

Begins

Afghan National Police gaining ground say MOD officials

The eventual success of NATO's ISAF mission depends on the Afghan National Police (ANP) being able to manage the security of their own districts. In a briefing today MOD officials said they were cautiously optimistic that the ANP training programme was producing results. The ANP strength is currently 116,000 and its target for the end of 2011 is to have 134,000 recruited personnel. MOD officials were confident this target would be achieved.

Many of the issues which have previously plagued the ANP are now being addressed by the NATO training mission and the E U police training mission EUPOL. During 2010 levels of funding for the ANP were addressed, as was the political leadership in the ministry of the interior. Resources have been directed towards equipment and accommodation deficiencies, and pay rates have been improved. The UK has provided funding for an additional 320 trainers, to assist at all levels of the command chain, local, district and national.

New recruits are screened for drugs and the failure rate for this has declined recently from 8% to 2%. As part of their eight week training course new recruits are given mandatory literacy training, which continues once they reach their operating post. MOD officials attribute the success of ANP training as being due to the Afghans themselves having a major role in the process. ISAF is providing funds and mentoring but more and more of the training is being done by Afghans.

At the district and village level, matters like pay and corruption are being addressed, which engenders greater respect among the community. Policemen are inspected with their equipment before they are paid, and increasingly pay parades are supervised to prevent corruption. MOD officials admitted that problems remain, but they are impressed at the speed of progress. Communities are being encouraged to send young men for training, recruits are then posted back to their own districts. As well as military aspects of counter insurgency, ANP recruits are taught basic policing skills such as evidence recovery. An Afghan version of Crime-stoppers has been introduced whereby villagers can report malign influences to provincial police HQ.

MOD officials are realistic about the problem of corruption which is being addressed, as well as the on-going challenges of literacy and the need to win over the support of villagers. They believe that by resourcing the Afghans to solve their own problems, and to take leadership, the job will be done faster.

ENDS

