

As usual, the U.K. media has had a field day in running down this country's contribution to ISAF operations in Afghanistan. This short piece seeks to spoil their story with some facts.

The U.K. has about 10,000 service people in Afghanistan. We're not alone, we're not the biggest. We are doing some of the 'heavy lifting' in Helmand /Regional Command (South West). Other nations aren't quite at the sharp, but somebody has to carry out their roles, and we have neither the numbers of the ground nor the appetite to do everything. We are reinforcing our troops on the ground in Central Helmand with 300 extra troops from the Theatre Reserve Battalion (2nd Battalion the Duke of Lancaster's Regiment, currently trained and ready to move from Cyprus). By the end of this year, there will be three Brigade size forces in Helmand – the 8,000 strong U.K. led Task Force Helmand (covering 32% of the population and which includes Danes and Estonians) and two U.S. led Combat Teams, North and South (covering 37% and 31% of the population respectively). As part of this comprehensive redeployment, U.K. forces will be concentrated in Central Helmand, focussing in particular in Nahr-e-Saraj.

Below are the maps which the MoD has supplied recently in explanation of these reorganisations which follow on the injection of some 20,000 extra ISAF troops in Helmand.



