



Plenary sitting

B8-0678/2017

11.12.2017

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

to wind up the debate on the statement by the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy

pursuant to Rule 123(2) of the Rules of Procedure

on the situation in Afghanistan
(2017/2932(RSP))

Cristian Dan Preda, Arnaud Danjean, José Ignacio Salafranca Sánchez-Neyra, Sandra Kalniete, David McAllister, Dubravka Šuica, Laima Liucija Andrikienė, Elmar Brok, Daniel Caspary, Lorenzo Cesa, Michael Gahler, Manolis Kefalogiannis, Tunne Kelam, Andrey Kovatchev, Eduard Kukan, Alojz Peterle, Julia Pitera, Tokia Saïfi, Jaromír Štětina
on behalf of the PPE Group

**European Parliament resolution on the situation in Afghanistan
(2017/2932(RSP))**

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the Communiqué of 4 and 5 October 2016 issued by the Brussels Conference on Afghanistan,
 - having regard to its previous resolutions on Afghanistan, in particular those of 26 November 2015 on the situation in Afghanistan, in particular the killings in the province of Zabul¹ and of 13 June 2013 on the negotiations on an EU-Afghanistan cooperation agreement on partnership and development²,
 - having regard to the Council conclusions on Afghanistan of 18 July 2016,
 - having regard to the statement made by the UN Security Council President on 14 September 2016 on the situation in Afghanistan,
 - having regard to UN Security Council Resolution 2210 (2015) on Afghanistan,
 - having regard to the joint communication from the Commission and the EEAS to the European Parliament and the Council on ‘Elements for an EU Strategy on Afghanistan’ of 24 July 2016 (JOIN(2017)0031),
 - having regard to the results of the Brussels International Conference on Afghanistan of 5 October 2016 co-chaired by the European Union,
 - having regard to the Human Rights Watch (HRW) report of 13 February 2017 entitled ‘Pakistan Coercion, UN Complicity: The Mass Forced Return of Afghan Refugees’,
 - having regard to the signing of the EU-Afghanistan Cooperation Agreement on Partnership and Development (CAPD) on 18 February 2017 and its subsequent ratification by Afghanistan,
 - having regard to the HRW World Report 2017,
 - having regard to the Foreign Affairs Council conclusions on Afghanistan of 16 October 2017,
 - having regard to Rule 123(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas, since 2002, the European Union and its Member States have been committed to combating terrorism and extremism and achieving sustainable peace, stability and development in Afghanistan;

¹ Texts adopted, P8_TA(2015)0412.

² Texts adopted, P7_TA(2013)0282.

- B. whereas the EU has contributed billions of euros in humanitarian and developmental aid and assistance to Afghanistan; whereas the EU and its Member States together are the largest donors to Afghanistan, expecting to provide up to EUR 5 billion during the period 2017-2020 as pledged during the Brussels International Conference on Afghanistan;
- C. whereas ensuring democracy, human rights, the rule of law, and good governance during the transition period in Afghanistan and into its 'Decade of Transformation' (2015-2024) is essential for establishing a stable and prosperous state;
- D. whereas endemic corruption, entrenched patronage systems, and the inability of the politically fractured Afghan Government to move forward on reforms threaten to reduce progress and reverse past achievements;
- E. whereas the EU's four priority areas critical to achieving progress in Afghanistan concern: a) promoting peace, stability and regional security; b) reinforcing democracy, the rule of law and human rights and promoting good governance and women's empowerment; c) supporting economic and human development; d) addressing challenges related to migration;
- F. whereas following the 2014 presidential election crisis, the Government of National Unity (GNU) has experienced stalled progress on its reform agenda prompting an increasingly unstable political situation;
- G. whereas a resurgent Taliban, Al-Qaeda, and a newly emerging local franchise of the Islamic State (IS) in Afghanistan (Islamic State of Khorasan Province (ISKP)), alongside large numbers of Afghani migrants returning home mainly from Pakistan, threaten to turn already existing instability into a larger-scale conflict, further threatening regional stability;
- H. whereas according to the US Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR) 6 785 members of the Afghan forces were killed and another 11 777 wounded between January and November 2016, and whereas the UN Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) also reported a 3 % increase in the number of civilian casualties (3 498 killed and 7 920 wounded) in 2016 compared with the previous year;
- I. whereas there has been an increase in poppy production in Afghanistan and spiking drug usage in neighbouring Iran in recent years; whereas this illicit drug trade is used by the Taliban to fund its operations; whereas limiting or eliminating this trade would be mutually advantageous for Iran and Afghanistan; whereas opium from Afghanistan is the main source of heroin in the EU; whereas working with Iran and other border countries, such as Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, is necessary to further limit the flow of opiates to European markets;
- J. whereas reports indicate that Afghanistan has between one and three trillion dollars of undeveloped mineral reserves; whereas illicit mining is a major problem that threatens to turn a potential driver of Afghani development into a source of conflict and instability; whereas mining is the Taliban's second largest source of revenue;
- K. whereas the NATO-led Resolute Support Mission will increase its current troop level

from 13 000 to 16 000; whereas, in August 2017, the US decided to increase its military footprint as part of the new US South Asia Strategy;

1. Recalls that Afghanistan has been torn apart by nearly 40 years of conflict and war, which has led to the destruction of the country, to more than a million casualties and the forced exile of a significant part of the population, and to what is now in effect a failed state;
2. Highlights that under the Taliban regime Afghanistan emerged to become one of the most fertile grounds for the spread of terrorism, resulting in the tragic events of 9/11; points out, however, that since the intervention of the international community Afghanistan has undergone significant changes;
3. Recalls that Afghanistan in the last decade and a half has achieved progress in the political, security, economic and development spheres; highlights that the GDP per capita has increased fivefold, life expectancy has increased by almost 15 years, and there has been a significant increase in the number of girls attending schools in comparison to 2001, the figure today being some 40 % of the total of 8 to 9 million children; stresses that none of the above would have been possible but for the dedication of the Afghan population and the commitment of the international community, and the provision of funds, know-how and personnel on the ground;
4. Underlines that the progress achieved is very fragile and reversible; emphasises that advancing it will require further reforms to take place, stable relations with neighbours and the continued provision of a necessary level of security and stability; regrets that in recent years the security situation in Afghanistan has deteriorated and the country faces increasing insurgent and terrorist pressure, with bombings and terrorist attacks taking place on an almost daily basis; underlines that democratic institutions continue to be weak and the electoral framework fragile; deplores the fact that human rights, particularly those of woman and children, are threatened daily; points out that a lack of infrastructure and an increase in the number of people returning to Afghanistan from neighbouring countries endanger the economic and social progress achieved to date;
5. Pays tribute to the efforts and sacrifice of the international community which provided security to Afghanistan for over a decade through Operation Enduring Freedom and the ISAF mission in Afghanistan, during which nearly 3 500 servicemen and women died; welcomes the 39-nation NATO-led Resolute Support Mission operating since 1 January 2015, which is mandated to train, advise and assist the Afghan security forces and institutions; recalls that the Afghani National Security Forces (ANSF) are fully responsible for combat operations, which were taken over from ISAF on 1 January 2015;
6. Strongly believes that an inclusive Afghan-led and Afghan-owned peace and reconciliation process is the only viable path towards the sustainable resolution of the conflict; welcomes Afghan initiatives for peace such as the Kabul Process for Peace and Security Cooperation; reconfirms the EU's strong commitment to support any initiatives leading to peace, security and stability in Afghanistan;
7. Underscores the importance of Afghanistan for regional stability; emphasises that a secure, stable and prosperous Afghanistan is vital for peace and stability in the region as

a whole; reiterates, in this context, the importance of regional partners, such as the countries of Central Asia, Iran, China, India and Pakistan; encourages them to cooperate constructively to promote a genuine and results-oriented negotiation process without preconditions; expresses support for the 'Heart of Asia' process launched in Istanbul in 2012 with the aim of building stability and prosperity in the region;

8. Reiterates the need for the international community to continue its engagement in Afghanistan and to contribute to rebuilding the country, developing the economy and resisting terrorism; is encouraged, in this context, by the commitments made by the international community during the Brussels International Conference on Afghanistan, which pledged some EUR 13.6 billion in support until 2020;
9. Considers that a lack of security and endemic corruption are the two biggest challenges hampering the normal functioning and development of Afghanistan; reiterates that the security situation in Afghanistan has deteriorated and terrorist attacks have increased; is alarmed by the ongoing territorial expansion of the Taliban and by the emergence of ISKP and strengthening of Al Qaeda terrorist groups; recognises that ISKP has the potential to become the biggest threat to security in Afghanistan in the near future;
10. Expresses strong concern about the emergence of ISKP as the latest element to contribute to the increasing fragility of the security landscape in Afghanistan; underlines that in addition to its stronghold in the east of the country (Nangarhar) it is attempting to assert its presence in the north of the country with the assistance of the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU); highlights that, should this be successful, an environment conducive to the harbouring of foreign fighters and militants will be created, as they are pushed out of Iraq and Syria, on account of IS military setbacks in those two countries;
11. Underscores the importance of a genuine internal reconciliation process; calls for the EU to actively support an Afghan-led disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration programme for former insurgents; underscores the need to fight radicalisation, extremism and recruitment for terrorist organisations; recalls that addressing the root causes of the above-mentioned problems is related to creating incentives for economic development and growth for the population at large;
12. Underlines that combating terrorism and its financing is a key ingredient of creating an environment conducive to security in Afghanistan; emphasises the need to strengthen the capacities of the Afghan National Defence and Security Forces (ANSF), to which the NATO Resolute Support mission focused on training, advice and assistance significantly contributes; commends the great sacrifice of the ANSF, which endure heavy losses on an annual basis in their fight against insurgents; recalls the international community's annual contribution of approximately USD 1 billion to sustain the ANSF's financing until 2020;
13. Condemns the recent terrorist attacks in Afghanistan, particularly the suicide bombing of the Imam Zaman Shia mosque in Kabul on 20 October 2017 and the attack on the privately owned TV station Shamshad in Kabul on 7 November 2017; points out that ISIS/Daesh claimed responsibility for both attacks; expresses concern about the deteriorating humanitarian situation and the high number of civilian casualties resulting from terrorist attacks;

14. Highlights the importance of the EU-Afghanistan Cooperation Agreement on Partnership and Development, which is the first contractual relationship between the two parties; trusts that the application of the agreement will strengthen the bilateral relationship and cooperation in the areas of human rights, particularly the rights of woman and children, the rule of law, health, rural development, education, science and technology, combating corruption, money laundering, financing of terrorism, organised crime and narcotics, as well as cooperation on migration;
15. Supports the new EU strategy on Afghanistan as presented on 24 July 2017, which is an attempt to comprehensively tackle the challenges facing Afghanistan, focusing on promoting peace, stability and regional security, strengthening democracy, the rule of law and human rights and promoting good governance and women's empowerment, as well as supporting economic and human development and addressing challenges related to migration;
16. Welcomes the commitment of the GNU to pursue the priorities enshrined in the 'Afghanistan National Peace and Development Framework', with a view to achieving self-reliance, particularly by reducing dependence on external aid and giving economic possibilities to the population; strongly calls on the GNU to address the pressing matters of corruption, mismanagement, waste, drug trafficking and security for the people;
17. Expresses concern about the increasing resurgence of violence against women and the removal of provisions for women and their rights in Afghanistan; calls on the Afghan parliament and the GNU to repeal all laws containing discriminatory elements against women, which are in breach of the International Treaties signed by Afghanistan;
18. Calls on the governments of Afghanistan and Pakistan to work together on security and terror issues, and encourages intelligence sharing and cooperation in order to fight terrorists and extremists on both sides of the border; highlights the problem of sanctuaries for insurgent groups in Pakistan, which needs to be addressed by the authorities in Islamabad;
19. Takes note of the activities of the Quadrilateral Coordination Group (QCG) on Afghanistan comprising the US, China, Afghanistan and Pakistan, as established in December 2015; appreciates the efforts to date in the form of the roadmap aimed at facilitating direct talks between the GNU and the Taliban; regrets however that there has been no tangible progress in this endeavour leading to an Afghan-led, Afghan-owned peace and reconciliation process;
20. Reiterates the importance of the dialogue and cooperation with Afghanistan on migration issues, including returns and readmissions, combating migrant smuggling and trafficking in human beings; underscores the importance of full implementation of the EU-Afghanistan Joint Way Forward and bilateral arrangements with Member States;
21. Expresses its deepest concern over the massive increase in the number of internally displaced people in 2016, with over 653 000 new displacements, which could lead to a massive humanitarian crisis; encourages all parties involved to provide for these vulnerable Afghans, and calls on the GNU to help in reintegrating them into Afghan society; stresses that, according to estimates by the Afghan authorities, UN agencies and other humanitarian agencies, over 9.3 million people will have required humanitarian

assistance by the end of 2017;

22. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the Council, the Commission, the Governments and Parliaments of the Member States, and the Government and Parliament of Afghanistan.