



Security Council

Fifty-seventh year

4479th meeting

Wednesday, 27 February 2002, 10.30 a.m.
New York

Provisional

<i>President:</i>	Mr. Aguilar Zinser	(Mexico)
<i>Members:</i>	Bulgaria	Mr. Tafrov
	Cameroon	Mr. Mbayu
	China	Mr. Wang Yingfan
	Colombia	Mr. Franco
	France	Mr. Doutriaux
	Guinea	Mr. Fall
	Ireland	Mr. Ryan
	Mauritius	Mr. Gokool
	Norway	Mr. Kolby
	Russian Federation	Mr. Lavrov
	Singapore	Mr. Mahbubani
	Syrian Arab Republic	Mr. Wehbe
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Jeremy Greenstock
	United States of America	Mr. Negroponte

Agenda

The situation in Afghanistan.

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The meeting was called to order at 10.35 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Afghanistan

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, and in the absence of objection, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Mr. Kieran Prendergast, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs.

It is so decided.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

At this meeting, the Security Council will hear a briefing by Mr. Kieran Prendergast, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs.

I welcome Mr. Prendergast and I give him the floor.

Mr. Prendergast: In previous briefings to the Council we described the emergence of "embryo" political institutions from a chaotic political context stamped by long years of war. The resilience of those fragile institutions has been tested and continues to be tested, and the nature of the challenges against them is coming into sharper focus. Political progress has occurred at a rate that, I believe, was faster than most people expected. Those elements who have the most to lose from a stable and democratic order in Afghanistan have begun to react.

The next landmark on the road to stability mapped out in the Bonn process is the convening of an emergency loya jirga, due on 22 June, which in turn will lead to the formation of a transitional authority. Whether or not the Loya Jirga is held in a climate free from fear or intimidation will depend on whether or not Afghanistan's nascent institutions are able to impose themselves now against the threats of disorder. While the Interim Authority carries the prime responsibility for that, the international community, and the Security Council in particular, also have an important role to play.

If I may, I will outline the rudiments of the political order emerging in Afghanistan.

The two most urgent tasks for the Interim Administration were the setting up of the Special Independent Commission for the Convening of the Emergency Loya Jirga and re-establishing the civil service. As the Council knows, the members of the Loya Jirga Commission were named on 25 January, in compliance with the Bonn Agreement, in the presence of the Secretary-General, and the Commission was inaugurated on 7 February. The Commission has been making progress towards formulating the rules and procedures for the convening and the conduct of the Loya Jirga. Those are expected to be announced on 21 March, the Afghan new year.

The Commissioners, accompanied by United Nations staff, have begun to undertake visits to Afghanistan's provinces, with a view to increasing awareness of the Commission's role and to solicit advice from the people about how to make the Loya Jirga as representative and as fair as possible. Very successful public meetings have been held in Ghowr, Bamian, Paktia, Nangahar and Laghman provinces, where Afghans have demonstrated overwhelming support for the Emergency Loya Jirga, including support for the participation of women.

At the same time, Afghans have expressed the fear that armed groups could affect the selection or election — because the Bonn Agreement provides for both — of delegates to the Loya Jirga. The Commission has so far been able to operate without interference from outside parties, but there are legitimate fears that political pressure on the Commission will increase substantially as the date for the formation of the Loya Jirga approaches. Reports have already been received of widespread lobbying and the distribution of money by powerful figures who are trying to get large numbers of their supporters into the Loya Jirga. The Commission is working to develop mechanisms to minimize those risks and temptations, and Mr. Brahimi's Office is monitoring the process closely.

I would like here to note with gratitude that the Loya Jirga Commission was provided with \$500,000 by the United Kingdom Government to cover its logistic and administrative costs. That timely grant allowed the Commission to begin its crucial work

immediately, which was an important consideration given the pressure to adhere to the Bonn timetable.

The second priority, namely, the re-establishment of the civil service, has also seen significant progress. Most importantly, the Interim Administration was able to pay the salaries of public servants in January and February. This not only allowed civil servants to return to work and to begin performing the functions of government, but it also sent an important signal about the reliability and constancy of the Interim Authority. Salary payments were made out of the Interim Administration fund administered by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Here, I would like to thank all countries that have contributed to that fund for their generosity and to note again the excellent job done by UNDP in delivering that money to the Government in as timely a manner as possible despite the absence of a modern banking infrastructure.

Perhaps the Council will also allow me to remind it, however, of Mr. Brahimi's urgings to the Group of 21, and to the Council during his recent visit, for the delivery of the millions of additional dollars that are needed immediately. Without those millions being available today, the billions pledged at Tokyo may be of much less use. As we have previously said, the Interim Authority needs bread today more than the promise of cake tomorrow.

The Interim Authority and Mr. Brahimi's Office have now turned their attention to the establishment of the judicial commission and the human rights commission. Those two bodies will work to provide the foundations for not only the rule of law in Afghanistan, but also for the fair rule of just law. The recent history of Afghanistan has been such that its population has not only experienced the absence of law, but also the tyranny of so-called law.

Another encouraging political development has been the diplomacy of Chairman Karzai and his Administration. In visits to neighbouring countries whose support and non-interference are critical for the success of the Bonn process, the Interim Administration has mended fences and forged good relations. Mr. Karzai himself has been an ambassador not only for Afghanistan's dire needs, which require international assistance, but also for Afghanistan's aspirations, which are built on the principles of international responsibility and cooperation.

Most heartening, however, has been the positive reaction to the Bonn process by Afghans, who have been victimized by war for so long. Their overwhelming support has manifested itself in various ways: through the enthusiastic reaction of the population to Mr. Karzai during his recent visits to Herat and Jalalabad, through the eager participation in the work of the Loya Jirga Commission of people in the provinces, and through the number of Afghan refugees voluntarily returning to their country.

Chairman Karzai has said that his greatest asset is the Afghan people. It is all too easy to forget that this is the first time in many that ordinary people have had a chance to express themselves; previously their voice had been stifled by war or by oppression or by both. They are signalling a strong and clear desire for the Bonn process to work, and for those who are resisting it, or undermining it, to cease doing so.

That brings me to the issue of security in Afghanistan. It is becoming increasingly difficult to separate issues relating to security from those relating to political developments. The most basic function of a State, after all, is to assure the security of its citizens from outside aggression or internal injustice.

Despite the generally positive progress on the political front, the Interim Authority has recently faced two major security threats, which Mr. Brahimi mentioned during his briefing here on 6 February. Those were a mobilization of rival factions in the northern city of Mazar-e-Sharif and a battle between rival Governors in the southern city of Gardeyz.

In the north, following mediation by the Interim Authority and the United Nations, the situation has grown calmer. A 600-strong multi-ethnic police force and a security commission with representation from all the political parties was created, and armed units have been withdrawn to barracks. Nonetheless, fighting nearby between two garrison commanders resulted in two deaths and several wounded. There are also reports in the north of harassment of ethnic Pashtuns by Tajiks and Uzbeks.

In Gardeyz, the threat of renewed fighting remains, although the situation has been so far stabilized following Chairman Karzai's appointment of a new governor there. In both situations, therefore, the authority of the Interim Administration has been sufficiently respected by political and military players

outside Kabul to prevent a widespread return to war and to warlordism.

At the same time, the Interim Authority is being increasingly challenged in other areas. Low-intensity fighting has been reported in Farah province between three rival leaders jostling for power. In Kandahar, the disarmament programme is continuing, although some groups have actively resisted handing over their weapons to the local government. According to recent press reports, the Governor of Helmand said that he would defy the Interim Authority's ban on opium production, because Kabul did not have the power to enforce it. And, of course, in Kabul itself, as was widely reported, the Transport Minister was brutally killed for motives that might have been political.

Despite recent breaches of security in Kabul that were reported by the international press, in general the crime rate has fallen and security has improved. This improvement is in no small part due to the performance of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), which reached its full operational capacity on the eighteenth of this month and has 4,500 troops who are conducting 30 daily patrols around the clock. Such patrolling is to increase during the coming weeks in order to tackle the lawless elements in Kabul. Special attention will be focused on District Five in west Kabul after two shooting incidents involving ISAF troops.

Training of the first battalion of the new Afghan Army by ISAF has also begun. The new recruits have been arriving from around the country for incorporation into what is to be an ethnically and geographically balanced corps. An assessment team from the United States recently spent several days in Kabul discussing the formation of a new Afghan Army and the United States contribution to training.

The creation of an Afghan police force was advanced by a meeting on international support for the Afghan police force in Berlin on 13 February. The meeting was attended by 18 countries and by 11 international organizations, including the United Nations. The Government of Germany presented its report from a recent fact-finding mission to Kabul and generously pledged 10 million euros in 2002 to support the training of Afghan police and the renovation of police buildings. The German Government has also donated 50 vehicles, which are arriving in the capital. Other significant contributions were promised by Belgium, India, Norway, Pakistan and Russia. The

United Kingdom has already provided communications equipment and uniforms. A further meeting on policing is planned for March, when participants are expected to present more detailed plans.

At the same time, I ought to point out that ISAF remains limited to Kabul, while the main threats to the Interim Authority emanate from the provinces. There is a continuing danger, therefore, that the existing security apparatus, both Afghan and international, does not adequately address the security threats that are currently discernible and that are likely to increase as the convening of the Emergency Loya Jirga approaches. We are, of course, well aware that there is a great deal of debate on this subject in the capitals of the countries represented here and of ISAF contributors. I can only reiterate what has been said before by the Secretary-General and by his Special Representative, as well as by Chairman Karzai, namely, that the question of security continues to be the foremost concern, and the manner in which it is addressed by the international community and the Afghans together may well determine in the very near future whether or not the Bonn process succeeds.

I would like to now turn to an issue that is also deeply affected by the security situation, and that is the status of our humanitarian activities in Afghanistan. The United Nations and non-governmental organizations are continuing to solidify their presence throughout the country, thereby increasing our ability to reach the most vulnerable. The ability of aid agencies to deliver non-food items has been bolstered by the arrival of a third Hercules aircraft. Tajikistan has confirmed that an additional five border crossings will be opened to speed the delivery of humanitarian assistance.

Aid agencies, in collaboration with the Interim Administration, will start a programme to help those who are displaced within Afghanistan and refugees in neighbouring countries to return to their homes. A three-week pilot repatriation scheme is due to start on the first of March for refugees in Pakistan who want to go back to the eastern region of Afghanistan. Over this period, the return of some 200 families per day will be assisted by the provision of a lump sum payment. A similar exercise is planned for Kandahar. The main refugee return programme is tentatively planned to start in early April.

However, I need to add that a new wave of refugees from Afghanistan to Pakistan highlights a chronic lack of stability. Since the beginning of this month, nearly 20,000 Afghans have arrived at Pakistan's Chaman border after travelling for weeks in search of aid and protection. Hundreds continue to arrive every day. According to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), many of the new refugees are ethnic Pashtuns fleeing human rights abuses in various areas of the country.

The World Food Programme (WFP) has delivered more than 325,000 metric tons of food aid into Afghanistan since October 2001. Approximately 38 per cent of WFP aid this month has entered from Termez in Uzbekistan, which makes it the most significant food logistics entry route into Afghanistan at present. WFP's general urban distribution in Kandahar city will begin on 14 March and will target some 360,000 people with 3,000 metric tons of food, following similar one-off distributions in Kabul, Herat and Mazar-e-Sharif.

A rapid assessment of internally displaced persons has been taking place to establish accurate numbers, locations of origin, their needs and whether they are willing to return home. The plan is to shift the focus of assistance from the internally displaced person camps to the places where those people will return.

Finally, tomorrow, the updated financial requirements for the International Transitional Assistance Programme will be presented in Kabul. This document, which has been prepared in close consultation with the Interim Administration, presents the immediate humanitarian needs in Afghanistan for 2002. I would like to echo the calls of the Secretary-General and Mr. Brahimi to the international community to continue to support the Interim Authority and the people of Afghanistan, whose dire needs, in many cases, are only now being revealed.

Before concluding, I would like to touch briefly on the status of the United Nations mission in Afghanistan. First, I am pleased to report that the new Deputy Special Representative, Nigel Fisher,

arrived in Kabul on 14 February. He will lead the United Nations programmes for relief, recovery and reconstruction. We hope to name shortly the Deputy for the political side.

The Office of Mr. Brahimi also has a police adviser, temporarily seconded from the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, who will liaise with the Interior Ministry and give advice to security organizations in Afghanistan. Finally, a human rights adviser has arrived at the mission, on temporary loan from the Office of the High Commissioner. On 9 March there will be an Afghan human rights workshop, which is set to coincide with the visit to Kabul of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Mary Robinson, and with the celebration of International Women's Day. It is hoped that this workshop will set the basis for the setting up of the Human Rights Commission to which I referred earlier in this briefing.

The United Nations system is putting the final touches on its plan for the new Mission, which will be called the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA). These will be presented soon to the Council in the form of a report of the Secretary-General. Meanwhile, financial and administrative measures necessary to facilitate the establishment and support of an integrated United Nations mission in Afghanistan have been taken on the basis, Mr. President, of your letter of 8 February and subsequent decisions taken by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ). For this, and for all the other forms — tangible and intangible — in which the Council has been supporting our efforts to assist Afghanistan's return to stability, I thank the Council very much.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Mr. Prendergast for his comprehensive briefing.

In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I should now like to invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion on the subject.

The meeting rose at 11.05 a.m.