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VVD to back extension of Dutch NATO mission

Published: Tuesday 18 December 2007 13:51 UTC

Last updated: Tuesday 18 December 2007 13:51 UTC

The Hague (18 December) - The conservative VVD have decided to back the extension of the Dutch NATO mission to Afghanistan. Parliamentary party chairman Hans van Baalen said his party was unanimous.

There is however one condition. The Dutch government has to promise in writing that the last Dutch soldier leaves the Afghan province of Uruzgan by the end of 2010.

The coalition government is expected to promise this in a debate in the Lower House on Tuesday evening. Mr Van Baalen welcomed the cabinet's assurances on the mission's funding.

The VVD support means that the government can bank on a majority in parliament. Parliamentarians from the ruling parties - the Christian Democrats, Christian Union and Labour - as well as the SGP also support extending the mission.

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