



S360/06

## **Press conference on the occasion of the end of the EU-led ACEH monitoring mission (AMM)**

*Brussels, 18 December 2006*

Edited transcript of the press conference given by Head of AMM Pieter FEITH on the occasion of the end of the EU-led Aceh Monitoring Mission (AMM)

*"We are happy to be back because it's not often that we can complete a crisis management mission. Missions tend to be prolonged in time, here we have a mission that has been completed reasonably in time and this is a satisfaction. I'll make three points:*

*One- we have now entered a new phase, the third phase in Aceh following the implementation of the military and security provisions of the agreement made in Helsinki, then we had the law on governing Aceh agreed by the Parliament followed by the [11 December] local elections for the government in Aceh. And what comes now is the daunting challenge for the newly elected governor to put everything together and, in particular, to kick start the economy and to give content to the far-reaching autonomy provisions. The focus is not anymore on security but on the economy and to do so he will need the confidence of the Acehnese, the local Parliament, Jakarta, of the President and Vice-President and of the International Community. I believe that, as long as he sticks faithfully to the agreement of Helsinki, this confidence is forthcoming. I have discussed this issue with the President and the Vice President of Indonesia Saturday, Friday and we went over these issues in detail.*

*My second point has something to do with EU and comes from my heart. This mission and the way the EU has dealt with the crisis, after the tsunami, shows that we have undisputable comparative advantage; we have a broad range of instruments, and all of these have been deployed and used over the past two years. We had a crisis management mission for 16 months but next to that we have the longer term Community programmes to take forward issues like reintegration and police training. We have had election monitors led by a member of the European Parliament, Glyn Ford. So, you see, all the three pillars of the EU institutions were working together.*

*My third point has to do with AMM completing its tasks: we have completed our tasks in the shortest possible time but the peace process has to continue, many issues that fall outside our agreement and that we are taking forward: reintegration is one of the key programmes, where I am happy to report that the Government is committed to work further with the local administration.*

*And then, in that context, we are going to draw the lessons that we have learned from this experience and let me just single out four of them.*

- *One is that we managed to deploy in the shortest possible period of time, that is to say that we had just four weeks to plan and prepare for this mission in anticipation of the signature, on 15 August 2005. We were alerted by President Ahtisaari who was in charge of peace negotiations in Helsinki on progress but we were left with very little time. So, bending the rules a little bit, we managed to get all the things in place by 15 August and to start with a complete mission one month later on. But there was no interruption or vacuum that could be misused by the parties.*
- *Second, we worked closely together in an integrated mission with the ASEAN countries, the first time we did so, the first EU presence in the area. Working with ASEAN has been a pleasure because we had highly qualified officers on their side, people with various skills, military police, human rights expertise, reintegration expertise, political analysts and they all performed very well. It was an integrated mission and there was confidence within the mission because we were fully transparent in our reports. We reported to Brussels and to the capitals but we also reported in copy-form to the two parties.*
- *Third, we did proactive monitoring, because you can do monitoring in two ways: you can sit backwards and wait for something to happen or you can lead and try to influence the tempo of the implementation, to settle priorities and suggest the agenda to the parties, I think that was appreciated and helped us to move forward quickly.*
- *Finally, the mission is accomplished but, maybe unluckily and it may not be excluded that there'll be some problems arising in the future and, for that contingency, both President Ahtisaari and myself, if needed, will remain available to help sort out any problems that may arise."*

**Q: On this last point, what is your assessment of the security situation, if you have a security risk, when and where is it going to happen?**

A: I think the security situation is extremely stable at this moment, the parties are talking to each other, both at the Banda Aceh level and at lower levels and therefore any incident can be discussed and quickly defused. I have seen really how the mindset of the Indonesian military has evolved in the past two years. So I think this is very reassuring but it doesn't take away what I was saying before: we want to at least give a signal that the Acehnese are not on their own and that both the former President of Finland and I can give a help if necessary, but there might be not necessarily be security problems, maybe other problems.

**Q: When we met there, your motto was that a good mission has to be a short mission, and that a mission shouldn't stay there longer than foreseen: actually you stayed six months longer than planned: was it against your will or was it a good reason to stay?**

A: The member states had initially authorized this mission for six months...the initial authorization for NATO in Bosnia was for one year...they are still there. But, there appeared to be a good argument for staying there for one year because the government had suffered some delay in finalizing the preparation for the elections and finalising the law in the Parliament so, we stayed on for a little while till September and then the President himself asked me to recommend to the Member States and HR Solana yet a further extension until the elections to bridge the period between the adoption of the law and the elections and I think it was fully justified and helped further stabilizing the situation.

**Q: A few more details about the elections? Was it peaceful? How much did this mission cost?**

A: As far as the security situation was concerned no incidents at all have occurred, no serious problems as far as the preparation and the conduct of elections in the polling day, but this is important: the President and the top leadership in Jakarta have had no hesitation to immediately make a statement that they welcome the outcome of these elections and that maybe others in Indonesia who may have some hesitation about the fact that here all of a sudden is one former rebel seizing power in a province which could set a precedent elsewhere: you don't find anything like this with the President or Vice president and they are happy to work with him, they understand the challenges, they understand that Jakarta will have to reach out to Aceh to help. As long as the local governor, Mr. Irwandy Yusuf scrupulously respects the terms of Helsinki's provisions- that is the basic thing, being that independence is off the table and that we have been working on a set of far-reaching autonomy provisions, but that Aceh will remain within Indonesia- the local government can count on full support of Jakarta.

On the budget, the final tally is 15 million, of which about 6 came from member states directly. This is I think what the member states want, they want to see results and cost-effective missions. We kept the costs very low, it was well spent.

**Q: AP How many local police are there in Aceh and how many of them are local? About the reintegration: how many guerrillas are there that need to be reintegrated? About resources they have said that now Aceh will be able to control 70% of their resources is that correct or not?**

A: On police. It's 9.100 plus 2.433 cadets who have completed their training: so 11.500, all of these are organic police forces. One of the first steps we took to implement the Helsinki strategy was monitoring the withdrawal of non organic forces out of Aceh and in that context there were 5.791 coming from elsewhere in Indonesia to deal with the emergency situation. Reintegration: 3000 active combatants, that's the figure used to provide cash compensation of about 2500 USD per person and this is significant.

In the longer term -I discussed it with Clinton- over time (3 years) the reintegration efforts and the reconstruction efforts have to be merged. Once we have overcome the reintegration we should reach out to the broader mass of Acehnese.

The third question (income): there's 70% of revenues of natural resources which will be retained or will flow back to Aceh. This is significant because whereas natural gas and oil resources are running down [...] nevertheless Aceh has significant resources in minerals, palm oil, rubber and coffee. There are significant substances that will come back to the system and it will need very careful and professional management to control these incomes to manage the natural resources. There's not a lack of resources but there's so much money to come into Aceh in the next years that you need a strong administration to handle this and to avoid that the word "corruption" comes back in the vocabulary.

**Q: Coming back to cooperation, are there any ways to keep this cooperation going on?**

A: We'll send some initial findings with ASEAN to Asian capitals so they'll have some institutional memories for the following years of what happened.

I understood that the German Presidency will put it on the agenda at a future EU-ASEAN ministerial meeting. This should anyway come from their side.