

## **THE INTERNATIONAL SECURITY ASSISTANCE FORCE (ISAF)**

### **Origins**

The International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) was created in December 2001 following the terrorist attacks on the United States (US) on 11 September 2001. At the Bonn Conference in December 2001, anti-Taliban and regional leaders began the process of reconstructing Afghanistan by setting up the Afghan Transitional Authority. The Bonn Conference also invited the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) to consider authorising the early deployment to Afghanistan of a United Nations-mandated force to assist in the maintenance of security for Kabul and its surrounding areas, noting that such a force could be progressively expanded to other urban areas and other areas.

ISAF works under a UNSC mandate. At first, this mandate was limited to providing security in and around Kabul (UNSC resolution 1386 of December 2001). The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) assumed ongoing leadership of ISAF in August 2003. Shortly afterwards, the UNSC extended ISAF's mandate to cover the whole of Afghanistan (Resolution 1510 of October 2003). US General David Petraeus assumed command of ISAF in June 2010. On 13 October 2010, the UNSC unanimously renewed ISAF's mandate for a further year.

### **Strategy**

ISAF's mission is to assist the Afghan government in the establishment of a secure and stable environment across the country. Its strategic objective is to transfer lead responsibility for security and governance to the Afghan authorities as conditions allow, permitting a phased draw-down of the international presence. ISAF is pursuing a comprehensive strategy focused on:

- conducting operations together with the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) to reduce the capability and will of the insurgency,
- training, mentoring and equipping the Afghan army and police to build their capacity and capability, and
- facilitating improvements in governance and socio-economic development, through Provincial Reconstruction Teams which work with the Afghan authorities and the UN to strengthen institutions and deliver basic services.

Prior to late 2005, ISAF was focussed on a stabilisation mission. Since 2005, this mission moved to a counter insurgency focus, which was not adequately resourced until 2009. In 2009, ISAF gave increased priority to protecting key population centres and implementing a more effective civilian partnership with the Afghan government and with the United Nations (UN) to improve governance and development in secure areas – alongside an enhanced effort to train and mentor the ANSF and the ongoing campaign against insurgent networks. In support of this strategy, NATO appointed Mark Sedwill, the former UK Ambassador to Afghanistan, as its Senior Civilian Representative in January 2010 to establish a more effective civilian-military partnership. ISAF's new strategy also includes a greater focus on partnership with Pakistan to address violent extremism in the border regions that threatens both Pakistan and Afghanistan.

### **Composition**

Coalition forces in Afghanistan now number around 140,000, comprising 120,000 ISAF troops from 47 nations and an additional US 20,000 US troops under Operation Enduring Freedom. ISAF has grown in membership and troop contributions over the last year in line with the revised ISAF strategy to accelerate the training and mentoring of Afghan forces and the progressive hand-over of security responsibility to them. Between November 2009 and August 2010, the US increased its troop commitment to ISAF from 31,855 to 78,430, ISAF's membership increased by five nations to a total of 47 and non-US troop numbers increased from 35,845 to 41,390. Between mid-2009 and today, Australia's troop strength increased from 1,090 to an average of around 1,550.







## International Security Assistance Force: Troop Contributing Nations



	Albania	295		Germany	4590		Norway	500
	Armenia	40		Greece	75		Poland	2630
	Australia	1455		Hungary	360		Portugal	250
	Austria	3		Iceland	5		Romania	1750
	Azerbaijan	90		Ireland	6		Singapore	30
	Belgium	575		Italy	3400		Slovakia	300
	Bosnia & Herzegovina	10		Jordan	6		Slovenia	70
	Bulgaria	540		Republic of Korea	270		Spain	1555
	Canada	2830		Latvia	170		Sweden	530
	Croatia	295		Lithuania	245		The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*	240
	Czech Republic	500		Luxembourg	9		Turkey	1740
	Denmark	730		Malaysia	40		Ukraine	15
	Estonia	160		Mongolia	195		United Arab Emirates	15
	Finland	80		Montenegro	30		United Kingdom	9500
	France	3750		Netherlands	380		United States	78430
	Georgia	925		New Zealand	205	<b>Total</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>119,819</b>

Note on numbers: Totals are approximations and actual numbers change daily. Number of troops should be taken as indicatives.

\* Turkey recognises the Republic of Macedonia with its constitutional name