

MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS
MINISTRY OF DEFENCE

Press Release

Political agreement on the Danish engagement in Afghanistan: The Danish Helmand Plan 2011-2012

The Danish Government and the Social Democrats, the Danish People's Party, the Social-Liberal Party and the Liberal Alliance have agreed on a two-year plan for the comprehensive Danish engagement in Afghanistan for 2011-2012 with a view towards 2014. The Helmand Plan involves adjustments of the Danish military engagement towards an increased focus on training of the Afghan security forces. The plan also entails a markedly strengthened police training effort as well as an increase in civilian and developmental contributions to Afghanistan.

The gradual adjustments to the Danish engagement in Afghanistan - initiated in 2010 - continue. The Danish soldiers will over the coming years gradually assume a more retracted posture, allowing the Afghan security forces to take the lead. The changed focus from combat to training of the Afghan security forces means that Denmark already in 2011 can reduce the overall number of troops with approximately 30 soldiers. The reductions will continue in the second half of 2012, reducing the overall Danish troop contribution from the current approximately 750 to approximately 650 soldiers. By the end of 2014, there will be no Danish combat units in Afghanistan, but Denmark will continue its active engagement in the country with an emphasis on development assistance.

The Danish support to the training of the Afghan police will over the coming years be strengthened. Denmark will now contribute four police trainers to the Helmand Police Training Centre. Furthermore, this February Denmark dispatched an additional police training team (POMLT) consisting of 21 officers (soldiers, military and civilian police), complimenting the Danish POMLT already present in Helmand. The objective is to improve the basic police competences of the Afghan national police. At the same time, the Danish contribution to the EU Police Mission (EUPOL) will be maintained. With the additional contributions, the Danish police training efforts in Helmand will more than double.

Foreign Minister Lene Espersen comments:

"The hand-over of security responsibilities will be initiated in 2011, in order to ensure that the Afghans can resume full responsibility for security by the end of 2014. As a

consequence, the Danish Government and the Social Democrats, the Danish People's Party, the Social-Liberal Party and the Liberal Alliance have agreed to gradually adjust the Danish

- The adjustments from combat to training will be implemented Both are areas where the Danish soldiers have proven skills.
- Long-term perspective, making it possible to finish the job.
- Doubling of the Danish police training in Helmand.
- Development assistance to Afghanistan approx. 500 million DKK per year.

engagement in the Helmand Province over the coming two years towards training, support and education of the Afghan security forces as well as a strengthening of our civilian efforts.

I am pleased that we have managed to achieve the objective from last year's Helmand Plan, namely to create the necessary conditions that would enable adjustments and if possible reductions of the Danish troop contributions from 2011. With the Plan that we have now agreed upon, the Danish Battle Group will continue until the fall of 2012, but the adjustments towards education and training will be intensified and gradual reductions of the overall troop contributions will be initiated already this year.

The agreement on the Helmand Plan 2011-2012 illustrates that there still is broad political support for the Danish engagement in Afghanistan. This is important for the Danish soldiers and their efforts. And it is important for the Danish international reputation as a responsible member of NATO."

The Helmand Plan 2011-2012 hence focuses on creating additional security improvements in Afghanistan.

Defence Minister Gitte Lillelund Bech states:

"I am very pleased with the fact that the Danish engagement in Helmand will be adjusted in a 1:1 ratio from combat to training in the beginning of 2012. Both are areas where the Danish soldiers have real and proven skills. Over the coming years, the Danish soldiers will be able to draw on the lessons from the Balkans, Iraq and Afghanistan when it comes to capacity-building of the local security forces. I am also very pleased that the plan has a long-term perspective, which gives our soldiers the opportunity to finish the job."

In addition, the plan focuses on the civilian and political development of Afghanistan. Afghanistan remains one of the least developed countries in the world and there is a great need for long-term support to the country. Therefore, Denmark will increase its development assistance to Afghanistan with 100 million DKK from 2011-2013. The annual Danish development assistance to Afghanistan thereby reaches approximately 500 million DKK, making Afghanistan the second largest recipient of Danish development assistance. The primary focuses of the assistance are stabilization, the improvement of livelihoods and education.

Development Cooperation Minister Søren Pind says:

"With the increased development assistance we are sending a clear signal to Afghanistan that we – also for the long haul – will play our part in contributing to the development of the country. Of course there are greater risks when implementing development assistance in a fragile state such as Afghanistan. But we are ready to accept those calculated risks in order to create improvements in the everyday life for the Afghan people and by that give them the faith in a better future. Accepting a degree of risks does not in any way change our zero tolerance policy when it comes to corruption and fraud. We will consequently take prompt action if it comes to our knowledge. Precisely because we are increasing the assistance to Afghanistan over the coming years, we need to know what works and whether it works to a sufficient degree. Therefore, I have decided to evaluate the development cooperation with Afghanistan in 2011."

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Below, please find a short summary of the key components of the Helmand Plan 2011-2012. The plan in English will be available in its entirety at **Fejl! Hyperlinkreferencen er ugyldig.** and a print version as soon as possible.

Press/media:

For press inquiries to the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs – please call (+45) 40 25 06 38

For press inquiries to the Danish Ministry of Defence – please call (+45) 23 23 65 00

Imagery:

You may contact the Danish Defence Media Centre for a video and still-photo package from Helmand. In order to receive a mail with the photos and a link to downloading the video (broadcast quality), please forward a mail to this address; lbv@ftv.dk.

22 February 2011

Broad political agreement on the continued Danish engagement in Afghanistan: The Danish Helmand Plan 2011-2012

The Danish Government and the Social Democrats, the Danish People's Party, the Social-Liberal Party and the Liberal Alliance have agreed on a plan for the Danish engagement in Afghanistan for 2011-2012 with a view towards the complete phasing out of Danish combat units by the end of 2014. The new Helmand Plan builds upon the results achieved by Denmark in Afghanistan over the last years as well as the Danish Afghanistan strategy for 2008-2012. **The Helmand Plan involves substantial adjustments of the Danish military engagement towards an increased focus on training and education. The plan also entails a markedly strengthened police training effort as well as an increase in civilian and developmental contributions to Afghanistan. The adjustments of the Danish engagement will allow the Danish troop contributions to be reduced from approximately 750 to approximately 720 in 2011 and to approximately 650 in 2012.**

At the NATO summit in November 2010, the Afghan Government and the international community agreed that the Afghan National Security Forces will take over the responsibility for security in Afghanistan by the end of 2014. The hand-over of security responsibilities will be initiated in 2011, making this a pivotal year for Afghanistan. The Alliance and Afghanistan also agreed to establish a long-term partnership that goes beyond 2014. **The new Danish Helmand Plan therefore prepares the ground for a continued strong Danish engagement with Afghanistan after 2014, primarily focusing on civilian development cooperation.**

As stated in the Danish Helmand Plan for 2010, the Danish engagement has over the last year sought to create the necessary conditions that will enable adjustments and reductions of the Danish troop contributions from 2011. Building on this, and in line with the plans of NATO/ISAF, the parties to this agreement have agreed that the adjustments of the Danish military engagement from combat and partnering towards training, education and support will be intensified throughout 2011 and 2012. The Danish soldiers will gradually assume a more retracted posture, allowing the Afghan security forces to take the lead. It is paramount that the capacity and capabilities of the Afghan soldiers are strengthened, enabling them to take over the responsibility themselves.

The Danish Helmand Plan 2011-2012 has been drafted in close coordination with the United Kingdom. The UK has the general lead on NATO's military and civilian efforts in the central Helmand Province. The detailed implementation of the plan will happen in coordination with our close allies in ISAF and in light of the actual conditions on the ground.

In 2011, the training and advisory roles of the Danish soldiers will be prioritized and the Danish efforts will be focused around Gereshk city. As part of this development, the Danish Battle Group intends to hand over the forward patrol bases in the so-called Patrol Base Line to the Afghan security forces around August 2011. These adjustments mean that Denmark during the second half of 2011 – on par with the US and United Kingdom – will be able to carry out a small reduction of the overall Danish troop contributions in the range of 30 soldiers.

The enhanced focus on training and education of the Afghan security forces is a precondition for the planning of further adjustments during the first half of 2012 when one of the current two combat companies of the Danish Battle Group will be transformed into a number of requested trainers, instructors and enablers. The intention is to implement these changes as part of the planned rotation of the Danish troops in February 2012.

During the second half of 2012, the overall Danish troop contribution will be further reduced to approximately 650 soldiers. The reduction will be initiated with the arrival of Team 14 in August 2012. In that connection, the Danish Battle Group will be transformed into a Danish-led Advisory and Training Battalion and a number of enablers.

The Danish engagement will be continued up until the end of 2014. The continued adjustments to and reductions of the Danish troop contributions in 2013 and 2014 will be negotiated between the parties to this agreement at the latest by the end of 2012. The Danish Government, the Social Democrats, the Danish People's Party, the Danish Social-Liberal Party and the Liberal Alliance agree that there – as also stated by the UK - will be no Danish combat units in Afghanistan by the end of 2014.

After 2014 there will possibly still be a need for an international military presence in Afghanistan as part of NATO's long term partnership with Afghanistan. A possible Danish military presence will in that case primarily consist of trainers, advisors and enabling units. The Danish engagement in Afghanistan post-2014 will be agreed by the parties to this agreement during 2014.

Developments of The Danish Military Engagement in Afghanistan

	Until now	2011	1st half of 2012	2nd half of 2012
Combat and Partnering	Battle Group Company Company Tanks Close protection Artillery Radar	Battle Group - enhanced training Company Company Tanks	Battle Group - reduced combat and more training Company Tanks	Training and Advisory Battalion Over Watch/Contingency Unit Tanks
	Training	Military 1 x Garrison Training Team 2 x Military Training Team Police 1 x Police Training Team Instructors 8 x Instructors	Military 1 x Garrison Training Teams 2 x Military Training Teams Police 2 x Police Training Teams Instructors 10 x Instructors Special Operation Forces in Military Assistance Role	Military 1 x Garrison Training Teams 2 x Military Training Teams Police 2 x Police Training Teams Instructors 14 x Instructors 70 x Army School Contribution Incl. Close Protection Special Operation Forces in Military Assistance Role
Enablers/support			Transport Plane Air Operations Centre	Transport Helicopters
	Approx 750 persons	Approx 750→720 persons	Approx 720 persons	Approx 720→650 persons
		Reduction in troop numbers	Change in Danish combat units' areas of operations	The Battle Group will be transformed to a Training and Advisory Battalion

As for police training, Denmark will contribute four police trainers to the Helmand Police Training Centre and an additional POMLT consisting of 21 officers (soldiers, military and civilian police), who will train the Afghan police in basic police work, thereby more than doubling the Danish contributions to police training in Helmand.

Overall, the Danish police training both nationally and in Helmand will contribute to ensuring that the target of an Afghan police force of 134.000 officers is reached by October 2011. Furthermore, the training will also address some of the problems still faced by the Afghan police, including the need for greater competencies as well as the fight against corruption and other crimes within the police force. The Danish police contribution will build upon the positive experiences we have achieved so far through our participation in EUPOL and the first Danish POMLT in Helmand. The Danish contribution to EUPOL will be maintained.

The focus on Afghanistan's civilian and political development must be increased with a particular emphasis on good governance and in parallel with improvements in the security situation. A stable Afghanistan is best ensured by an Afghan Government – also at provincial and district levels - with reasonably effective state structures, an Afghan Government capable of delivering basic services such as education and health to its population and an Afghan Government respecting human rights and offering its population fair living conditions.

Afghanistan remains one of the least developed countries in the world, and there is a great need for long-term developmental support to the country. Therefore, the Government, the Social Democrats, the Danish People's Party, the Danish Social-Liberal Party and the Liberal Alliance have agreed that **Denmark will increase its development assistance to Afghanistan with 100 million DKK from 2011-2013**. The annual development aid to Afghanistan thereby reaches approximately 500 million DKK, including support for Danish NGOs. The Danish development aid meets international standards as more than 50 pct. of the aid is channeled through Afghan national programs and budgets. This is the only way to ensure, that the Afghans themselves are gradually put in a position where they can take over the responsibility. With the increase, Afghanistan becomes the second-largest recipient of Danish development assistance.

The Danish development cooperation will maintain its focus on stabilization, the improvement of livelihoods and education. In addition, Denmark will strengthen the focus on women's rights and the rule of law and work towards enhancing the Afghan capacities in the area of detentions and the fight against corruption. While it is necessary to accept greater risks when working in a fragile state such as Afghanistan, it remains important to ensure the best possible results of the Danish development cooperation. Therefore, **the Danish development assistance to Afghanistan will be evaluated in 2011**.

The Danish engagement with Afghanistan is strong and for the long term. **Also after 2014, Denmark will - bilaterally and through NATO, the EU and the UN - continue the development cooperation with Afghanistan and the support for stability, peace and reconciliation**, as well as the continued development of the country with respect for basic human rights.

In the beginning of 2012, the Danish Government will report to the Parliament on the implementation of the Helmand Plan. The parties to this agreement will at that time meet again to discuss the status of the implementation of the two year Danish Helmand Plan.

22 February 2011