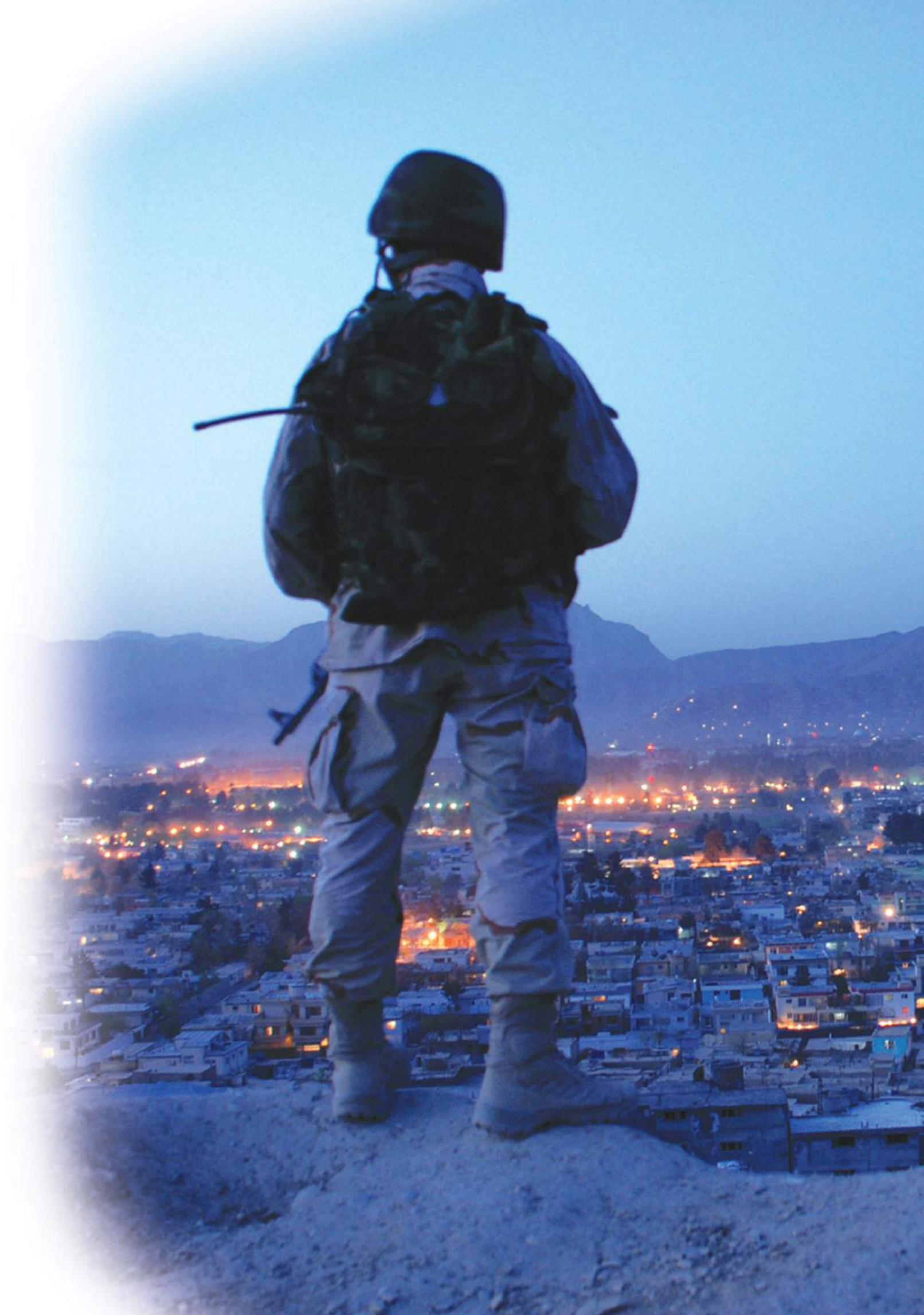


МИНИСТЕРСТВО ЗА ОДБРАНА
РЕПУБЛИКА МАКЕДОНИЈА



MINISTRY OF DEFENCE
REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA





ISAF

ARM 

12 YEARS
AMBASSADOR
OF PEACE

The photograph on the cover page and pages 5 and 6:

A panoramic view of the Kabul from the hill at the periphery of the city called "Antena Hill" where the ARM members participating in the ISAF mission carried out patrols with the APCs "Hermelin". The photograph was taken during a visit of a military delegation at Easter 2007.

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Zoran
Jolevski

*Defence Minister
of the Republic of Macedonia*





Ladies and Gentlemen,

For over two decades, the Republic of Macedonia has been living its dream - our citizens live in a free, sovereign and independent state which fully incorporates the European, i.e. the contemporary values, such as democracy, human rights and freedoms as well as equality on all grounds. Our country was the only country that managed to gain independence and sovereignty in a peaceful manner in the process of dissolution of Yugoslavia.

Consequently, the Republic of Macedonia in its very recent history has grown from a consumer to a provider of these contemporary values. The process of integration into the European Union and the NATO Alliance has enabled us to contribute, by utilizing

our capacities and capabilities, to the Alliance's efforts for establishing peace and security and the respect for the essential human rights and freedoms, initially as part of Iraqi Freedom, followed by the ISAF Mission in Afghanistan.

The mission of the NATO Alliance in Afghanistan ISAF, officially completed on the last day of 2014, will always have a special place in our memories. This is our heritage, and our contribution to world peace and stability. The participation in the ISAF mission for us was a source of enormous pride and a responsibility. The political commitment to supporting the Alliance's efforts in this Asian country is clearly visible through the actual presence of peacekeeping forces from the Army of the Republic of Macedonia in this part of the world. Not only that, the members of the Army of the Republic of Macedonia, aware of the benefits of living in a peaceful and prosperous environment, knew that their mission was a noble mission – democratization of the country, respect for every human being, respect for all gender, religious and human diversities. Over 2,700 Macedonian peacekeepers knew that that was the only way to create a climate for social development, better health service, better education for the young Afghans, because that was the future and the way ahead.

The purpose and mission of the members of the Army derives from the overall political commitment of the Republic of Macedonia, its President, Government, Assembly and, most importantly, the citizens of Macedonia. It is exceptionally positive to

mention that the decisions of the Government of the Republic of Macedonia, in the 12 years of continuous presence as part of the ISAF, were always made with the full and absolute support of the Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia. This happens only in the case of the decisions on the participation of the members of the Army in international peacekeeping missions. The political consensus on this issue clearly indicates that the consciousness and conscience of the political actors in the Republic of Macedonia is highly developed and firmly committed to spreading a climate of equality and prosperity. After all, the Republic of Macedonia with its history is the true link in the chain called the international community, which can realistically and clearly assess to what extent these values are important for the human well-being.

The third pillar of support are the citizens of the Republic of Macedonia. The high support for Macedonia's accession to the Alliance "de facto" indicates that the citizens of our country fully share the values and vision of the countries – NATO members, including the vision behind a democratic, peaceful and secure Afghanistan for its citizens. Citizens of the Republic of Macedonia, are firmly convinced in the need for providing assistance and support to the efforts for stabilization and reconstruction of Afghanistan. They have confirmed this by supporting the policies, i.e. the political commitment of the executive and legislative branches for participation in international peacekeeping missions. The Republic of Macedonia has invested over 55 million Euros in support of the Macedonian contin-

gents in ISAF, funds from the citizens of the Republic of Macedonia to the citizens of Afghanistan, which sufficiently demonstrates the sincere and serious approach of our citizens to the efforts of the Alliance and ISAF.

One of the major missions of the Alliance in its recent history ended with the end of 2014. This mission left behind a new infrastructure, new hospitals, new schools. It left room for the Afghans to take care of their country and their future on their own. This is a priceless legacy. However, it is a legacy that does not come without a heavy price. Many members of the coalition forces have laid their lives on the path towards a united and free Afghanistan. Many were injured, trying to reach the ultimate goal. Their sacrifice will not be forgotten.

As Minister of Defence of the Republic of Macedonia, I would like to thank all the members of the Army of Republic of Macedonia for their immeasurable devotion, sacrifice, courage and dedication in carrying out all the tasks that they have been entrusted with. This claim is not only ours. The international community, the leadership of NATO and the ISAF HQ have always emphasized the professional approach and the seriousness of the Macedonian peacekeepers. I would like to express my gratitude to the families of ARM peacekeepers for their perseverance and support to their loved ones. Sending the backbone of a family away from their home is not easy. But, they know that the goal is a noble goal, a humane goal. But we do not stop here. The Ministry of Defence and the overall executive and legislative power continue to support Afghanistan, but as part of the new mission

of the Alliance, i.e. Mission Resolute Support. The global security, stability and peace in general, remain our priorities. The contingent from the Republic of Macedonia, although reduced in absolute numbers, remains one of the highest contributions "per capita" in Afghanistan. In correlation with the new mission, 39 Macedonian peacekeepers are allocated for executing tasks related to providing Force Protection in RS HQ in Kabul, and counseling in TAAC North, and TAAC Capitol. Everything that has been said so far is, in fact, the reason why the Ministry of De-

fence has decided to issue this publication. The publication is a testament of our 12 years of participation in and experience from the ISAF Mission in Afghanistan. This publication is only a small appreciation towards the members of the Army of the Republic of Macedonia for everything that they have done in the process of establishing peace and democracy in Afghanistan. Finally, the publication will be a reminder for the future generations, for Macedonia, for the Macedonian values and the Macedonian cult of freedom and equality.



Minister of Defence Zoran Jolevski meeting the members of the ARM contingent to be deployed in the ISAF mission in Afghanistan 2014

Methodija Velickovski

Lieutenant General

*Chief of
the ARM General Staff*





Ladies and Gentlemen,

From its independence to date, the Republic of Macedonia has continuously been pursuing a policy based on its commitment to building a modern society with developed democracy, whose path is clearly traced to the Euro-Atlantic integrations. In addition to our membership in the international organizations, an unbreakable imperative of the integrative processes of our country is our participation in the collective security and defence systems. The Republic of Macedonia expressed the commitment with its unambiguous aspiration to attain membership in the NATO Alliance, substantiating this in practice, by implementing comprehensive and thorough reforms of its overall defence system. The firm and unequivocal commitment of all relevant political subjects to actively participate in the collective defence and security systems, and the efforts for providing a concrete

contribution to the global security architecture, are the best indicators of the commitment of the Republic of Macedonia towards attaining full-fledged membership in NATO and the EU.

The Army of the Republic of Macedonia (ARM), together with the Ministry of Defence, throughout its long years of membership in the Partnership for Peace, have invested enormous efforts to build the ARM and transform it into an equal partner of the Alliance, and army that possesses a high degree of training and interoperability in all areas along with the armies of NATO member countries. Moving rapidly on the path towards the big family of the Alliance, in the past decade, the ARM assumed an extremely consistent approach with respect to the implementation of its deepest and most comprehensive reforms, which enabled the army to reach the required standards of NATO in a very short period.

Guided by a commitment for active involvement in the fight against terrorism, as well as by the recommendations of the Alliance derived from the successfully implemented reforms in the defence, the Republic of Macedonia decided to give its specific contribution to tackling the global security challenges, through active participation in international missions. By supporting the objectives and commitments of the Republic of Macedonia and the other countries participating in the ISAF peacekeeping mission and providing contribution to global peace and security, the ARM with its capacities and capabilities, started with the implementation and participation in the international peacekeeping operation in Afghanistan ISAF.

Thus, the 8 September 2002, is a memorable date for us, i.e. the day the Republic of Macedonia sent two staff officers in the biggest NATO mission. From that day and until the end of the mission, the Macedonian flag would be waved for twelve years in Kabul. What we started that September of 2002, with two staff officers as part of the Turkish contingent in Kabul, ended in 2014 with one company of 150 ARM members and five (5) staff officers assigned on duties in RC North.

The given trust to the ARM member for providing force protection to the ISAF HQ in Kabul together with the members of the armed forces of the United Kingdom, followed by their independent assignment to this task, was a confirmation of the high level of expertise, professionalism, and the application of NATO's standard operating procedures, which were demonstrated by the ARM members in the performance of their tasks, as part of the Turkish and German contingents. The ISAF mission in Afghanistan was an excellent opportunity for the realization of regional cooperation projects, such as the Combined Medical Team deployed as part of the Adriatic Charter within the Greek and Czech field hospital from 2005 to 2009. Consequently, as a result of the achieved standards in providing medical assistance, the ARM, together with the armed forces of the Kingdom of Norway, deployed one surgical medical team.

Our maturity for performing extremely difficult and complex tasks was demonstrated with our participation in Task Force

Phoenix, where together with the US Vermont National Guard, the ARM members performed high risk tasks, for a period of nine months. On this occasion, it should also be emphasized that the ARM staff officers contributed to the work in the ISAF Command, as well as the Operation Mentoring and Liaison Teams of the Afghan Security Forces.

We are especially proud that in the 12 years that we had been part of the largest coalition (around 50 countries members of the NATO Alliance, the International Organizations and partner countries) in the fight against terrorism, which included over 2700 members of the Army, thousands of kilometers away from their homeland, in extremely complex conditions, gave the contribution of the Republic of Macedonia in building peace, democracy and security in Afghanistan. What will remain forever engraved in the memory of our partners is the fact that the Macedonian soldier, gained worldwide affirmation as: bold, persistent, trained and highly motivated to carry out the most complex combat tasks. The lessons learned from our participation in ISAF, which largely found a wide application in the training of the members of the ARM, as well as the vast experience, are invaluable. We have gained the legitimacy, recognition and confirmation of a safe, reliable, trained and most of all an equal partner to NATO and the other partners, by demonstrating our high professionalism and commitment to the mission.

The publication dedicated to participation of the ARM in the ISAF mission in

Afghanistan, represents a memorial for the current and future generations of the ARM. Through text and photography, this publication reflects moments that perpetuated the courage, responsibility and professionalism of the ARM members. In this way, we give utmost importance to a period of our

recent history. The contents of each new page will bring the reader closer to the ARM members, which are both the guardians of the territorial integrity and sovereignty of the Republic of Macedonia and ambassadors of peace.



Farewell ceremony for the Macedonian contingent that was part of the ISAF mission, January 2013



PREFACE

"We are known as a small country in the Balkans, but we are big in the grand coalition, the global coalition of peace where there is no division into small and large countries, and where there are only great and brave peacekeepers."



Always providing assistance

On September 11, 2001, the whole world was shocked by the terrorist attack on the World Trade Center in the United States that killed 3,000 people. Followed by the Islamist attacks in Bali, Djerba and Casablanca. Europe was not spared. Hundreds died in the attacks in London and Madrid. The perpetrators of these bloody crimes came from the training camps in Afghanistan.

The international community was united against the terrorist threat, the United Nations Security Council adopted binding res-

olutions in accordance with Chapter 7 of the Charter for dealing with international terrorism. United Nations Security Council Resolution 1386, from 20 December 2001, enabled the establishment of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) and its deployment to Kabul and the surrounding areas. In January 2002, ISAF and the Afghan Transitional Authority signed a Military Technical Agreement that provided detailed terms of reference for ISAF.

In August 2003, upon request of the UN



The youngest Afghans were especially fond of the "Macedonian sun"

In August 2003, upon request of the UN and the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, NATO took command of ISAF. Soon after, the UN mandated ISAF to gradually expand outside of Kabul. Despite being in a post-conflict period itself, the Republic of Macedonia actively monitored the situation with the development of the anti-terrorist coalition and the formation of the international forces for dealing with the enormous challenges in Afghanistan. Starting from its strategic determination for membership in NATO and the EU and sharing the values of these organizations, the Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia adopted the first decision for participation in the ISAF mission with two staff officers starting August 2002, which was a confirmation of its political will and capability for contribution to the international security.

From then on, with the political consensus of all political subjects in the country, as well as the support of the entire Macedonian public with regard to the contribution to the coalition for combating terrorism, the Republic of Macedonia actively participated by sending its units in the ISAF Mission. In 2003, the Republic of Macedonia took part in the mission with one section, and from 2004 to 2006, we have increased our contribution with a composition in the size of a platoon. The ARM made its first major engagement and contribution in 2006 by deploying 90 ARM members in one rotation within the UK contingent in the ISAF. The confidence entrusted by the United Kingdom was fully justified and hence, in 2007 one infantry company was deployed, followed by a constant increase of its capacities in ISAF, both in quality and quantity.

Since 2002, as part of the Turkish contingent in the coalition of around 50 countries, both NATO allies and partners, to date, the ARM has participated with over 2,700 Macedonian peacekeepers in the ISAF Mission, a national contribution which at certain times was one of the biggest (per capita) among the participants in the coalition in Afghanistan, a contribution which significantly contributed to preserving peace and building a more developed democracy and establishing greater security. On the other hand, the Macedonian soldiers and the Army as a whole gained, legitimacy and confirmation as a secure, reliable and qualified partner of NATO and other contributing partners.

As part of its contribution by participating in the ISAF Mission, the Republic of Macedonia became a part of the A3 Combined Medical Team (Macedonia, Albania, Croatia) which, from August 2005 to July 2009, successfully worked through 8 rotations at the hospital located in KAIA (Kabul International Airport), the combined medical surgical team as part of the Norwegian Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) in Meymaneh and the SEEBRIG HQ in ISAF with 10 staff officers in one rotation in 2006.

From 1 April 2010, the Republic of Macedonia further increased its contribution in Afghanistan with one Military Police platoon for training the Afghan National Police, one Ranger platoon for training the Afghan National Army, one Force Protection Unit and Staff Officers in the US Vermont 86th Brigade Command, deployed at Bagram base, Afghanistan. In addition, we were part of the joint A-5 efforts, in the Mil-

itary Police School for training of the Afghan National Army, Darulama, Regional Command – Capitol, from September 2011 to March 2013. The Republic of Macedonia did not decrease its contribution to ISAF even when the others were retreating and reducing their participation due to certain national savings. We stayed true to the principle of “in together, out together” and we stayed until the end of the mission, which was finalized at the end of 2014.

The Republic of Macedonia with its efforts in Afghanistan contributed to ensuring the international security and stability and implementing the decisions and requirements of the United Nations. We have proved once again that no country is so small that it cannot contribute and help in dealing with the biggest threats to the security and peace in the world.

Aside from the contribution, Afghanistan is an important symbol for Macedonia, especially for the transition of the Republic of Macedonia beyond 2001, when from a security consumer we become a security provider. Our participation in ISAF, places the Republic of Macedonia in the ranks of those countries who have pledged to share the burden of ensuring global security. Together with the armies of our allies, our troops were deployed in Afghanistan for 12 years, far away from the borders of their own country.

As a direct participant in the international operations, the ARM gained vast experience and demonstrated that there are highly trained personnel and highly professional capabilities and capacities.

This participation enabled us to practically examine the expertise of the units and

provide extended continuous training in a realistic military environment. It also implied a continuous assessment of the level of preparedness and ability of each individual and his willingness to engage in high-risk operations, which enabled us to receive the experience and quality assessment of the planning and implementation of the training.

Our participation in the OMLT teams of the Afghan National Army commands enabled us to transfer the experience of our officers as part of the international training forces.

The joint contribution to ISAF to date has proven to be the right way for promoting regional cooperation, intensifying the friendship between the countries in the region and benefiting all participants. The joint participation in ISAF has made a significant contribution to the joint training and mutual complementing prior to deployment in Afghanistan.

The benefits that the ARM has received from its participation in the ISAF Mission, primarily from the lessons learned are yet to be felt. For a country with a modest economic development as Macedonia, it is a great honour to have highly trained soldiers

and officers able to demonstrate a high degree of professionalism and at the same time contribute to the overall positive picture of ISAF. The Republic of Macedonia and its citizens have always been proud of the members of the Army, who, in this period, were both the guardians of the territorial integrity and sovereignty of the country, and the ambassadors of peace.

The professionalism of our army is also proven by the fact that a considerable number of Macedonian soldiers and officers have received awards and honors from several coalition partners, to mention those of the major military forces. All participants in NATO – led missions have received Non-Article 5 Medals, while over 1,000 members have received other international awards, decorations and medals for their achievements in the mission which contribute to making the Army of the Republic of Macedonia proud and giving greater credibility and desirability as a partner in the international missions. The majority of the awards have been received from NATO and the US Army for the demonstrated high degree of professionalism, expertise and capability in Afghanistan.

Macedonian
peacekeepers,
“shoulder to shoulder”
with the Afghan
Security Forces





1. ISAF - INTERNATIONAL SECURITY ASSISTANCE FORCE AFGHANISTAN

THE BEGINNING OF THE STORY

The need for launching an international mission in Afghanistan was expressed by the transitional government of Afghanistan during the Bonn Conference of December 2001. On 20 December the same year, the United Nations Security Council adopted Resolution 1386 which officially created the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) Afghanistan.

Initially, the defined primary goals of the mission were the following:

- Help maintain basic security, initially in the region of Kabul and its surroundings;
- Give assistance to the Afghan Transitional Authorities in building the national security structures (institutions);
- Assist in the reconstruction of the nation;
- Help in educating and training the new Afghan National Security Forces (Afghan National Police and Afghan National Army).

The initial goals were defined in January 2002, by signing the Military Technical Agreement between the transitional authorities in Afghanistan and the International

Security Assistance Force (ISAF) Afghanistan. The agreement gave a detailed description of the ISAF tasks. Initially, the UN-led peace-keeping ISAF were deployed around Kabul and the surrounding areas and enabled the establishment of transitional authorities in Afghanistan. On 11 August 2003, at the request of the UN (SC Resolution 1510) and with the approval given by the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, NATO took command of ISAF, starting the phase of gradual expansion of the ISAF mission beyond Kabul, first to the north, then to the west, south and east. By October 2006, through four stages, ISAF spread throughout the territory of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and established the regional commands North, South, East and West and Capitol. The purpose of these regional commands was assisting the Afghan authorities to expand their influence and control over the territory, fight against the Taliban and Al Qaeda and create conditions for the establishment of Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs).



The symbol of the fight against terrorism states that together we can succeed always and everywhere

The later redefined objectives and responsibilities of ISAF for the period from 2006 to 2011 included: assistance to the Afghan government in establishing security and stability throughout the territory, support in reconstruction and development, support in establishing governance structures and promoting an environment where governance can be enhanced, as well as assistance in the fight against drug trafficking. The specific responsibilities were focused on:

- Safety in terms of performing security and stability operations, providing support to the Afghan National Security Forces, disarming of the illegal armed groups, facilitating the ammunition reserve management and giving post-operative support;
- Reconstruction and development in terms of providing security for enabling reconstruction and humanitarian assistance;

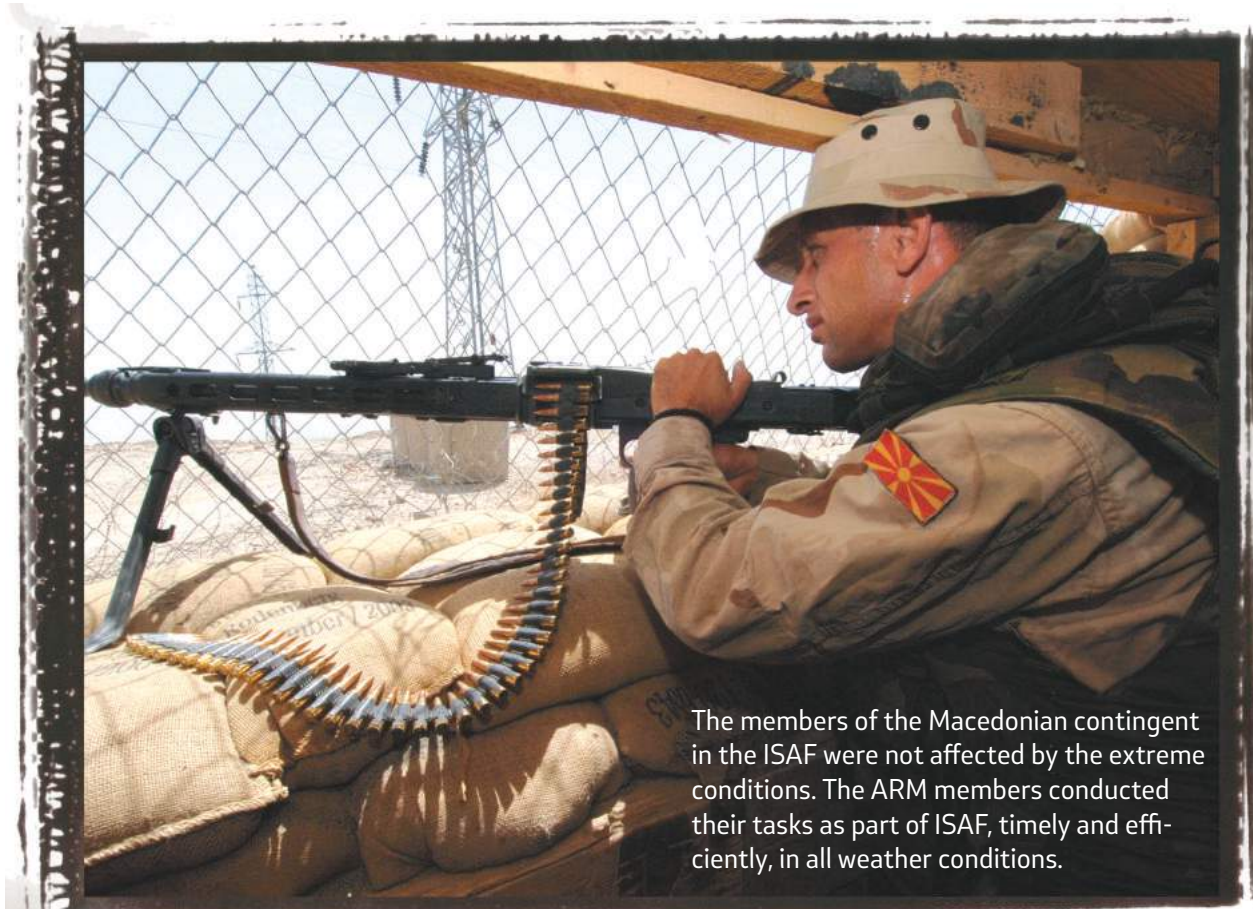
- Governance and management in the direction of continuing the efforts of the Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) in building facilities for the development of governmental structures and promoting an environment where governance can be enhanced;

- Fight against drugs by sharing information, conducting effective campaigns to inform the public, training the Afghan National Security Forces to combat narcotics trafficking, destroying the drug production facilities and fighting drug dealers and their established relationship with

the rebels.

As part of the support to the Afghan Government, ISAF has helped reduce the activities of the enemy and the capability of the insurgents and enabled the Afghan National Security Forces to build their capacities so as to carry out security operations across the country.

The results from the assistance of the Afghan Government were recognized in July 2011, when NATO formally announced that the Afghan Security Forces are fully prepared to take control of the entire territory of Afghanistan.



The members of the Macedonian contingent in the ISAF were not affected by the extreme conditions. The ARM members conducted their tasks as part of ISAF, timely and efficiently, in all weather conditions.

Thus began the preparation of the transition period which meant starting a new mission for stabilization and reconstruction. In the period from 2011 to December 2014, the priority of the ISAF forces was increasing the capacity and capability of the Afghan National Security Forces, and gradually transferring the security responsibility from ISAF to the Afghan forces. During this period, ISAF's combat role was transformed into training, advising and assistance centric to the Afghan forces. The multinational forces also assisted in creating the conditions and laying the foundations for improving the management and socio-economic development so as to achieve sustainable stability.

This transitional period ended in December 2014 and was followed by

the new mission, Resolute Support, responsible for continuing the training, advising and assistance to the Afghan Security Forces and institutions.

The mission of the International Security Assistance Forces (ISAF) in Afghanistan was one of the biggest coalitions in the history of NATO and one of the most challenging and most comprehensive missions to date. Several hundred thousand soldiers and other personnel from 51 NATO member states and NATO partner countries, along with numerous special representatives of international organizations and institutions and representatives of various NGOs participated in this mission.



THE MACEDONIAN CONTINGENT IN ISAF – FROM SYMBOLIC PARTICIPATION TO EQUAL PARTNER

One of the partner countries of the Alliance, and an equal contributor to the ISAF mission, was Macedonia. Guided by its strategic interest and goal to attain its full-fledged membership in the Euro-Atlantic structures, the Government of the Republic of Macedonia achieved a broad political consensus and received great public support from the citizens of the Republic of Macedonia to engage in the hitherto unheard Coalition for Combating Terrorism. The contribution to the International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan is an important symbol of the transition of the Republic of Macedonia, from a security consumer to a security provider through its participation in international operations. In the past 12 years, starting

from 2002 until December 2014, the Republic of Macedonia has constantly been present “shoulder to shoulder” with the Allies in ISAF. The continuous contribution to international operations made the Republic of Macedonia a reliable partner in the promotion of the shared and common values of democracy and in the fight against terrorism.

As part of ISAF, the Republic of Macedonia contributed with a wide range of capabilities and capacities by providing Force Protection to the ISAF HQ located in RC Capital, medical assistance, and staff officers in the SEEBRIG HQ, and in the OMLTs. With each passing year, the ARM increased and enhanced its participation in many differed structures in the international coalition.

Therefore, from 1 April 2010, the Republic of Macedonia further increased its contribution in Afghanistan with capacities for training the Afghan National Police, Afghan National Army, Force Protection capacities as part of the joint contribution with Vermont National Guard, as well as staff officers in the ISAF HQ and the Military Police School in Kabul, as part of our regional cooperation and the joint contribution of A-5.

The lessons learned and the experience gained from our participation in this international operation contributed to our further investment in the training of personnel, and the development of capabilities and capacities of the army.



They were a valuable resource in the transformation of the Army of Republic of Macedonia, which contributed to creating a small, modern, highly trained and interoperable force according to the standards of the NATO member countries. Based on the assessment of the Alliance,

the AM units attained the requested strict standards for training and operational procedures in accordance with the OCC, being thus able to fulfill the necessary criteria for membership and prepare to assume the responsibilities and obligations that derive from the full-fledged membership in the Alliance.

For over six years,
the Macedonian flag
guaranteed the security
of the ISAF HQ
in Kabul







3. TYPE, SIZE AND COMPOSITION OF UNITS FROM THE MACEDONIAN CONTINGENT IN THE ISAF MISSION

The units from the Army of the Republic of Macedonia actively participated in ensuring the peace in Afghanistan as part of the Multinational Forces engaged in peacekeeping and peacebuilding in the assigned areas of responsibility in the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, according to the Memoranda of Understanding between the Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Macedonia and the Ministry of Defence of the United Kingdom, the Technical Agreement with the Ministry of Defence of Germany, the Bilateral Cooperation Agreement with the Kingdom of Norway and the Memorandum of Understanding

for Regional Command North.

Each rotation of the Macedonian contingent (MACON) within the ISAF actively participated in peacekeeping and peacebuilding, as well as mentoring and advising the Afghan National Army (ANA) in the assigned area of responsibility in Afghanistan. In the course of its 12 years of experience in the ISAF mission in Afghanistan, the ARM participated with units in various compositions, such as Force Protection (FP), Operational Liaison And Mentoring Teams (OMLTs), medical teams, training of the Afghan Security Forces and staff officers in the mission headquarters, i.e.:

- Two rotations with two staff officers 2002/2003;
- Three rotations of contingents up to the size of an infantry section 2003/2004;
- Five rotations of contingents up to the size of one infantry platoon 2005/2007;
- Seventeen rotations of contingents in strength of one Mechanized Infantry Company (MechInfCoy) from 2006 to December 2014;
- One additional contingent as part of Task Force Phoenix, in strength of two platoons in 2010;
- Four rotations of the OMLT-1 with two officers from 2008 to January 2011;

- Three rotations of OMLT-2 with three officers from 2009 to January 2011;
- Four rotations of OMLT-3 with five officers from January 2011 to July 2014.

In ISAF, the Army of the Republic of Macedonia also participated with medical teams.

From August 2005, as part of the Greek field hospital, and later on, from March 2007 to July 2009, as part of the Czech field hospital, the ARM participated with one medical team as part of the A3 combined medical team from the US-Adriatic Charter.



ARM medical team in Maymana



The ARM staff officers deployed within the ISAF mission

Based on the Bilateral Cooperation Agreement with the Kingdom of Norway (KN), the Republic of Macedonia committed itself to provide one surgical team for the Norwegian field hospital which was located in the town of Maymana - Farjab province in northwest Afghanistan. Under the agreement, in the period of 3 years, the Republic of Macedonia sent 6 rotations for a 6-month period. The mission for providing Role 2 medical treatment began on 1.12.2008 and ended in May 2012.

However, we should not forget the early beginnings. Our participation in the ISAF began by sending staff officers as part of the Turkish contingent. We participated twice, in two rotations, three months each, with two officers, starting from August 2002 to February 2003.

The first contingent of 10 ARM members arrived in Afghanistan in February 2003, and was deployed and located at Camp Warehouse. The unit was engaged in several major tasks, such as providing

force protection at the main gate of the camp, control at the entry and exit of civilian and military vehicles, conducting various patrols with the German contingent and closing the

direction of the movement and organizing check points, while respecting the standard operating procedures.



ARM contingent in Camp Warehouse



THE MISSION AND TASKS OF THE MACEDONIAN CONTINGENT IN COMPANY STRENGTH

The main mission of the mechanized infantry company in the ISAF was physical security, that is, force protection of the HQ ISAF in Kabul by securing the entrance gates, the camp perimeter and patrolling the area of responsibility around the base.

The force protection company at HQ ISAF took an active part in the operations of the Coalition forces aimed at improving the security situation in Kabul.

The contingent members followed the orders and instructions issued by their superior officers in HQ ISAF (Operational Command) in their most

responsible manner, which were not opposed to the national laws, the rules of engagement and the national caveats, as well as the commitments ensuing from the Geneva conventions.

The entire personnel of the Macedonian contingent, under all conditions and at all times, were under the exclusive jurisdiction of their national legislation, that is, the Macedonian legal regulations, for any criminal or disciplinary offence committed on the territory of Afghanistan (Chapter 9 of the Memorandum of Understanding).



The ARM company in one of the rotations in front of the ISAF Main HQ in Kabul

The tasks of the company:

a). The first rotation of the Macedonian contingent composed of 90 personnel, in line with the MoU between the MoD of the Republic of Macedonia and the MoD of the UK, was directly subordinated to BG (E) – Battle Group East commanded by a British officer. This battle group included a UK FP Coy that conducted the same tasks as the Macedonian contingent. BG E was under the command of the RC-C (RC Capital). The unit was located at HQ ISAF and its task was to provide full force protection of HQ ISAF and patrol in the so-called “Green Area”, which was within its area of responsibility.

Upon its deployment, the unit conducted several tasks, inter alia:

- Establishment and protection of the FOB (Forward Operation Base) “Hawkeye” in Surobi District, 70km away from Kabul;
- Patrolling in Surobi District and protection of the hydroelectric plants Naghlu and Siemens that provide about 80% of the electricity for the city of Kabul;
- Organizing donations through the Civil – Military Cooperation in Jagdaleg valley in Surobi District;
- Conducting joint patrols with troops from the German company in the police areas within the area of responsibility and Khak-e-Jabar;

- Providing force protection of the EOD teams in the process of UXO destruction;

- Providing full force protection at ISAF HQ (both external and internal);

- Conducting patrols, by foot and on motor vehicles in the police area within the area of responsibility;

- Continuous readiness of the QRF (Quick Reaction Forces) for intervention in the police areas within the area of responsibility.

b). In the subsequent rotations, the company mission, as of July 2007 (in strength of 126, up to 152 ARM members), carried out a broad spectrum of responsible tasks for internal, perimeter and external FP of the ISAF HQ, such as:

- Providing force protection at the entry and exit gates of the base;

- Providing force protection of the external perimeter and the surroundings of the base from set up observation observation guard towers, also known as sangars;

- Patrolling in the area of responsibility (perimeter – patrols), around the base and to the ECPs in front of the US Embassy and Eggers camp;

- Provision of QRF readiness, primarily planned for a base response, but also outside the base during patrols or by a separate order;

- ECPs for pedestrians and motor vehicles at the gate main entry point;

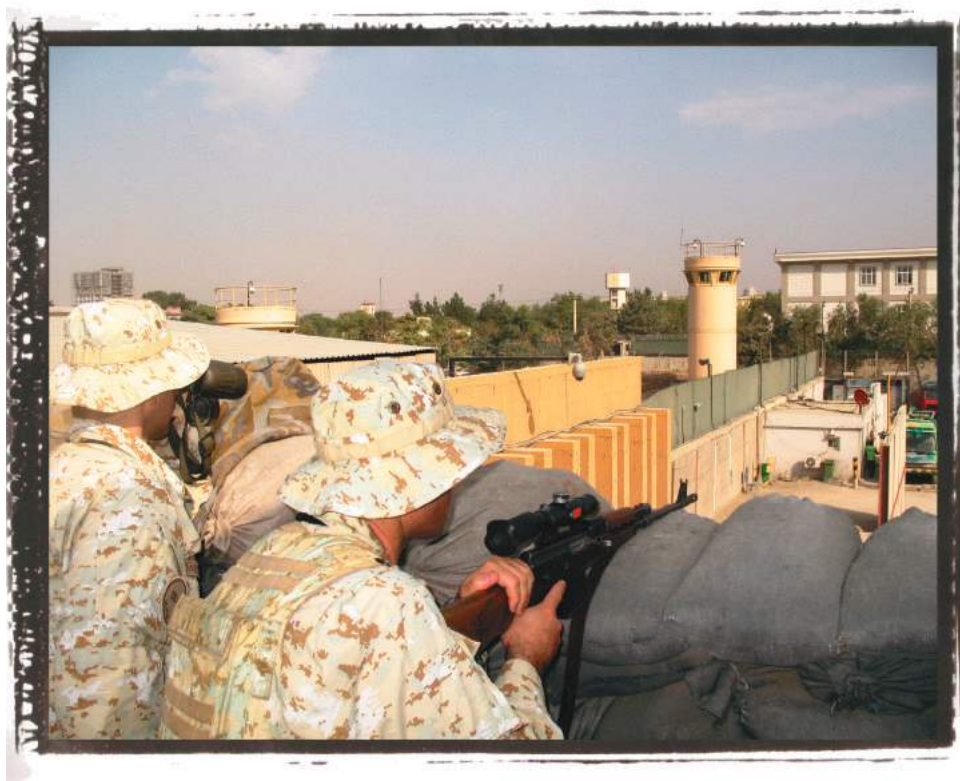
Thorough
preparation
before
executing an
assignment



- ISAF HQ Rear ECPs for commercial and oversized vehicles;
- Providing force protection of the classified areas in ISAF HQ;
- Providing force protection of the reception desks of the Command buildings and escorting persons;
- Assisting the international military police during searches and escorting local residents for submitting job documents and interviews;
- Providing force protection of the engineering unit from the Base Support Group when working on projects for improving base security by setting up road blockades and maintaining the control point at the location of the works;
- Providing force protection during conferences and high level events

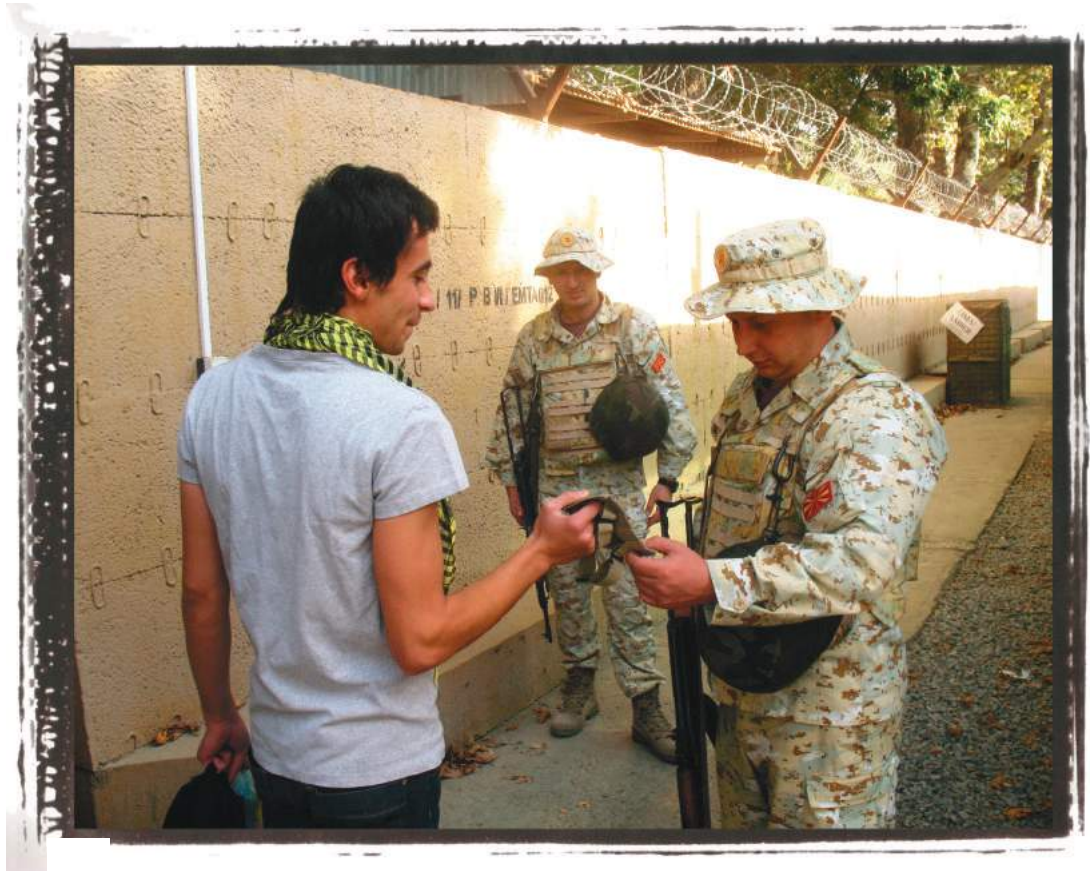
organized at the ISAF HQ base;

- Providing force protection at receptions of foreign high level delegations and IR Afghanistan Government representatives at ISAF HQ;
- Providing force protection of the helirome located at the stadium within the Afghan National Army sports complex during landings and take-offs of helicopters at the base;
- Providing force protection of the activities related to civil – military cooperation and confidence building with the local population the so-called “Friday Bazaar” organized at the stadium in the vicinity of the base and the so-called “Women’s Bazaar”, organized in the Milano facility, every first Saturday in the month;



Ther ARM members were well-known for their professionalism in executing the assigned missions in Kabul

The first contact at the ISAF camp gate is with the ARM members



- Escorting local workers and cleaning staff during their work in the classified areas;

- Conducting exercises for the Base Support Group based on possible scenarios of threats by engaging personnel from the company QRF.

Other tasks and activities conducted by the unit included:

- Assisting the fire fighting team in extinguishing larger scale fires;
- In periods of increased force protection, additional engagement of an additional APC crew and patrol in the vicinity of the base;
- Occasional engagement of the necessary number of soldiers for providing force protection at the entry point to the US Embassy;

- Performing patrols, both on foot and by motor vehicles in the police areas within the assigned area of responsibility;

- Engaging the Quick Response Force under the direct command of the BSG Commander in the police areas within the area of responsibility;

- Civil – military cooperation activities;

- Other activities ordered by the superior command.

All our peacekeepers that were part of the force protection troops will surely remember forever the manner and dynamics in which they executed their duties, which if asked they describe as follows:

"As part of its regular duties, the unit in the strength of one platoon was normally engaged to perform patrols in the area of responsibility and provide force protection for the QRF; one section of the unit was assigned to perform patrols and one section was assigned to the QRF. These sections interchanged every 24 hours. The section for patrols was tasked to conduct at least two patrols within 24 hours. The patrolling was conducted on the basis of previously developed plans by the company HQ. Following the patrols, the platoon commanders together with the patrol leader reported on the work of the patrol. All patrols lasted between 1 hour and 30 minutes to 2 hours, depending on the route and the assignments during the patrol. The patrols with an external perimeter within the areas and directions marked as high risk were stopped when the security situation deteriorated in the last several years of the mission.

The unit – the QRF (Quick Reaction Forces) section with full combat equipment in a state of readiness was located in a separate room, while two APCs "Hermelin", which were the most recognizable in the base, proudly waving the Macedonian flag were always in front of the facility and ready to go at all times and were equipped with the necessary commu-

nications assets, ready for intervention 24 hours a day, with 15 minutes of readiness time in normal conditions, or 10 or 5 minutes upon order. The unit was engaged by an order issued by the base commander through the duty officer, in circumstances when the ISAF members were under a threat or in emergency situations at the base or within the unit area of responsibility. Indeed, the largest number of recognitions from the highest authorities of the base were given precisely to our QRF members, for the minimal time in which they reacted, which bolstered the confidence and safety of all members of the armed forces in Kabul".

In addition to the other tasks, the QRF was engaged for protection of convoys when transporting sick persons to the hospital at "KAIA" (Kabul International Airport) and for escorting convoys during transportation of VIPs. Our peacekeepers will remain proud of the fact that they themselves and the Macedonian flag were the first thing that many well-known persons and delegations saw when visiting the Main HQ at KAIA.

The regular duties also included the provision of force protection at the camp – force protection at the front and rear gates with observation posts.

To that end, a unit in the strength of two platoons was permanently engaged. The tasks were carried out night and day, 24 hours a day. During important events organized in the camp (visits of VIPs, organization of important conferences and celebrations), the unit was engaged for organizing cordons for protection of persons and facilities involved in those important events. Many will remember that they were part of the force protection for the US President, NATO Secretary General or the President of Afghanistan and Defence Ministers from many countries that

visited the ISAF HQ.

During the mission, the company personnel was also engaged for providing force protection at other facilities within the area of responsibility during visits of senior NATO representatives and NATO Military Committee representatives to Afghanistan.

In addition, the contingent personnel performed non-stop 24 hour duty service in the Operational centre of the BSG which was responsible for the overall security and logistic support.



Patrolling as one of the tasks in the ISAF mission



Executing a task with UK servicemembers

The duty officers and assistant duty officers were appointed from the Contingent Command. Teams with two officers each took part in the duty service. The duty service was organized on shifts, 8 hours per shift. During the mission, the members of the contingent that were not engaged in the assignments underwent training activities, such as:

- Training for detecting magnetic mines on vehicles, detecting fake

identification cards, training on the baggage scanner, training on vehicle scanners for detecting explosives and urban warfare training;

- Training with the whole company on alarm procedures in the base in various situations (a received threat to the base, a suspicious package found in the base, a direct attack on the base, an indirect attack on the base, an intruder in the base and an attack of a car bomb and a suicide

bomber in the base) and on the QRF procedures in case of a complex attack on the rear gate;

- Medical training: first aid and self-aid, a sunstroke, a heatstroke and a shock.

In some rotations, a basic Dari language course was also organized.

Our peacekeepers will recollect many events, when performing their force protection duties of controlling the entrance of persons into the base in the most responsible and professional manner, they have stopped senior military and political persons,

including generals. Our peacekeepers, applying the prescribed procedures always replied in a positive and friendly tone: "We know you Sir, but we are responsible for your security and the security of the base and we are doing it in the best possible conscientious and professional manner, therefore, if you do not have valid entrance documentation, please obey our orders". For all these cases, they received praises personally from the ISAF Commanders from several rotations for their responsible work.



There was not lack of cooperation with the civilian structures in Kabul



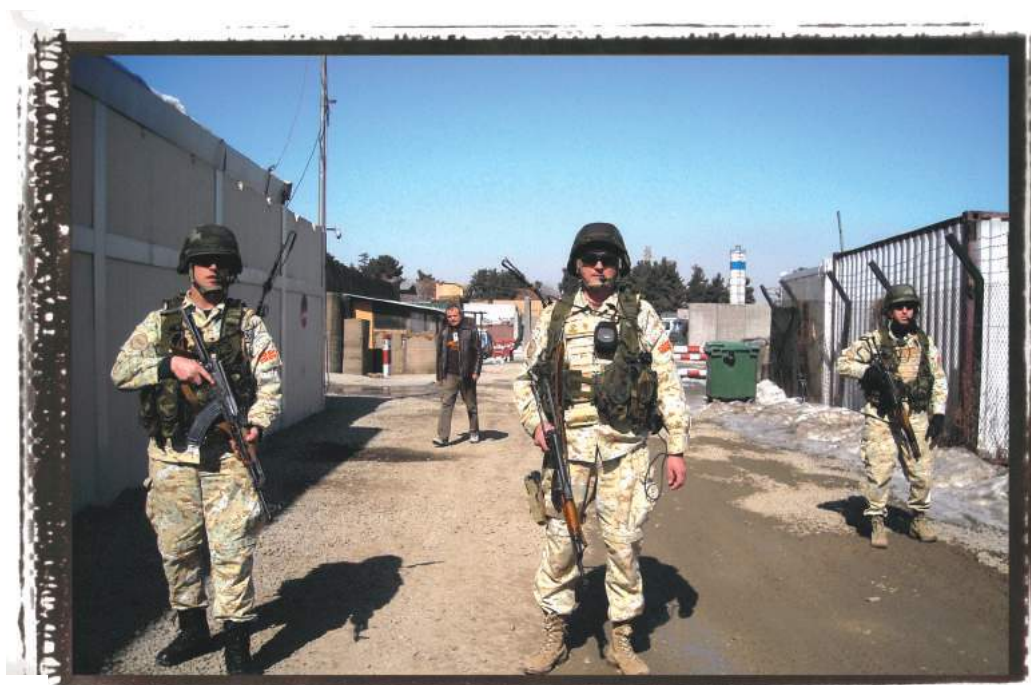
Routine checks
in compliance
with all entrance
procedures for
motor vehicles in
the ISAF camp



The assistance of the population in Afghanistan was complementary to the tasks



The female ARM members executed their tasks on an equal basis with their male fellow members



ARM patrol providing force protection at ISAF HQ camp



TASK FORCE „PHOENIX“

The peace operation of the task force Phoenix was an extremely complex mission that required many preparations and energy. The Macedonian contingent within the 86th Infantry Brigade Combat Team of Vermont the National Guard Vermont – USA, carried out operations within the area of responsibility aimed at achieving stabilization and security of Afghanistan as part of the international coalition forces.

As part of this mission, 79 members of the SOR and the MP battalion, together with their colleagues, the members of the NGV, USA and the US Army, carried out missions related to training and mentoring of the Afghan National Army and police, joint peace support operations in this Middle Asian country, force protection missions for senior military NATO and ISAF persons and joint operations with NATO and the US in support of the Afghan Army and police in a period of 9 months. The participation of the Task Force Phoenix in Afghanistan, given the

expertise and training level of its members, proved the professionalism of the ARM members in international missions. The complexity of the Phoenix mission increased the trust and mutual cooperation of the Macedonian contingent with the members of the 86th Infantry Brigade Combat Team of Vermont the National Guard Vermont – USA and thus confirmed the years-long partnership of the Republic of Macedonia with VNG. The tasks that the ARM members executed as part of the TF Phoenix were very complex. The ARM members, together with NGV members, carried out complex and delicate tasks consisting of:

- Combat patrols on foot and by motor vehicles aiming to show presence of troops in the area;
- Conducting special and specific reconnaissance and sniper missions;
- Providing force protection of convoys within the area of responsibility;
- Cordon and search;
- Rapid Reaction Forces.

TF Phoenix also carried out activities in the domain of civil – military cooperation. Many meetings were organized with the local authorities for planning and conducting a number of projects, such as: construction of schools, hospitals, irrigation systems, etc. In addition, TF Phoenix drafted projects for reconstruction of the company's operational base.

All ARM members that participated in the mission Phoenix were awarded medals and decorations. In Phoenix, the ARM members demonstrated that our country can produce personnel, whose readiness is on the same level with the armies of the

NATO members states.

This commitment was well noted in the Republic of Macedonia as well. All members that were part of the task force Phoenix were awarded coins by the Minister of Defence, as well as four plaques with the logo of the Ministry of Defence for the Special Operations Regiment, the Military Police Battalion, the Rangers and the Wolves. These medals and decorations, coupled with the high grades for their professionalism in everyday work, serve as a confirmation of the ARM's interoperability with NATO member states.



The participation in the Task Force Phoenix was an opportunity to confirm our interoperability with NGV



OPERATIONAL MENTOR AND LIAISON TEAM - OMLT WITHIN ISAF

The operational program, of the OMLTs is an important part of NATO-ISAF's contribution to the development of the Afghan National Army. They provided training and mentoring to the ANA. In addition, they served as a link between the ANA and the ISAF, by coordinating the planning of activities and ensuring that the ANA units receive the necessary support (including close air support, evacuation of casualties and medical evacuation).

During their engagement 2008 – until the completion of the mission, our members in the OMLTs, regardless of whether it was team 1, 2 or 3, carried out mentoring activities for the appropriate staff sections of the

Afghan army at brigade level in the 3rd brigade – 209th corps of the ANA in Mazar-e-Shariff, Regional Command North.

The OMLTs were engaged for mentoring during training, supervision and assisting the training and suggesting ways for more efficient functioning of the ANA units, with the ultimate goal of making them capable of conducting operations in the area of responsibility independently.

Immediately prior to their departure to mission, the team members attended a course for OMLT mission execution in Hohenfels, FR Germany where they were directly familiarized with the OMLT mission, goals and methods of work.

Working
in the OMLT's –
an opportunity
to gain new
experience



OMLT 1. This team consisted of a signals officer and a signals NCO. The mission of the OMLT of the Macedonian contingent was executed in the period 22 March -25 September 2008. The team was engaged in the period March 2008 - January 2011 with 6-month rotations. The basic mission of the team was mentoring in the S-6 section in the 1st ANA Brigade, 209th ANA Corps in the Mike Spann camp in Mazar-e-Shariff. The OMLT was under the operational command of the German contingent to which the team was assigned, within the Bde OMLT of the 3rd Bde of the 209th ANA Corps in Mazar-e-Shariff, that is, the OMLT in RC North.

It was deployed in the camp with the German OMLT (Mazar-e-Shariff).

OMLT 2. This team consisted of an intelligence officer, fire support officer and personnel NCO in the period January 2009 – July 2010 as part of the Bde OMLT of the 3rd Bde of the 209th ANA Corps in Kunduz, RC North. The personnel was rotated every six months. OMLT 2 was engaged within the Bde OMLT of the 2nd ANA Bde for mentoring of the training, supervision and assisting the training and suggesting a more efficient way of working of the ANA units, with the ultimate goal of making it capable of operating independently within the area of responsibility.

OMLT 3. This team consisted of a signals officer and a signals NCO, an intelligence officer, fire support officer and personnel NCO within the Bde OMLT of the 3rd Bde of the 209th ANA Corps in Mazar-e-Shariff. The team was engaged in the period January 2011 – July 2014 with 6 - month rotations. The basic mission of the team was mentoring of the training, supervision and assisting the training and suggesting a more efficient way of working of the ANA units, with the ultimate goal of making it capable of operating independently within the area of responsibility.

The OMLT personnel carried out various assignments, inter alia:

- Conducting assignments arising from their duties in the OMLT (mentoring in the sections and participating in the planning of the operations);
- Mentoring, training and providing further training and support to the planning and execution of the upcoming operations;
- Assisting the link between the ANA and the ISAF and the Coalition forces;
- Providing regular attendance at briefings and meetings with the superiors within the Brigade OMLT;



ARM officers
as part of
the OMLT
for training
of the Afghan
Security
Forces

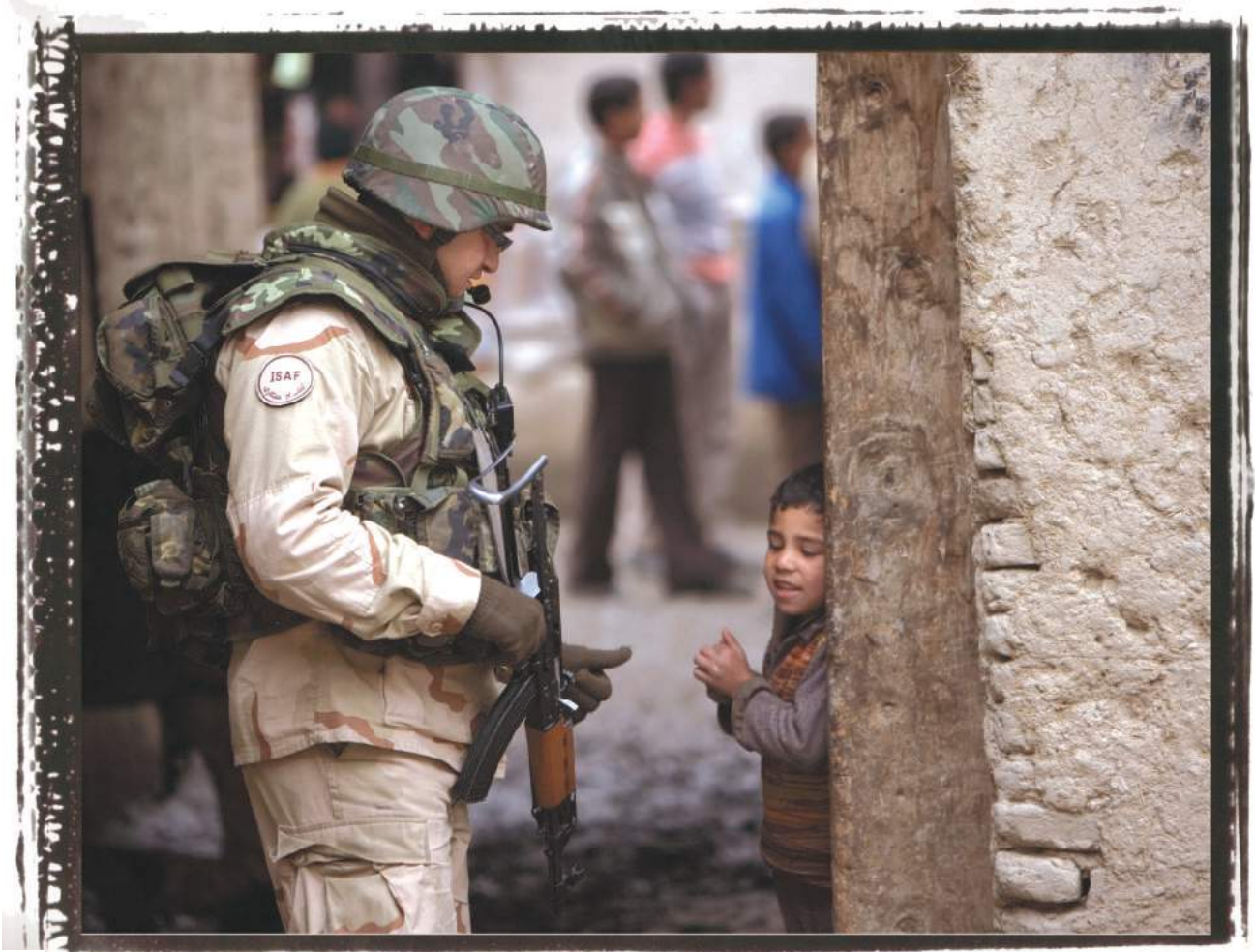


Supplying humanitarian aid to the local population

- maintaining regular contact with the senior national representative in the ISAF mission in Afghanistan;
- Submitting weekly reports to the Brigade OMLT through the senior national representative in the ISAF mission.

During the mission, the OMLTs spent most of their time in training the ANA in the camp and surroundings where ANA carried out their tasks, including the conduct of con-

crete combat operations. The task of our teams was to monitor and support ANA's activities; hence, our personnel spent several weeks in combat operations in theatre in the Badakhshan province, in the city of Fayzabad, which is about 600 km away from the camp. The teams occasionally took part in the meetings in the police stations, made contacts with the census committees during a census and elections and communi



The Macedonian peacekeepers were known among the local population as “the soldiers with a sun on their sleeve”

cated with various governmental and non-governmental organizations.

During the mission, the cooperation with the ANA members and the members of the other ISAF nations was on a very high level.

The OMLTs had trainings on various topics.

The organized transport of the allies for the needs of our OMLT is a confirmation of the fact that our engagement was highly appreciated.

The transport was conditioned with immaculate knowledge and skills of the combat procedures in case of sudden attacks and protection, which was no problem whatsoever for our representatives and our peacekeepers never had any additional training for this purpose.





THE ARM MEDICAL TEAMS WITHIN ISAF Combined Medical Team

The Army of the Republic of Macedonia took part in the ISAF mission within the A-3, as part of the Greek field hospital as of August 2005 and as part of the Czech field hospital in the period March 2007 – July 2009. In this mission, the Combined Medical team operated as a team of 12 members, four representatives from each of the following countries: Republic of Albania, Republic of Croatia and Republic of Macedonia, located at KAIA, Afghanistan. The A-3 medical team included medical personnel from the Military Health Care Service – Skopje that functioned at that time, as well as from the medical support platoons of the Logistic Support Command.

The Macedonian medical team consisted of a doctor, two medical technicians, one paramedic and one driver, or 4 personnel in total that rotated every six months. Prior to each

mission deployment, the team had joint training in the Republic of Albania and in the medical Training Centre within the Military health Care Centre – Skopje. The medical team was constantly engaged within the period August 2005 – July 2009, with six-month rotations of the personnel.

Surgical team: based on the Agreement for Bilateral Cooperation with the Kingdom of Norway, the Republic of Macedonia undertook to provide a medical surgical team for the field hospital of the Kingdom of Norway that was located in Maymana – Northwest Afghanistan. In line with the Agreement, the Republic of Macedonia deployed 6 rotations, each rotation in duration of 6 months within a period of 3 years. The mission for provision of Role 2 medical care began on 01 December 2008 and ended in May 2012.



One of the surgical medical teams in Maymana

The mission of the Medical Surgical team in the ISAF was to provide Role 2 medical care of the ISAF members

within the PRT that was tasked to assist the reconstruction of post-war Afghanistan.

Medical team in Maymana



In accordance with the technical arrangement between the MOD of the Republic of Macedonia and the MOD of the Kingdom of Norway, the MST is engaged for:

- Diagnosis and treatment of surgical patients and scheduling the wounded soldiers based on priority;
- Treatments involving acute medicine, anesthesiology and intensive

care – medicine for the patients of the unit;

- Lectures for the medical and supporting staff and scheduling the wounded soldiers based on the priority.



The specific terrain in Afghanistan is a challenge in executing the assignments



STAFF OFFICERS IN THE ISAF

The Macedonian officers were engaged on staff duties since the very beginning of the mission, first within the Turkish contingent and then as staff officers in the South-Eastern Europe Brigade (SEEBRIG) in the rotation in which the brigade was engaged.

In the period from the beginning of 2008 to January 2009, three staff officers gave their active contribution to ISAF HQ assigned in the following sections: Information Coordination Section, Section J-9 – Civil – Military Cooperation (CIMIC) and psychological operations. The next rotations and duties of the staff officers were as follows:

- January 2009 – three staff officers (J-9, CIMIC and a training and liaison engineering officer and MP officer at KAIA);

- As of November 2009 – two staff officers were transferred to the base in the vicinity of Kabul airport, where the MP NCO was also located;

- 2010 – two staff officers (training and liaison engineering officer and MP NCO);

- 2011 - two staff officers (training and liaison engineering officer and MP NCO);

- From 2012 to January 2013 - two staff officers (training and liaison engineering officer and MP NCO);

- From 2013 to December 2014 – one MP NCO.

The training and liaison engineering officer is usually deployed in the Engineering Section in J-3/ ISAF, and the MP NCO was deployed at the International Police Station at Kabul airport.

Tasks of the Staff officers in the Military Police School

In the period September 2011 - March 2012, a mentoring officer team was sent to the Military Police school in Kabul. The team consisted of three officers. In the period February 2012 – September 2012, the team was composed of 5 NCOs and 3 officers, while in the period September 2012 – March 2013 it had two officers.

The staff officers within the MP school in Kabul were engaged for mentoring during training, supervi-

sion and assisting the training and suggesting ways for more efficient functioning of the MP school, with the ultimate goal of making them capable of conducting operations in the area of responsibility independently.

Tasks of the training and liaison engineering officer:

- Management of the engineering parks (EP);
- Participation in the Committee for selection and technical evaluation of tenders for building EPs;



Joint training with the Afghan National Army



- Supervision over the EP inventory of assets;
- Introduction of SOPs for using the EP assets;
- Planning and procurement of IV class assets for the needs of the EP;
- Planning, coordination, synchronization and control of the engineering training (bridges and force protection) with the members of the engineering units, such as the Coalition forces and the Afghan National Army;
- Execution of additional tasks within the section;
- Compilation of the weekly engineering reporting which is submitted to Joint Force Command Brunssum;

- Monitoring the situation in all directions of movement within the area of operations of the engineering units directly subordinated to the ISAF-JFC (18th Engineering Brigade, later replaced by the 411th Engineering Brigade and the 22nd Naval Construction Regiment).

The tasks of the MP

NCO at the International Military Police in the northern (military) part of KAIA encompass tasks that are in line with the SOPs at the International Military Police in the northern (military) part of KAIA.



The MP NCO, deployed in the International Military Police in the northern (military) part of the KAIA, is responsible, inter alia, for:

- Investigation procedures for criminal activities at KAIA (North);
- Traffic control at KAIA (North);
- Investigation procedures in traffic accidents in the camp;
- Implementation of traffic security programs;
- Detention;
- Passenger control and security on all arriving and departing flights at the military airport, both internal and international;

- Support to the force protection assignments at KAIA (North).

In addition to the above listed obligations, the MP NCO was also engaged in the management and supervision activities of the International Military Police.

During the engagement, all contingent members complied with the rules of engagement within the area of responsibility, the cultural and traditional customs of the local population.





SENIOR NATIONAL REPRESENTATIVE

The leaders of the Macedonian contingents in most rotations were the senior national representatives that organized the coordination with the other contingents and persons with care and conscience for each ARM member in Afghanistan.

The SNR is deployed in the ISAF company. Since the beginning of our participation in the mission until 2009, the unit commander or the most senior staff officer was designated as the SNR.

The increased participation brought about greater duties and responsibilities. Therefore, in the July 2009 rotation, ARM officer was deployed for the first time as a SMR as a separate function.

The SNR during the mission is a representative of the Republic of Macedonia that represents and protects the interests of our country and

the interests of the ARM contingents that participate in the mission in the most responsible manner. Additionally the SNR performs other tasks, inter alia:

- Organization and escorting during visits of high level representatives of the Republic of Macedonia to Afghanistan (in coordination with the ISAF Command);
- Attendance of conferences, briefings, meetings in the Main HQ of the Coalition Forces in Kabul, Afghanistan;
- Organization of the rotation of all contingents as scheduled;
- Responsibility for raising and solving all open issues and problems relating to the life and work of the contingents;
- Holding regular briefings and meetings with the contingent commanders and other personnel;

- Participation in meetings with the national representatives from the other armies to discuss topics relating to the operation and administration of the coalition forces, and if required, setting up a common position and understanding due to national differences;

- If required, providing advice to the command group of the coalition forces HQ on issues in the field of rules and regulations that are in direct correlation with the engagement and tasks of the ARM contingents;

- Monitoring of the work and maintaining communication with the other ARM contingents in the ISAF

mission and developing weekly reports on the situation of the contingents and submitting the reports to the ARM GS;

- Collecting the received invoices for the services rendered to our contingents (food, laundry etc.) and submitting them for payment to the Republic of Macedonia;

- Taking care of the morale and the organization of sports and leisure activities by participating in the Base Committee for morale and social activities.







MOST COMMON THREATS

Being present and operating in areas that are constantly marked as “orange” or “red” for their level of security, that is, in areas that are potentially dangerous or highly dangerous according to the NATO classification of security, is a great challenge for every soldier, even for the most experienced. Yet, our peacekeepers proved this in practice, having calm faces radiating with confidence, always being on the frontline executing their assignments, even in the most dangerous situations. In dangerous situations, when the sirens in the base called for finding shelters, only the Macedonian sun could be seen on the left uniform sleeve in the first defence lines under helmets and full combat equipment,

watchfully following the situation and responding to the challenges.

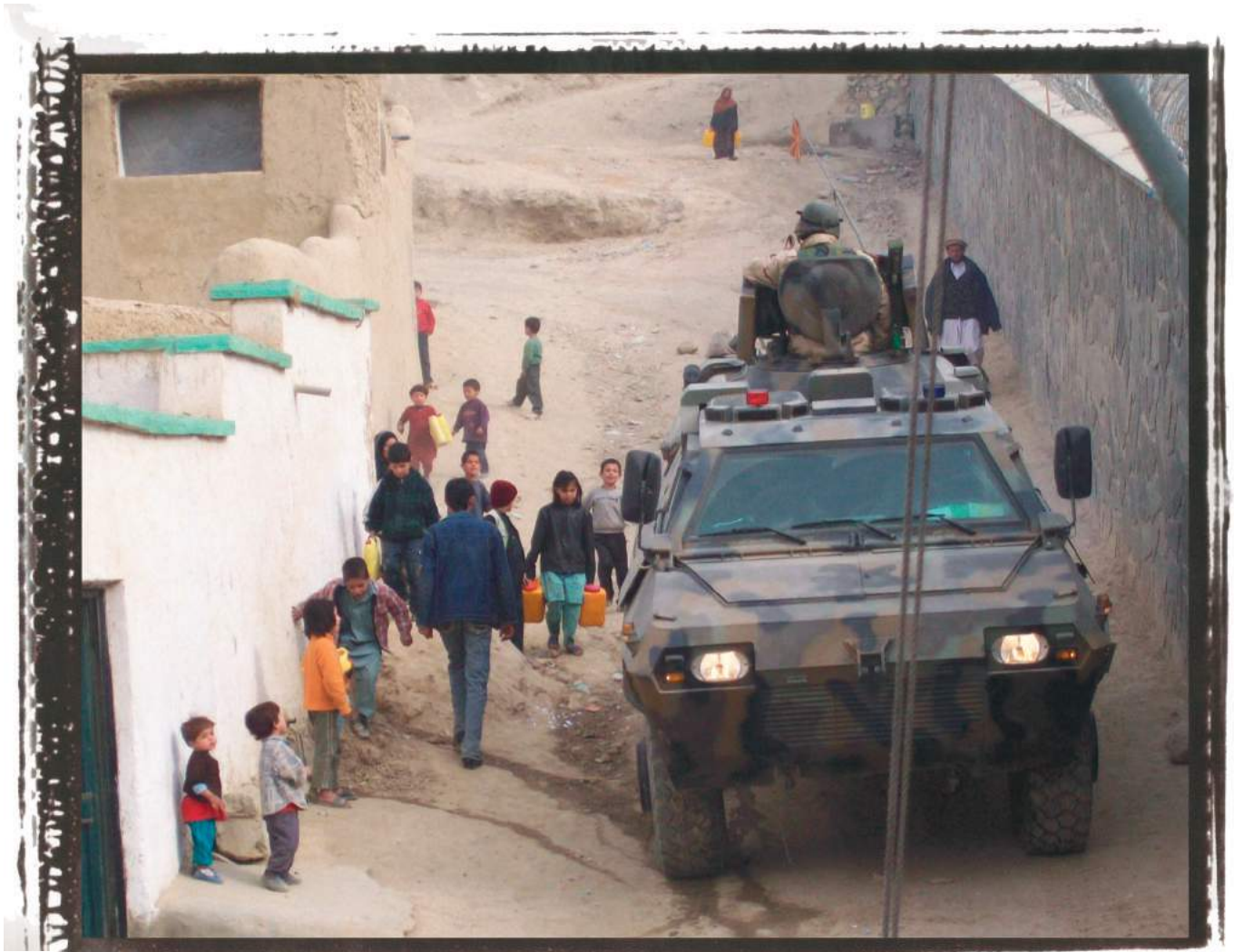
The members of the Macedonian contingent met numerous challenges and threats during their participation in the ISAF. The most common threats to the security of the units that conducted the mission in Afghanistan primarily included the following:

- attacks with IEDs;
- attacks by suicide bombers, from vehicles, on foot, etc.;
- sniper attacks;
- direct attacks with infantry weapons, and
- missile attacks.

The most characteristic noted attacks include the attack of a suicide bomber from a bomb vehicle at the

main gate of the ISAF HQ in July 2009; the massive attack on the HQ ISAF with infantry weapons in September 2011 and the synchronized attacks on the HQ ISAF base, the Presidential Palace, the CIA seat, the Ministry of Defence of Afghanistan and the international hotels in June 2013. In these attacks, the ARM

members kept their dignity in conducting their tasks, provided assistance in countering the attacks and supported the force protection actions on the surrounding facilities, including the US Embassy in Kabul, for which they were unselfishly praised by the allies and partners.



RECEIVED DECORATIONS

The units engaged in the missions fully executed the assigned tasks and demonstrated in the best possible way the training, capability and compatibility of the ARM with the armies from the NATO member states.

Many contingent members were awarded and praised by the Minister

of Defence, the Chief of General Staff and their immediate superior commanders for their achieved results.

The contingent members were also decorated by the highest command structures of the ISAF HQ, the Coalition Forces and the US Army as follows:





- NATO medal for their participation in the ISAF mission, which is awarded to each member that participated in a rotation for at least 30 days;
- Achievement medal awarded by the US Army to most of the members that participated in the Phoenix mission;
- Medal of the US campaign in Afghanistan, ARCOM, medals and bronze badges for the participation of the ARM members in the ISAF mission;

The SNR were awarded coins by the Chief of General Staff and the contingent commanders, the sergeant majors and certain officers were awarded coins for appreciation by the BSG Commander, who was also the Base Commander.

DIGNIFIED PRESENTATION IN THE NON-COMBAT SEGMENT OF THE MISSION LIFE AND WORK

In addition to executing their combat assignments, the Macedonian peacekeepers during their deployment in the ISAF mission used the little spare time that they had available enjoying non-combat activities. They used every opportunity to take part and compete in sport events and socialize with the members from the other national contingents contributing thus towards achieving common understanding and unity among the participating nations.

The ISAF mission will also be remembered by the fact that even in war conditions, hypothetically speaking, the basic needs for decent accommodation, communication, ratios and recreation of the personnel were

taken care of in all rotations and bases.

The personnel who performed duties was housed in a container type building and in other complementary buildings that meet the living and working requirements. The female personnel was housed in a separate facility.

Interestingly, all accommodation facilities in this base had its own name, which in a specific manner helped in the evacuation during the sounding of alarms and the location of the required personnel. Interestingly enough, the building where our contingent was placed was called "Tom", while the name of the building of the members of the United Kingdom was called "Jerry" and all



Raising the cup

Macedonian mid fielder Goran Boleski kisses the cup after his team won HQ ISAF's football final. An elated team-mate and team captain Elvis Todorovski looks on.

Photo by Sgt. Ruud Mol

**For more on the championship
turn to page 22.**

members of the base constantly said that "Tom" and "Jerry" synchronize and perform their tasks in an extraordinary manner.

The base where the Headquarters was located, as well as the place where most of our troops were housed, organized regular sport activities for maintaining their physical fitness and they marked remarkable results in this non-combat part of the mission.

The cultural and leisure activities are treated as important activities for the morale of all members in the base. The authorities in the base organized dances, competitive games,

tournaments in football, volleyball, chess, darts, billiards, bingo and other games. Our troops, despite their continuous engaging, always possessed enough enthusiasm to constantly win or at least be among the first three places in almost all team sports, and at times in the individual disciplines, which have brought them numerous trophies, medals and recognition by the Commission for Morale and Entertainment.

The victories of our members in the sports and in leisure activities, were sometimes discouraging for the other teams, so before the start of any activity, the other teams asked

whether the “Macedonian Suns” would participate, so that they could start predicting who will get the second and third place, because the first would already be taken.

By previously submitting requests for celebrations of national holidays, birthdays, etc., certain facilities from the base could be used. The National Day of the Republic of Macedonia, August 2 – Ilinden, officially supported by the ISAF mission HQ (with a certain financial grant and the presence of top officers), were celebrated by each rotation present

in the relevant period, and at the same time, the contingent celebrated the ARM Day, the Day of Independence 8 September and the Day of the National Uprising - October 11.

Members of other contingents will surely remember the Macedonian specialties prepared for them, especially the traditional Macedonian dish “baked beans” (tavche gravche), as well as the big cake with the Macedonian flag which always aroused great interest. These gourmet meals were prepared by our members in kitchens at the specific bases.





FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Resource implications, whether it be personal, engaged capacity or financial resources, cannot be compared with what has been invested and obtained by participating in the stabilization and reconstruction of Afghanistan. Afghanistan is on the path to becoming a safe place to live, albeit slowly, and the welfare of the Afghan people is constantly taking place. The benefit from the engagement of the Republic of Macedonia in this mission is multifold. Someone might say that it is mostly political, but one would like to believe that is also cultural, i.e. that during this mission we learned a lot, both about us and about the others. We learned to act as part of the grand coalition, to share the values of democratic action and be interoperable with the top world armies. We reaffirmed that we are ready and that we have met all preconditions for full-fledged membership in NATO, and that we are a

trustworthy partner, a partner that the allies and other partners can rely on, and a partner that knows how to share the burden and help when most needed.

However, for those who prefer figures as indicators, excluding the unselfish benefits that our participants have offered to their allies and partners, for its overall multi-year engagement in ISAF, the Republic of Macedonia spent a total of 3 billion 426 million MKD or 55 million Euros. This amount does not include the costs for pre-deployment preparations, training and evaluation of the units designated for deployment.

To us, as a country with the respective GDP and overall capacities that are transparently published, these costs are considered as respectable. However, we would like to know what others have to say about us in every respect.

WHAT HAVE OTHERS SAID ABOUT US...

14

http://macedonia.usembassy.gov/welcome_home_reception2010.html

Reception ceremony for 79 ARM members 16 December, 2010

Ambassador Reeker's Remarks:

On behalf of President Obama, I want to express our deep gratitude to these soldiers who participated in the deployment of the Army of the Republic of Macedonia and the Vermont National Guard, in Afghanistan under ISAF Regional Command-East.

I am also honored to pass along the personal thanks and appreciation of Major General Dubie, the Commanding General of the Vermont National Guard, and a long-time friend of the Army and of Macedonia.

Macedonia has consistently stood alongside the United States and other allies in defending freedom and making the world more safe and secure for all of us.

<http://www.eucom.mil/media-library/photo/15304/ambassador-reeker-shakes-hands-with-soldiers-along-with-ltg-stojanovski-and-lt-co>

Ambassador Reeker shakes hands with soldiers along with LTG Stojanovski and Lt Col Kaiser.

By EUCOM

December 3, 2010



Ambassador Reeker, LTG Stojanovski and Lt Col Kaiser by EUCOM

http://macedonia.usembassy.gov/mac_ttroops_.html

Ambassador Reeker Thanks the Macedonian Army Troops that Served in the Operation Iraqi Freedom

Letter from David H. Petraeus
Dear Honorable Mr. Konjanovski,

I wish to take this opportunity to thank you, your government, and the people of Macedonia for the contributions and sacrifices you have made to secure the future of the citizens of Iraq. The security assistance training you have provided to the Iraqi Security Forces in Baghdad, as well as your staff officers' assistance at the Multi-National Force-Iraq, have contributed immensely to progress in Iraq.

I would also like to thank you for considering further support of OPERATION Enduring Freedom and the International Security Assistance Force mission in Afghanistan. Currently, we are analyzing

the requirements in Afghanistan to determine how your forces would be best employed in this critical endeavor. We plan to engage your government concerning this matter within the next two weeks and look forward to continuing our partnership as we seek to bring greater security to the Afghan people.

Your nation's leadership and support of the war on terror have brought great credit to Macedonia. The US Central Command is grateful for the many contributions of your nation.

With best warm regards,

David H. Petraeus
General, United States Army
Commanding

http://www.foreign.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/Baily_Testimony.pdf

Statement of Jess Baily Ambassador - Designate to the Republic of Macedonia

Senate Foreign Relations Committee, September 17, 2014

"Macedonia has been a steadfast partner in international security operations: this past July, 153 Macedonian soldiers deployed in the country's 17th rotation to Afghanistan to provide force protection at International Security Assistance Force headquarters in Kabul. Macedonia is one of the highest per capita contributors to ISAF. It has affirmed its willingness to stay in Afghanistan beyond 2014; and it supports the EU peacekeeping mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the UN mission in Lebanon."

<http://www.eucom.mil/media-library/article/25425/new-vtng-adjutant-general-moves-macedonia-partnership-forward>

Decorating 79 peacekeepers in Ilinden barracks by Cray, Wohlers and Glodgett

SKOPJE, Macedonia, 12 September 2013

U.S. Army Sgt. Maj. Forrest Glodgett, "These soldiers earned the Meritorious Unit Citation and Vermont Commendation medals. I am proud to have served with them in Afghanistan." U.S. Air Force Maj. Gen. Steven Cray, the Adjutant General of the Vermont National Guard "We share a deep bond of mutual respect that has grown from our experience in combat, but we also know each other's families. The personal nature of our relationship is only built over time."

<http://macedoniaonline.eu/content/view/10879/45/>

US decorates 31 Macedonian soldiers

Monday, 14 December 2009

Admiral William Brown: Foreign operations had showed to the world the capacities, preparedness and determination of Macedonia for Euro-Atlantic integration. - Macedonia is a key member in the Adriatic Group and it will play an important role in the enlargement process in the region. Macedonia continues to be a regional leader in promoting Balkan peace and stability."

<http://www.eucom.mil/media-library/photo/17783/krivolak-republic-of-macedonia-mdash-macedonian-army-sgt-1st-class-sasha-toshevski-stands-behind-u-s-army-sgt-daniel-demars-team-leader-with-the-230th-military-police-company-95th-military-pol>

KRIVOLAK, Republic of Macedonia –

Macedonian army Sgt. 1st Class Sasha Toshevski stands behind U.S. Army Sgt. Daniel DeMars, team leader with the 230th Military Police Company, 95th Military Pol - April 2010, By EUCOM



(U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Adrienne Killingsworth)

<http://www.eucom.mil/media-library/article/21021/vermont-guard-trains-macedonia-military-missions>

Vermont Guard trains Macedonia military for peacekeeping missions

By Tech. Sgt. Devin L. Fisher U.S. European Command Public Affairs

October 18, 2006

KRIVOLAK, Macedonia

"The State Partnership Program is a very dynamic, effective tool for Atlantic-European integration" for aspirant NATO countries like Macedonia, said Army Lt. Col. Michael Hurst, EUCOM Macedonia desk officer.

Air Force Maj. Gen. Michael Dubie, The Adjutant General of Vermont, agrees. "The things that we are going to practice will remain in our life forever," he said. "This is cooperation on a global level because the terrorist threat is present all over the world. Our two armies are determined to cooper-

ate in the joint war on terrorism ... and we will succeed."



(Army Lt. Col. Dan Pipes, commander, 1-124 Infantry Training Battalion, contributed to this article.)

http://macedonia.usembassy.gov/mac_ttroops_.html

Ambassador Reeker Thanks the Macedonian Army Troops that Served in the Operation Iraqi Freedom

Ambassador Reeker addresses the Macedonian Army troops

19 December, 2008

Remarks by Ambassador Philip T. Reeker,

"Though I know you took this mission with a military objective, you were also serving as envoys of Macedonia -- and you projected an excellent image of this country and its people.... No one who has served in any of these important missions has any doubt that the Macedonian military is strong, smart, and ready for any mission....

The United States recognizes that we have an exceptionally close friend and ally in the Republic of Macedonia."

<http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2005/10/text/20051026-4.html>

President Meets with the Macedonian Prime Minister Buchkovski

The Oval Office

26 October, 2005

PRESIDENT BUSH:

"I am grateful for the strong support that you have given in our efforts to win the war on terror. You've been a steadfast ally, and the American people are grateful. I also appreciate the fact that you have committed troops alongside our troops, in some of the world's newest democracies, in Afghanistan and Iraq. I want to thank you for that, as well."

CEREMONY on the occasion of the completion of the ISAF mission and the participation of the ARM in this mission



On 16 January 2015, the Ministry of Defence and the Army of the Republic of Macedonia organized a ceremony to express officially their gratitude to all Macedonian peacekeepers that were part of the 12-year participation of the ARM in the ISAF mission in Afghanistan.

At the ceremony, the Minister of Defence Zoran Jolevski addressed the military leadership, the Ambassadors accredited to the Republic of Macedonia and the members of the last contingent in this mission: "By participating in the ISAF mission in Afghanistan, Macedonia has transformed itself into an exporter of security and positive changes. Our peacekeepers achieved a great success, which is evident in the enhancement of peace, freedom and democracy in this country".



Minister Jolevski added that Macedonia's participation in the ISAF has always been supported by the Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia, the political officials, and most importantly, by the citizens of the Republic of Macedonia. Minister Jolevski thanked over 2700 ARM members that were part of

ISAF for their commitment and courage and told them that over the past 12 years there have been many achievements that we can be very proud of, and underlined two of them – the participation in the PHOENIX mission, where the Macedonian soldiers were fully integrated with the US troops and the defence against ISAF HQ and the US Embassy on 13 September 2011.

The Chief of General Staff of the ARM at that time, Lieutenant General Gorancho Koteski stated in his address: "I was honoured to hear in person that the ISAF senior political authorities felt safe in the main HQ and that the Macedonian peacekeepers are professional, responsible and brave".

The Ambassadors of the Republic of Turkey and the United States of America, Ömür Şölendil and Paul Wohlers respectively, spoke at the ceremony and emphasized that the Republic of Macedonia is a credible partner and proven ally. The Ambassadors stated that the ARM members served alongside their fellow colleagues from the allies.

As a token of our gratitude for the support to the participation of the ARM members in the ISAF mission, Minister Jolevski awarded plaques of gratitude to the Ambassadors of the USA, the United Kingdom, Turkey, Germany, Norway, Croatia, France, the Czech Republic, Greece and Italy.



Minister of Defence Zoran Jolevski and the Chief of General Staff at that time, Lieutenant General Gorancho Koteski with the Ambassadors of the countries supporting the ARM in the ISAF (from left to right): the Ambassador of the USA at that time, Paul Wohlers, the Ambassador of the United Kingdom, Charles Garrett, the Ambassador of Turkey, Ömür Şölendil, the Ambassador of FR Germany, Christine Althaus, the Defence Attaché of Norway, Tore Andersson, the Ambassador of the Czech Republic, Miroslav Rameš, the Ambassador of France, Laurence Auer, the Ambassador of Greece, Haris Lalakos and the Ambassador of Italy, Massimo Bellelli.

About the ARM in the ISAF...

Vlado Buchkovski - Minister of Defence

24 July 2004 – Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia, address by the MoD Buchkovski before the MPs

"The deployment of our unit represents a continuous reaffirmation of the efforts of the Republic of Macedonia in contributing to the fight against terrorism as a member of the anti-terrorist coalition for preserving peace in Afghanistan and its aspirations for NATO membership."

<http://bit.ly/1nvNjgO>

Jovan Manasijevski - Minister of Defence

16 February 2006, on the participation of the ARM in peacekeeping missions, statement for Radio Free Europe:

"This is of huge political importance, because through our participation in NATO-led operations and the operations of the anti-terrorist coalition, we as a country have gained great political credit and those procedures increased Macedonia's power in the defence and the promotion of its national interests."

<http://www.makdenes.mobi/a/1479339.html>

Lazar Elenovski, Minister of Defence

17 July 2009, Kabul Afghanistan, statement by the MoD Elenovski during his visit of the Macedonian contingent in the ISAF

"Our participation in ISAF is Macedonia's trump card in reaffirms its readiness to join NATO"

<http://makfax.com.mk/zanimlivosti/zdravje/69649>

Minister of Defence Zoran Konjanovski

09.07.2010, address in "Jane Sandanski" barracks, Shtip, Farewell ceremony for the ISAF peacekeepers:

"I am confident in your readiness and quality, I know that you will continue the pace of the previous generations of peacekeepers, and the only thing that you can do is to improve the excellent mark of the Republic of Macedonia in the peacekeeping operations. Be proud of your work, your families, the uniform and the flag."

Minister of Defence Fatmir Besimi

08-01-2013 – visiting the contingent of the Army of the Republic of Macedonia which is part of the ISAF troops in Kabul, Afghanistan:

"This is the contribution of the Republic of Macedonia to NATO and to the global stability in general. This contribution has received the highest marks on all NATO summits in the past, on all the meetings we have had in the past, regardless of whether they have been given by the NATO Secretary General Rasmussen, or from the bilateral nature". <http://www.morm.gov.mk/?shtit=26534&lang=mk>

Minister of Defence Talat Xhaferi

13 April 2013, Kabul, Afghanistan, Mr. Xhaferi visiting the peacekeepers from the Army of the Republic of Macedonia that are part of the ISAF:

"The Republic of Macedonia fully supports the efforts of the international community to ensure a stable and secure democratic future for Afghanistan. In line with the needs of the Alliance and taking into consideration our domestic capabilities, our country is ready to participate in the new mission and continue to provide unhindered contribution to the advancement of the Afghan society beyond 2014."

<http://vecer.mk/dzhaferi-vo-poseta-na-makedonskite-mirovnici-vo-avganistan>

Deputy Minister of Defence Emil Dimtriev

08. 11. 2011, Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia, address before the MPs:

"The Republic of Macedonia has continuously received high marks and awards from the highest and most senior authorities of NATO and the Alliance member countries. As an example of the professionalism and capacity of the ARM members he indicated the event from 13 September this year (2011), when they actively participated in refuting the attack on the Kabul HQ".

ISAF / ARM - 12 Years Ambassador of Peace

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