in close cooperation with the Afghans; notes that the conferences in London and Kabul were an important step in this direction;
4. Welcomes and supports the Council Conclusions of October 2009, entitled 'Strengthening EU Action in Afghanistan and Pakistan' and outlining a more coherent and coordinated EU approach towards the region and highlighting the importance of regional cooperation and of a more civilian focus in the policy towards Afghanistan;
5. Stresses that any long-term solution to the Afghan crisis has to start from the Afghan citizens' interest in their internal security, civil protection and economic and social development, and should include concrete measures for the eradication of poverty, under-development and discrimination against women, for enhancing respect for human rights and the rule of law, strengthening reconciliation mechanisms, ensuring an end to opium production, engaging in a robust state-building exercise, and fully integrating Afghanistan into the international community, as well as banishing Al-Qaeda from the country;
6. Welcomes the conclusions of the Kabul International Conference on Afghanistan; stresses that commitments by the Afghan Government to improve security, governance and economic opportunities for Afghan citizens, as well as the commitments by the international community to support the transition process and the shared objectives, need to be respected;
7. Reiterates that the EU and its Member States should support Afghanistan in the reconstruction of its own state, with stronger democratic institutions capable of ensuring national sovereignty, security based on a democratically accountable army and police, a competent and independent judiciary, state unity, territorial integrity, equality between men and women, media freedom, an emphasis on education and health, sustainable economic development and the prosperity of the people of Afghanistan, and respect for the historical, religious, spiritual and cultural traditions and rights of all ethnic and religious communities on Afghan territory, while recognising the need for fundamental change in the attitude towards women; calls for more support to be given to local-authority development projects in those provinces where there is evidence of good governance;
8. Notes that 80 % of the population is settled in rural areas, and that arable land per capita diminished from 0,55 ha in 1980 to 0,25 ha in 2007; highlights the fact that Afghanistan continues to be highly vulnerable to adverse climatic conditions and to rising food prices on the world market, while the widespread and indiscriminate use of landmines poses a significant risk to successful rural development; considers, in this context, that it is of primary importance to continue and enhance funding geared towards rural development and local food production, in order to achieve food security;
9. Takes note of the Afghan Government's commitment to implementing over the next 12 months, in a phased and fiscally sustainable manner, the Sub-National Governance Policy, strengthening local authorities and their institutional capacities and developing sub-national regulatory, financing, and budgetary frameworks;

Thursday 16 December 2010

10. Notes that more substantial Afghan involvement in the rebuilding process can be hampered by weak public administration and civil service capacity; is therefore convinced that more attention needs to be paid to these important areas; welcomes the idea that the Commission and the Member States should devise a special long-term flagship programme to address the issue of strengthening public administration by developing a curriculum, helping to build or use existing premises, linking up with the network of EU public administration institutes, as well as mentoring civil service institutes in a number of metropolitan cities in Afghanistan such as Kabul, Herat and Mazar i Sharif;
11. Points out that development efforts must focus on improving the capabilities of Afghan government structures and that the Afghans themselves must be closely involved both in setting priorities and during the implementation phases, with a view to fostering the process of taking ownership and responsibility at national and community level; draws attention, therefore, to the essential role of civil-society organisations in ensuring that Afghan citizens are involved in the process of democratisation and reconstruction and in guarding against the risk of corruption;
12. Remains deeply concerned, despite some improvements in women's lives since the end of the Taliban rule in 2001, about the general situation regarding human rights in Afghanistan and particularly about the deterioration in women's fundamental, political, civil and social rights over the past few years, and expresses its concern about negative developments such as the fact that the majority of prisoners in Afghan jails are women escaping oppressive relatives, and about the recent changes to the electoral code which reduce the quotas for parliamentary seats for women;
13. Believes that women's rights are part of the security solution and that it is impossible to achieve stability in Afghanistan without women enjoying their full rights in political, social and economic life; calls, therefore, on the Afghan authorities and the representatives of the international community to include women in every stage of the peace talks and reconciliation/reintegration efforts, in accordance with UNSC Resolution 1325; calls for special protection to be provided for women who are publicly or politically active and therefore endangered by fundamentalists; points out that progress in the peace talks may not, under any circumstances, involve any loss of the rights acquired by women in recent years; calls on the Afghan Government to improve the protection of women's rights by amending existing legislation, such as the criminal code, to avoid discriminatory practices;
14. Calls on the Commission, the Council and EU Member States to continue to raise the issues of discrimination against women and children, and of human rights in general, in bilateral relations with Afghanistan, in line with the Union's long-term commitment to assisting Afghanistan in peace and reconstruction efforts;
15. Calls on the EU and the international community to increase the level of funding and political and technical support for policies to improve the situation of Afghan women and non-governmental women's organisations, including those defending women's rights;
16. Notes that, despite improvements since the fall of the Taliban regime, the situation has worsened in recent years with regard to freedom of expression and of the press; notes that armed groups and the Taliban attack and threaten journalists to prevent them reporting on areas under their control; calls for action to be taken in this field to allow journalists to exercise their profession with certain safety guarantees;
17. Notes with concern that the parliamentary elections which took place in Afghanistan on 18 September 2010, with a turnout of around 40 % despite the security conditions in the country, were, once again, marred by fraud and violence, in which, according to NATO, 25 people lost their lives; regrets that many Afghans have been prevented from exercising their fundamental right to vote;
18. Notes irregularities in the country's judicial processes, which do not comply with international standards of justice; deplores the execution in 2008 of 16 people sentenced to death; calls on the EU to seek approval for a moratorium on the death penalty, in accordance with UN Resolution 62/149 of 2007, with a view to its subsequent abolition;

Thursday 16 December 2010

International aid – use and abuse

19. Recalls that the combined EU (European Community and Member States) budget for aid to Afghanistan for the period 2002-2010 totalled around EUR 8 billion;

20. Highlights the importance of strengthening media freedom and civil society in Afghanistan to enhance democratisation in the country; also commends the conclusions of the 2009 EU Election Observation Mission;

21. Notes that, despite the huge injections of foreign aid, the situation in Afghanistan continues to be discouraging, preventing humanitarian and medical aid from reaching the most vulnerable sections of the population, that more Afghans are dying through poverty than as a direct result of the armed conflict, and that, shockingly, infant mortality has risen since 2002, while life expectancy at birth and levels of literacy have declined markedly, and that since 2004 the number of people living below the poverty threshold has increased by 130 %;

22. Emphasises the importance of achieving the Millennium Development Goals and deplores the fact that, although progress has been made in some areas, Afghanistan's ranking in the UNDP Human Development Index has descended from 173 in 2003 to 181 (out of 182 countries), while mortality rates among children aged under five and maternal mortality rates in Afghanistan remain among the highest in the world; considers that specific objectives in these areas, and on access to health and education, in particular for women, should not be neglected, but urges that special attention be paid to improved income generation and the construction of a functioning justice system;

23. Underlines the revelation by UNODC in its study of January 2010 that corruption is the biggest concern of the population and that revenues generated by bribery amount to almost one quarter (23 %) of Afghanistan's GDP;

24. Calls on the Commission to ensure transparency and accountability in relation to the financial assistance provided to the Afghan Government, international organisations and local NGOs, in order to ensure the coherence of aid and the success of Afghanistan's reconstruction and development;

25. Calls for humanitarian aid to be distributed on a geographically more homogenous basis, in the light of an analysis of needs and in keeping with the requirement for urgency;

26. Notes, however, the limited progress made on infrastructure, telecommunications and basic education – usually cited by donors and the Afghan Government as areas of achievement;

27. Draws attention to the huge cost of the war prosecuted in Afghanistan between 2001 and 2009, estimated at over USD 300 billion and equivalent to more than 20 times Afghanistan's GDP, and set to rise to over USD 50 billion per year with the additional military 'surge' that is foreseen;

28. Acknowledges the widespread perception that Afghan Government corruption is solely responsible for the lack of provision of essential services to citizens, but also notes that the majority of resources for socio-economic development have been channelled through international organisations, regional development banks, NGOs, international contractors, consultants etcetera, and not through the central Government; urges the Afghan Government and the international community to exercise greater control in order to eliminate corruption and to ensure that aid reaches its target;

29. Takes the view that the fight against corruption should be at the core of the peace-building process in Afghanistan, since bribery causes misallocation of resources, constitutes an obstacle in terms of access to basic public services such as health and education, and represents a huge impediment to the country's socio-economic development; emphasises likewise that corruption undermines confidence in the public sector and the government, and consequently constitutes a major threat to national stability; therefore, urges the EU, when providing assistance to Afghanistan, to pay special attention to the fight against corruption;

Thursday 16 December 2010

30. Notes that, according to the Afghan Minister of Finance, as corroborated by other independent sources, only USD 6 billion (or 15 %) out of a total of USD 40 billion in aid actually reached the Afghan Government between 2002 and 2009, and that, of the remaining USD 34 billion, which was channelled through international organisations, regional development banks, NGOs, international contractors, etcetera, between 70 % and 80 % never reached the intended beneficiaries, the people of Afghanistan; notes the decision taken at the Kabul Conference that 50 % of the international aid should be channelled through the Afghan national budget by 2012, in accordance with Afghanistan's request;
31. Points out the urgent need to establish coordination mechanisms among international donor countries and to provide for detailed evaluations of European and international aid to combat the lack of transparency and the limited mechanisms for donor accountability;
32. Condemns the fact that a significant proportion of European and other international aid money is lost along the distribution chain – a situation drastically highlighted in the recent scandal around the Kabul Bank – and draws attention to the four main ways in which this happens: waste, excessive intermediary and security costs, overbilling and corruption;
33. Notes, however, that EU losses are mitigated by the fact that 50 % of the Union's aid (as compared with 10 % of US aid) is allocated through multilateral trust funds, whose rate of effectiveness is very high (around 80 %);
34. Calls on the EU to set up a centralised database on, and to analyse the costs and impact of, all EU aid to Afghanistan, as the lack of comprehensive, up-to-date and transparent data undermines aid efficiency;
35. Calls, too, on all the main humanitarian and development bodies active in Afghanistan, including the EU and its Member States, the US, UNAMA, the UN agencies, the main NGOs and the World Bank, drastically to prune their operating expenses by allocating funds to concrete projects implemented in real and balanced partnership with Afghan institutions, and to ensure that aid actually reaches its target; emphasises, in that regard, that Afghan institutions shall have the right to decide on the use of the funds, while ensuring due transparency and accountability;
36. Stresses the importance of coordinating reconstruction and development efforts at regional level in order to promote cross-border development in a region where ethnic and tribal links often transcend national borders;
37. Notes that increased involvement by Afghan local and regional governments should be promoted, and emphasises that, at this level, allegiance, the rule of law and democracy are imperative for the proper use of funds; points out that the allocation of funds at local and regional level shall require the approval of the central Government, thus enhancing its role and responsibility;
38. Calls on the High Representative for Foreign and Security Policy, the Council and the Commission to set up a joint team of researchers to evaluate all EU and Member State measures and missions in Afghanistan once a year, using explicit qualitative and quantitative indicators, especially with regard to development aid (including public health and agriculture), good governance (including the justice sector and respect for human rights) and security (especially the training of Afghan police); calls too, in this context, for an evaluation of the relative impact of EU measures on the overall situation in the country and of the level of coordination and cooperation between EU bodies and other international missions and measures, and for the findings and recommendations of such an evaluation to be published;
39. Stresses that the security situation and the geographical distribution of assistance are mutually dependent and calls, therefore, for help to be dispatched directly to the population in Afghanistan immediately affected;
40. Stresses that combating corruption in Afghanistan must be a priority; recognises that local corruption exists but hopes that this will be countered through strengthening the legitimacy of Afghan state institutions by making them responsible for approving the allocation of funding and ensuring the effectiveness of aid;

Thursday 16 December 2010

41. Advocates a policy of increasing procurement within Afghanistan itself wherever possible rather than importing goods or services;
42. Takes the view that impartial humanitarian bodies should be responsible for the distribution of aid in the country and that military personnel should be involved only in entirely exceptional circumstances, in recognition of the neutral, impartial and independent nature of the work of humanitarian bodies and in full compliance with the relevant international standards, as codified in the 'Guidelines on the Use of Military and Civil Defence Assets in Humanitarian Emergencies' (MCDA) and advocated in the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid;
43. Points out that any perceived breach of the principles of neutrality, impartiality and independence by such bodies in their work makes them more vulnerable on the ground, particularly as they will continue to be present on the ground long after troops have been withdrawn;
44. Notes that, as widely reported in the press and in the US House of Representatives report 'Warlord, Inc.', the US military in Afghanistan has outsourced most of its logistics to private contractors, who in turn subcontract the protection of military convoys to local Afghan security providers, with disastrous consequences;
45. Notes that the decision to place the US military supply chain in private hands without any reliable criteria for assuring accountability, transparency and legality is fuelling extortion and corruption, as warlords, local mafia bosses and ultimately Taliban commanders end up taking a significant share of the USD 2.2-3 billion business of military logistics in Afghanistan;
46. Is appalled by the fact that protection money and extortion at every level of the military supply chain constitute the most significant source of funding for the insurgency, as recognised by US Secretary of State Hilary Clinton in her testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in December 2009;
47. Is equally appalled by the fact that, since US and NATO/ISAF military logistics follow similar lines, the full traceability of EU financial contributions might not be fully guaranteed in all cases;
48. Fully welcomes the new guidelines issued in September 2010 by the NATO military command in Afghanistan on contracting – currently worth around an estimated USD 14 billion per year – which aim to reduce corruption and decrease the funds that flow indirectly to the insurgency and the Taliban; hopes this change of orientation in contracting policy will be implemented quickly;
49. Welcomes, in this context, the recent decree by President Karzai setting a four-month deadline for all local and foreign private security firms in Afghanistan to cease operation;

The peace process

50. Stresses that good governance, the rule of law and human rights are the foundations for a stable and prosperous Afghanistan; stresses, therefore, that a credible justice process is a fundamental aspect of the peace process and that respect for human rights and the prevention of widespread impunity should be non-negotiable aspects at all stages of the peace process; calls, in this respect, on the Afghan Government to implement a judicial reform strategy as a matter of priority;
51. Believes that much of the blame for the present stalemate in Afghanistan rests with early miscalculations made prior to the new counter-insurgency strategy by coalition forces who foresaw a speedy military victory over the Taliban and an easy transition to a stable country run by a legitimate government with strong Western backing;
52. Believes, consequently, that the presence of the Taliban was underestimated and the ability of the Karzai government to provide governance overestimated, and that, as a result, little attention was paid to the task of rebuilding and developing the country;

Thursday 16 December 2010

53. Fears that these errors have fuelled the resurgence of the Taliban in over half the country, exacerbating the deterioration in security in the entire region and in respect for human rights, particularly those of women;
54. Points out that the military focus of the past did not achieve the desired results, and therefore strongly supports a more civilian approach;
55. Recognises that the only possible solution is a political one and that this should include negotiations – which should eventually take place against the backdrop of a ceasefire – with the Taliban and other combatant groups, as well as other political players in the country, who are ready to participate in a government of national unity capable of putting an end to the civil war that has raged there for almost three decades and of ensuring full respect for the rule of law and fundamental human rights; believes that, in order to achieve the political solution, the new counter-insurgency policy must be given time to show results in line with the timetable announced by President Obama;
56. Firmly believes that the EU's three main prerequisites for such a peace process and the involvement of Taliban groups must be a commitment by all parties involved in negotiations to banish from the country Al-Qaeda and its promotion of international terrorism, as well as any other terrorist group; to take action to eliminate poppy cultivation; and to establish a policy of promoting and respecting fundamental human rights and the Afghan Constitution;
57. Believes, too, that all other issues should be left to the will and capacity of the Afghan people themselves;
58. Recognises that the Taliban are not a single uniform entity and that there are at least 33 top leaders, 820 mid-level/junior leaders, and 25 000 to 36 000 'foot soldiers' distributed among 220 communities, some fighting for ideological and others for monetary reasons; believes, therefore, that negotiations should, from now on, be encouraged at local level between the democratically elected local government and members of the armed opposition 'who renounce violence, have no links to international terrorist organisations, respect the Constitution and are willing to join in building a peaceful Afghanistan', in accordance with paragraphs 13 and 14 of the Kabul communiqué of 20 July 2010;
59. Welcomes the Afghan Government's Peace and Reintegration Programme, which is open to all Afghan members of the armed opposition and their communities on the basis of the above-mentioned paragraphs 13 and 14 of Kabul communiqué;
60. Points out that any disarmament and reintegration strategy must take close account of the problem of the return of ex-combatants and refugees to their villages of origin;
61. Highlights the importance of increasing the credibility, responsibility and competence of the Afghan Government and administration, in order to improve its reputation among its own citizens;
62. Stresses the key role of Pakistan, as there is no incentive for the Taliban to undertake any serious negotiations as long as the Pakistan border remains open to them; recommends wider international coordination and involvement in the process, including that of other neighbouring countries and leading regional players – notably Iran, Turkey, China, India and the Russian Federation;
63. Calls on the Commission to evaluate the strategic and political implications for Afghanistan and the broader region of the recent disastrous floods in Pakistan, and to take every necessary step to assist the affected population of the country and the Afghan refugees whose camps were overwhelmed by the flooding;
64. Stresses the importance of good water management in and around Afghanistan and highlights the benefits of regional and cross-border cooperation in this field, inter alia in terms of confidence-building among neighbours in South-West Asia;

Thursday 16 December 2010

65. Notes the involvement of the Pakistan Intelligence Service (ISI) aimed at making sure that Pakistan, too, gets a satisfactory outcome from any peace dividend;

66. Stresses, however, that for peace to be allowed to take root in Afghanistan will require political deals among key regional powers, including India, Pakistan, Iran and the Central Asian States, Russia, China and Turkey, and a common position of non-interference and support for an independent Afghanistan; calls, too, for normalisation of the relationship between Afghanistan and Pakistan, namely through a final settlement on the issue of the international border between the two countries;

67. Calls on the EU to continue to support the peace and reconciliation process in Afghanistan as well as Afghan efforts to reintegrate those ready to renounce violence, allowing the Karzai Government enough flexibility in its choice of dialogue partners, but insisting that the Afghan Constitution and respect for fundamental human rights form the overall legal and political framework for the peace process;

68. Welcomes the National Priority Programmes prepared by the Afghan Government in line with the Afghanistan National Development Strategy and supported by the Kabul Conference, and calls for their full and effective implementation;

69. Cannot stress strongly enough the need for a much more active EU role in the reconstruction and development of Afghanistan, as no lasting peace is possible in the country itself or in the region as a whole without significant poverty reduction and sustainable development; recognises that there is no development without security, as there is no security without development;

70. Urges the EU and its Member States to work together with the United States to channel more of the international aid effort through domestic authorities and the Kabul Government, and to ensure that drones, special forces and local militias against Taliban leaders are used according to General Petraeus' orders for zero tolerance on the loss of innocent civilians' lives;

71. Pays tribute to the servicemen and women of all the Allied Forces who have lost their lives in defending freedom, and expresses its condolences to their families, as well as to the families of all innocent Afghan victims;

72. Points out that the military presence of some EU Member States and their allies in Afghanistan is part of the NATO/ISAF operation and its objectives of combating the threat of international terrorism and tackling drug cultivation and trafficking;

73. Stresses that this presence can help create the security conditions that would allow for recent plans by the Afghan Government to exploit the country's potentially vast mining and minerals industry to be put into practice, thus providing it with sorely needed own resources for the national budget;

74. Stresses that the potentially vast mining and minerals resources on Afghan territory belong exclusively to the people of Afghanistan, and that 'protection' of these assets can never be used as an excuse for the permanent presence of foreign troops on Afghan soil;

Police and the rule of law

75. Notes that there can be no stability or peace in Afghanistan without the state first of all guaranteeing security for its citizens on its own responsibility;

76. Welcomes President Karzai's objective that, by the end of 2014, only the Afghan National Security Forces should lead and conduct military operations in all provinces, as well as the Afghan Government's commitment to a phased exercise of full authority over its own security;

Thursday 16 December 2010

77. Stresses that Afghanistan must be provided with an efficient police force and an autonomous army capable of ensuring security so as to permit a subsequent withdrawal of the foreign military presence from the country;
78. Sees merit in General Petraeus's idea that local, democratically elected authorities could be given a local gendarmerie to maintain law and order and protect the local population;
79. Recognises, however, that having self-sustaining security forces is a somewhat long-term goal and therefore draws particular attention to the need for a more coordinated and integrated approach in the training of police, as well as, separately, the training of army officers, and draws attention to the funding being invested in police training, with limited results; calls on all those involved to coordinate their work closely in order to avoid unnecessary duplication and to fulfil complementary tasks at strategic and operational levels;
80. Highlights the need for a comprehensive reform of the Interior Ministry, without which the efforts to reform and build a new police force could fail, and points in this context to the importance of monitoring, support, advice and training at Interior Ministry, regional and provincial level, in line with a further objective of EUPOL;
81. Believes that the undeniable vagueness of EUPOL's remit and its limited achievements to date prevent it from acquiring the leading EU role it deserves; deplors the fact that three years after its deployment EUPOL still has not reached three-quarters of its authorised strength; and reiterates its call to the Council and the EU Member States to honour in full their commitments towards this mission;
82. Welcomes the setting up by EUPOL Afghanistan of the Anti-Corruption Prosecutor's Office with the aim of investigating cases against high-profile public officials and other officials suspected of corruption;
83. Is disturbed by the ISAF figures indicating that of the 94 000 men in the Afghan National Police almost 90 % are illiterate, 20 % are drug users, and over 30 % go missing after a year, not to mention the 1 000 or so killed in service every year;
84. Believes that major factors behind the ineffectiveness of the overall training are a lack of coordination of the various aspects of police training and the practice of transferring duties to private military and security companies (PMSC);
85. Notes that the commitment by the EU and its Member States to the creation of a professional Afghan police force risks being compromised by the prevalence of practices such as the 'fast-track' approach (poor vetting of recruits, six weeks of training with no textbooks because of trainee illiteracy, minimal field training, recruits then given a badge, uniform and gun and sent out on patrol) implemented by a few big US security companies; emphasises the need for more coherent and sustainable police training enabling different Afghan police forces to work together; stresses that police training missions should not only focus on technical aspects but must guarantee recruits' literacy and give them a basic knowledge of national and international law;
86. Is disturbed to learn of the poor financial controls being applied to these private companies, and cites a 2006 joint US Defense and State Department report, the findings of which are still valid today, concluding that the police force in Afghanistan was incapable of carrying out routine law enforcement work and that no effective field training programme existed; acknowledges the attempts by the general command, and under the counter-insurgency policy, to exercise some degree of control over the private foreign militias operating with impunity in Afghanistan;
87. Recommends that police training should, as soon as possible, cease to be carried out by private contractors;

Thursday 16 December 2010

88. Calls for improved international cooperation and coordination to increase police training capacities significantly and to further improve the effectiveness of training programmes; proposes that a large-scale training programme be launched by EUPOL and NATO/ISAF, incorporating the national police units as agreed with the Afghan Government and thereby eliminating duplication, waste and fragmentation;

89. Urges the High Representative for Foreign and Security Policy and the EU Member States to intensify police training in Afghanistan and to increase significantly the number of police trainers on the ground so that the objective of the London Conference to reach 134 000 trained Afghan police officers by the end of 2011 becomes a realistic scenario; urges the High Representative for Foreign and Security Policy to amend EUPOL Afghanistan's mission by also mandating training for low-grade personnel in all provinces, by increasing the number of weeks dedicated to basic training, and by ensuring that patrols and other policing activities are conducted jointly in the field; urges the EU Member States not only to merge their bilateral police training mission with EUPOL but also to refrain from imposing caveats for national police deployed in EUPOL;

90. Recommends that salaries for the Afghan police be increased and that the whole recruitment process be reviewed, giving preference to recruits with a basic standard of literacy who are not drug users and are better qualified psychologically and physically than the present cohort;

91. Stresses that police training cannot deliver without a properly functioning judiciary and calls, therefore, on the international community to provide increased financial and technical support to strengthen the judicial system, including through an increase in the salary of judges at all levels; further requests the Council to put in place, in coordination with the UN, a specialised mission to train judges, as well as public officials in the Ministry of Justice and the penal system, in Afghanistan;

92. Welcomes the fact that the Afghan Government pledged at the Kabul Conference to improve, with the support of international partners, access to the delivery of justice throughout the country by implementing concrete measures within the next 12 months, as well as the capacity of judicial institutions, including through the design and implementation of a comprehensive human resources strategy;

Narcotics

93. Points out that Afghanistan is the source of 90 % of the world's illicit opium, and yet that when coalition forces entered Kabul in 2001 no opium poppies were being grown in Afghanistan owing to the UN's success in achieving a ban on their cultivation;

94. Opines that a large, well-resourced military force should, subsequently, have found it easy to sustain this opium-free situation through local agricultural development projects, protected by its troops against the Taliban and local warlords;

95. Notes, however, that opium production is still a key social, economic and security issue, and calls on the EU to consider this as a strategic priority in its policies towards Afghanistan;

96. Points out that more than 90 % of heroin in Europe originates from Afghanistan and that the cost to public health in European countries runs into billions of dollars; emphasises that the challenges posed by the drug economy in Afghanistan must be tackled not only nationally but internationally by addressing all links in the drug chain and that this requires, in particular, assistance to farmers to reduce supply, as well as drug prevention and treatment to curb demand, and law enforcement against the intermediaries; proposes, in particular, massive investment in the establishment of a comprehensive agricultural and rural policy to offer opium producers a credible, lasting alternative; insists also on the need to integrate environment into the agriculture and rural strategy, as degradation of the environment – caused for instance by poor management of water resources or the destruction of natural forest – is one of the main barriers to the development of the agricultural economy;

97. Notes that, as a result of the impunity given to growers and traffickers, within two years cultivation reached pre-2001 levels, with a small number of powerful warlords running a huge cartel;

Thursday 16 December 2010

98. Expresses deep concern at the sharp increase, indicated in the recent UNODC report, in the number of Afghans addicted to drugs; calls for targeted measures to be taken immediately to reduce the number of drug addicts and provide them with medical care; with this in view, stresses the need to fund programmes to set up rehabilitation centres in the country, particularly in those areas which do not have access to medical treatment;

99. Points out that, despite an earlier dip in prices caused by excessive production, in 2009 trade in narcotics totalled USD 3,4 billion and the potential gross export value of opium was 26 % of Afghanistan's GDP, with around 3,4 million Afghans (12 % of the population) said to be involved in the illicit narcotics industry;

100. Draws attention, however, to the findings of the recent UNODC report indicating that the Taliban net only 4 % of the profits from the annual narcotics trade, and local farmers 21 %, with 75 % going to government officials, the police, local and regional brokers, and traffickers; notes, in short, that NATO's Afghan allies are in fact getting the lion's share of the profits from the drugs trade;

101. Notes that between 2001 and 2009 the US and the international community spent USD 1.61 billion on counter-narcotics measures without having any significant impact on production and trafficking, and recalls Richard Holbrooke, US Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan, describing US counter-narcotics efforts in Afghanistan to date as 'the most wasteful and ineffective programme I have seen in and out of government';

102. Points out that, unless the dependence of the Afghan economy on drugs is ended once and for all and a viable alternative economic growth model found, the goals of restoring security and stability to the region will not be achieved;

103. Emphasises the importance of efforts to phase out opium cultivation in Afghanistan – which have had little success so far – and calls, in this connection, for viable alternative livelihoods to be provided for the 3,4 million Afghans who make a living from opium, and for the situation of rest of the Afghan rural population to be improved;

104. Notes successful attempts in Pakistan, Laos and Thailand to phase out the cultivation of opium through its replacement by alternative crops; notes, too, the emergence in Afghanistan of promising new crops, such as saffron, that can deliver a much higher income than opium poppies;

105. Notes that a similar process of phasing out opium poppy cultivation could be envisaged for Afghanistan at a cost of EUR 100 million per year by specifically earmarking 10 % of the EU's annual aid to the country for a period of five years;

106. Notes that the recently signed Afghanistan-Pakistan Trade and Transit Agreement will give an opening to producers of pomegranates, the most famous legal crop in the area, and one repeatedly been cited by foreign development workers as a key to creating decent alternative livelihoods for poppy-growers in the south of Afghanistan;

107. Commends UNODC for its active work to support the Government of Afghanistan in its struggle against illicit drugs, and calls for the strengthening of UNODC and its programmes in Afghanistan;

108. Calls for a five-year national plan for the elimination of illicit opium crops, with specific deadlines and benchmarks, to be implemented through a dedicated office with its own budget and staff;

109. Stresses that this plan should be promoted through cooperation between the EU and the Russian Federation, the latter being the major victim of Afghan heroin and the world's second-largest opioids market after the EU;

110. Calls on the Government and Parliament of Afghanistan to enact specific legislation aimed at prohibiting all eradication practices that may involve the use of non-manual and non-mechanical means;

Thursday 16 December 2010

111. Calls on the Council and the Commission fully to incorporate this proposed strategy into their existing strategies, and urges EU Member States to take the proposal fully into account within their own national plans;

112. Urges the Council and the Commission to take full account of all the budgetary implications of the proposals contained in this report;

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113. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and the Commission, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, the Secretary-General of NATO and the governments and parliaments of the Member States and of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan.

Establishing a permanent crisis mechanism to safeguard the financial stability of the euro area

P7_TA(2010)0491

European Parliament resolution of 16 December 2010 on establishing a permanent crisis mechanism to safeguard the financial stability of the euro area

(2012/C 169 E/12)

The European Parliament,

- having regard to Articles 121, 122, 126, 136 and 148 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (hereinafter ‘TFEU’),
- having regard to its resolution of 7 July 2010 with recommendations to the Commission on Cross-Border Crisis Management in the Banking Sector ⁽¹⁾ (hereinafter ‘the Ferreira Report’),
- having regard its resolution of 7 July 2010 on the European Financial Stability Facility and European Financial Stabilisation Mechanism and future actions ⁽²⁾,
- having regard to the question of 24 June 2010 to the Commission on the European Financial Stability Facility and European Financial Stabilisation Mechanism and future actions ⁽³⁾,
- having regard to its position of 6 July 2010 on the proposal for a Council Regulation amending Regulation (EC) No 479/2009 as regards the quality of statistical data in the context of the excessive deficit procedure ⁽⁴⁾,
- having regard to its position of 22 September 2010 on the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing a European Banking Authority ⁽⁵⁾ (hereinafter ‘the Garcia-Margallo Report’),
- having regard to its resolution of 20 October 2010 on improving the economic governance and stability framework of the Union, in particular in the euro area ⁽⁶⁾ (hereinafter ‘the Feio Report’),

⁽¹⁾ Texts Adopted, P7_TA(2010)0276.

⁽²⁾ Texts Adopted, P7_TA(2010)0277.

⁽³⁾ Oral question 0095/2010.

⁽⁴⁾ Texts Adopted, P7_TA(2010)0253.

⁽⁵⁾ Texts Adopted, P7_TA(2010)0337.

⁽⁶⁾ Texts Adopted, P7_TA(2010)0377.