

English

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Dutch mission in Uruzgan: two years

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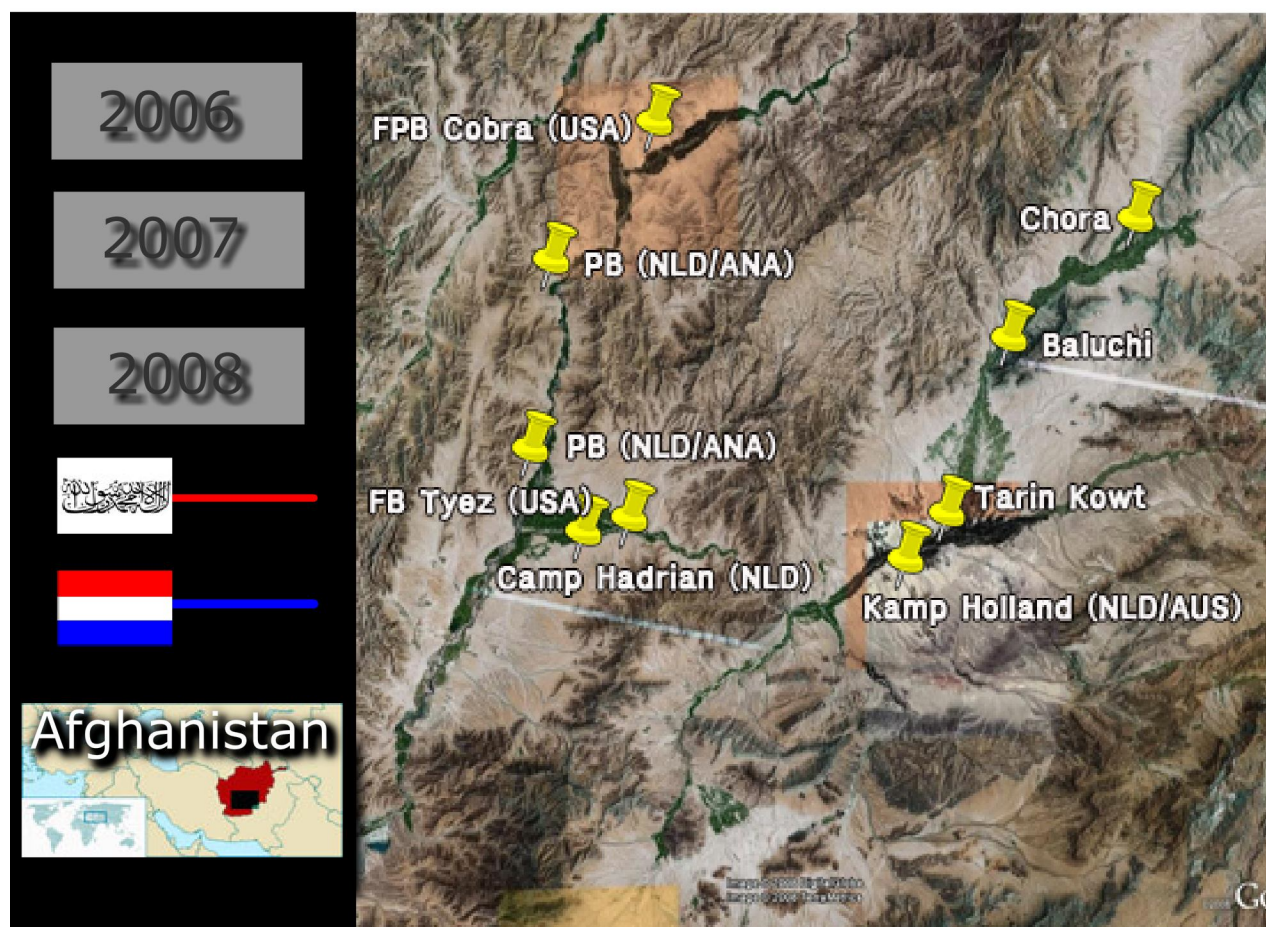
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The 1st of August 2008 marks the end of the '1st phase' of the Dutch NATO mission in the Afghan province of Uruzgan. The 2nd phase will last until the 1st of August 2010 and will be characterised by a greater contribution from other countries than Australia, which has been in Uruzgan since the start of the mission.

The Czech Republic, France, Hungary, Singapore and Slovakia have either sent a contingent or will do so in the near future. The main task of the mission continues to be to help the Afghan authorities maintain security so that the United Nations and NGOs can help with humanitarian assistance and reconstruction.

Our overview gives a brief description of how the security situation in Uruzgan has developed since 1 August 2006. The overview includes information collected by Radio Netherlands Worldwide over the past two years as well as data from the Defence Ministry and other sources. It provides a raw sketch which only presents the "frontlines" of the Task Force Uruzgan and the Taliban.

(Click on the year to see troop movements)



The graphics do not describe the activities of the United States troops, the Australian Special Forces, the Afghan army and the police. In addition, they only give an approximate picture since there is still a chance of attacks and roadside bombs in the safe areas (in blue), while ISAF troops also operate in areas which are mostly controlled by the Taliban and other groups (in red).

Key military developments in the period 2006-2008

2006

1 March: the Deployment Task Force starts to make preparations for the arrival of the Task Force Uruzgan. The Taliban capture Chora, but US and Afghan soldiers drive them out of the area. In July, Australian commandos clear the Baluchi Valley of rebels, while Dutch commandos clear a nearby ridge.

On 1 August, the Dutch-Australian Task Force Uruzgan begins its joint mission. The original goal was to secure the important population centres in southern Uruzgan - Tarin Kowt and Deh Rawod and their surrounding areas.

2007

In June, the Taliban and foreign fighters launch a massive attack in the Chora district. They are driven out after heavy fighting. Dutch troops are engaged in the fiercest fighting since the Korean War in the 1950s. Afterwards the NATO-led forces begin an operation in the Baluchi and Chora valleys.

Taliban and foreign fighters launch an offensive in the Deh Rawod district at the end of the summer. They capture a number of areas including the agricultural region (green zone) and the western bank of the Helmand river until US, Afghan and Dutch troops drive them out in February 2008. Some parts of the Baluchi Valley and the Chora Valley remain unsafe.

2008

Dutch and Australian troops launch a successful operation to secure the Baluchi Valley. Permanent forward bases are constructed for the Afghan army. In June, elections are held in the Chora district, the first of their kind in Afghanistan.

On the western bank of the Helmand River, Dutch/Afghan patrol posts are built in regions that were previously in the hands of the Taliban. Part of the area directly to the north of Tarin Kowt is considered safe. However the Mirabad region to the east of Tarin Kowt remains volatile.

Number of foreign troops in Uruzgan

Dutch Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT, coordinates reconstruction projects): 80*

Dutch Battle Group: 500

Dutch Special Forces Task Group 'Viper' (commandos and marines), when present in Uruzgan: approx. 185

Total number of Dutch troops in Uruzgan: 1300 (+185 Special Forces)

Smaller contingents under Dutch command: Czech

Republic, France, Slovakia. Hungary and Singapore are to follow.

Australian Reconstruction Task Force (under Dutch command): 400

Australian Special Operations Task Group (under ISAF command): 300.

United States: unknown and secret . Estimate: some 100 Special Forces in four locations.

* all numbers are approximate

* RNW translation (fs)

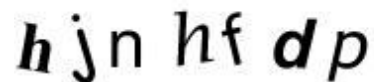
Tags: Afghanistan, Dutch troops, ISAF, NATO, Taliban, Uruzgan



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