

KABUL CONFERENCE

Karzai's goal endorsed

BBC ONLINE

A major conference on Afghanistan has endorsed President Hamid Karzai's goal that Afghan forces should lead security operations across the country by 2014.

Mr Karzai renewed his call for Afghan control over security during the one-day conference in Kabul, attended by representatives from 70 countries.

He said delegates had approved his commitment to good governance.

The talks ended with an agreement to channel 50 percent of aid - up from 20 percent - through the Afghan government.

Mr Karzai had been lobbying for more. The final communiqué from the conference said: "The international community expressed its support for the president of Afghanistan's objective that the Afghan national security forces should lead and conduct military operations in all provinces by the end of 2014."

Earlier, Mr Karzai said a board would review which of the 34 provinces were ready for Afghan forces to step up from 2011 onwards.

UK Prime Minister David Cameron said withdrawing British troops by 2014 was a "realistic" goal.

"We're training the Afghan army month by month and it's actually on target," he said in Washington ahead of talks with US President Barack Obama.

Control says that because insurgents still control much of Afghanistan, Mr Karzai's security targets are very ambitious.

But UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, who co-hosted the conference,

said there had never before been such a concrete vision of Afghanistan's future.

Nato Secretary-General Anders Fogh Rasmussen emphasised that the transition to Afghan-led security would be

KARZAI'S PROPOSALS

For Afghan forces to take over all military and law enforcement operations nationwide by 2014

To expand army strength to more than 170,000, and police strength to 134,000, by October 2011

To reintegrate up to 36,000 ex-combatants within five years

To raise the amount of aid channelled through the Afghan government from 20% to 50%

based on "conditions, not cash". "Our mission will end when -- but only when -- the Afghans are able to maintain security on their own," he said.

US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said the US would accelerate the process of turning over security to Afghanistan's police and military from July 2011.

She emphasised this was not the end of US involvement, adding the US military commitment to Afghanistan would be matched by an unprecedented civilian surge for economic development.

Acknowledging that Mr Karzai's administration had taken steps to fight corruption, Mrs Clinton said still more needed to be done.

"There are no shortcuts to fighting corruption and improving governance. On this front, both the Afghan people and the people of the international community expect results," she said.

She also warned the Afghan government against trying to make peace with the Taliban, al-Qaeda and other militant groups the US considers irreconcilable. The Taliban have insisted they will fight until all foreign forces leave.

To allow the withdrawal of some of the 150,000 Nato-led troops from Afghanistan, Mr Karzai proposed boosting the national army to 170,000 soldiers, and the police by 134,000 officers by October 2011. Up to 36,000 former militants would be reintegrated into society.

Some analysts suggest this would leave an Afghan force too small and too poorly qualified to guarantee security.

Nato has a clear marking system to grade the capabilities of military units from one to four, where one indicates an ability to operate independently of international support.

Cameron in talks with Obama

BBC ONLINE

David Cameron is holding talks with US President Barack Obama in Washington, with the BP oil leak, Afghanistan and the global economy on the agenda.

He arrived at the White House, on his first White House visit as UK prime minister, shortly after 1600 BST. A press conference will take place later.

Mr Cameron told a US newspaper he would be "hard-headed and realistic" about UK-US relations.

The PM will also meet four US senators about the Lockerbie bomber's release.

The prime minister met Mr Obama at the G8 and G20 summits in Canada last month, but this is his first visit to the US since entering Downing Street.

Writing in the Wall Street Journal, the prime minister said he and the president had a "very clear common agenda: succeeding in Afghanistan, securing economic growth and stability at home and across the world, fighting protectionism".

He called himself "unapologetically pro-America", adding: "I understand that we are the junior partner - just as we were in the 1940s and, indeed, in the 1980s."

IRAQ INQUIRY

Ex-MI5 boss says war raised terror threat

BBC ONLINE

The increase of Iraq's 'substantial' terrorist threat to the UK, the former head of MI5 has said.

Giving evidence to the Iraq inquiry, Baroness Manningham-Buller said the action 'radicalised' a generation of young people, including UK citizens.

As a result, she said she was not 'surprised' that UK nationals were involved in the 7/7 bombings in London.

She said she believed the intelligence on Iraq's threat was not "substantial enough" to justify the action.

Baroness Manningham-Buller said she had advised officials a year before the war that the threat posed by Iraq to the UK was "very limited", and she believed that assessment had "turned out to be the right judgement".

Describing the intelligence on Iraq's weapons threat as "fragmentary", she said: "If you are going to go to war, you need to have a pretty high threshold to decide on that."

The Chilcot inquiry is continuing to hear evidence about decisions taken in the build-up to the invasion and its aftermath.

Baroness Manningham-Buller, head of the domestic intelligence service between 2002 and 2007, said the terrorist threat to the UK from al-Qaeda and other groups "pre-dated" the Iraq invasion and also the 9/11 attacks in the US.

However, she said the UK's "undoubtedly increased" the level of terrorist threat.

A year after the invasion, she said MI5 was "swamped" by leads about terrorist threats to the UK.

"Our involvement in Iraq, for want of a better word, radicalised a whole generation of young people, some of them British citizens who saw



our involvement in Iraq, on top of our involvement in Afghanistan, as being an attack on Islam," she said.

The ex-MI5 chief said she shared her concerns that the Iraq invasion would increase the UK's exposure to terrorism with the then home secretary David Blunkett but did not 'recall' discussing the matter with prime minister Tony Blair.

MI5 did not "foresee the degree to which British citizens would become involved" in terrorist activity after 2004, she admitted.

"What Iraq did was produce fresh impetus on people prepared to engage in terrorism," she said, adding that she could produce evidence to back this up.

"The Iraq war heightened the extremist view that the West was trying to bring down Islam. We gave Bin Laden his jihad."

Lady Manningham-Buller said MI5 was given a budget increase after 9/11 and again in 2002 but the agency still needed far greater resources as a result of the Iraq invasion.

"By 2003 I found it necessary to ask the prime minister for a doubling of our budget," she said. "This is unheard of, certainly unheard of today, but he and the Treasury and the chancellor accepted that because I was able to demonstrate the scale of the problem that we were confronted by."

Baroness Manningham-Buller was part of the government's Joint Intelligence Committee before the war, which drew up the controversial dossier on Iraq's alleged weapons of mass destruction in September 2002. The dossier stated the weapons could be activated with 45 minutes of an order to do so.

Asked about the dossier, she said she had very limited involvement in its compilation but it was clear, with hindsight, that there was an "over-reliance" on double intelligence.

Indian diplomat charged with spying for Pak

Police said

AFP, New Delhi

A junior Indian diplomat arrested for allegedly spying for Pakistan was charged yesterday under the official secrets act, police said.

Madhuri Gupta, who had been working in the Indian embassy in Islamabad prior to her arrest, was booked under three sections of the act, Deputy Police Commissioner Shibesh Singh told AFP.

Gupta, 53, worked in the embassy's information service. She was called back to New Delhi in April on the pretext of consultations before police swooped on her at home.

Her lawyer, Joginder Dasiya, confirmed that charges had been filed in court.

"When I get the copy tomorrow morning (of the police charges) I will be able to comment. At the moment I have no details," Dasiya said.

Depending on the precise nature of the charges, Gupta could face a prison sentence of anywhere between three and 14 years if convicted.

According to Indian police, Gupta had been under surveillance for six months before she was taken into custody.

She had worked in the Indian mission for nearly three years and news reports said she was alleged to have passed on information from the Islamabad head of India's external intelligence service.

Former diplomats said Gupta would in theory have had limited access in her role in the information wing.



Yellow balloons float above some three thousand farmers from all over Italy belonging to Coldiretti, Italy's main agricultural union organisation, protesting in front of the Italian parliament in central Rome yesterday. Farmers are demanding reimbursement of fines imposed over 20 years due to milk quota restrictions.

PHOTO: AFP

Villagers

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start distributing compensation within the shortest possible time after conducting a survey. Sources said the BCMCL authorities would pay compensation for crops and repairing houses and provide jobs to affected people in BCMCL.

It also decided to form a committee comprising of representatives of the affected villagers, BCMCL officials, and officials of Dinajpur district administration and police for the survey. The committee will visit the affected areas today to assess the loss by subsidence.

Apart from 15 members of Jibon O Shampad Raksha Committee, officials of BCMCL including General Manager Mir Abdul Moteen and its AGM ABM Kamruzzaman (Hydrology and Mining), Assistant Superintendent of police Sanjit Kumar Roy and Parbatipur Upazila Nirbahi Officer Mujibul Ferdous were also present in the meeting. The meeting sat around 10:30pm Monday at BCMCL rest house.

The rail and road communications in the area resumed since the strike was called off.

Meanwhile, coal supply to Barapukuria 250MW Power Plant remained suspended since Monday afternoon as the agitating villagers slashed BCMCL's conveyer belt that was used to carry coal to the plant.

The plant is now running on reserve coal, which is likely to be finished in about three days. BCMCL sources said they started repairing the belt from yesterday but it would take some time.

The power plant authorities yesterday filed a general diary with Parbatipur Police Station in this regard.

INDEPENDENT UNIVERSITY, BANGLADESH Undergraduate Programme Admission Autumn 2010. Includes details on admission eligibility, test exemptions, scholarships, and program lists.

Carrier advertisement for Haroon Engineering Limited. Features the Carrier logo, slogan 'Turn to the Experts', and lists showrooms in Dhaka, Hatirpool, Kaptaan Bazar, Sylhet, and Bogra. Includes contact information for Haroon Engineering Limited.