

KABUL FIR Contingency Coordination Team (CCT)

Bulletin 2021/003

KABUL FIR CCT BULLETIN #3 – Kabul FIR Contingency Situation Update (no change), and Outcomes from the CCT Video Teleconference

SITREP at 16 August 2021, 1630 UTC

1. Afghanistan CAA CCT POCs have not responded to ICAO communications. Attempts to establish contact are continuing.
2. **Afghanistan Civil Aviation Authority: Unless contact is already established before receipt of this bulletin, you are requested to contact ICAO APAC Office:** apac@icao.int; ssummer@icao.int (tel/sms. +66 837557504).
3. ATS in the Kabul FIR remains unavailable. Most flights are avoiding the Kabul FIR.
4. The status of Afghanistan AIS is not known. The following contingency-related NOTAM is available on the Afghanistan AIS web portal (<https://www.afgais.com> or <https://www.notam-aaaa.com>):

(G1264/21 NOTAMN

Q) OAKX/QAFAM/IV/NBO/E/000/999/

A) **OAKX** B) 2108160445 C) 2108180445 EST

E) KABUL AIRSPACE HAS BEEN RELEASED TO THE MILITARY. ADVISE TRANSIT AIRCRAFT TO REROUTE.

ANY TRANSIT THROUGH KABUL AIRSPACE WILL BE UNCONTROLLED. SURROUNDING FIRS HAVE BEEN ADVISED.)

ICAO currently has no information on the expected continuity of this web-based NOTAM service provided by Afghanistan.

5. **NEW:** The following additional NOTAMs for Kabul FIR (OAKX) and Kabul/Hamid Karzai International Airport (OAKB) have been published on the USA Defense Internet NOTAM Service (DINS, <https://www.notams.faa.gov/dinsQueryWeb/>):

A0630/21 NOTAMN

Q) OAKX/QAFAM/IV/NBO/A/000/999/3434N/6912E/999

A) **OAKX**

B) 2108160715 C) 2108180445 EST

E) FOLLOWING NOTAM IS ISSUED ON REQUEST OF KABUL ACC. DUE SECURITY REASON KABUL ACC IS RELEASED TO MILITARY. NO ATS WILL BE AVAILABLE. AIRCRAFT TRANSITING THROUGH KABUL FIR WILL BE FLYING IN UN-CONTROLLED AIRSPACE AT THEIR OWN RISK.

1. TRAFFIC ON ATS ROUTE L750 TO CONTACT ON FREQ 134.5 MHZ AT POINT RANAH.

2. TRAFFIC ON ATS ROUTE N644 TO CONTACT ON FREQ 134.5 MHZ AT POINT LEMOD.

3. TRAFFIC ON ATS ROUTE A466 TO CONTACT ON FREQ 134.3 MHZ

AT POINT AMDAR.

4. TRAFFIC ON ATS ROUTE P500 TO CONTACT ON FREQ 133.1 MHZ
AT POINT MOTMO.

A0001/21 NOTAMN

Q) /QXXXXX/////

A) **OAKB**

B) 2108161601

C) 2111122359

E) KABUL INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT IS OPEN TO MILITARY TRAFFIC ONLY

UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE. WHEN THE AIRFIELD IS OPEN, KABUL INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT IS A PPR REQUIRED AIRFIELD. FOR PPR APPROVAL,

CONTACT THE AFCENT AIRFIELD FLOW COORDINATION CELL AT US 1-803-717-8400. THE AIRFIELD FLOW COORDINATION CELL WILL COORDINATE

WITH THE KABUL INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT AIRFIELD MANAGER TO OBTAIN A

PPR. LANDING AT THE AIRPORT WITHOUT A PPR IS DENIED EXCEPT IN THE

EVENT OF AN EMERGENCY. ARRIVE WITHIN 30 MINUTES OF PPR APPROVED

ARRIVAL TIME OR RE-COORDINATE FOR A NEW PPR. FOR AWARENESS OF

ARRIVAL SLOT TIMES, CONTACT THE AFCENT AIRFIELD FLOW COORDINATION

CELL AT US 1-803-717-8400. LANDING AT THE AIRPORT CAN ONLY OCCUR BY

AN APPROVED PPR OBTAINED AS DESCRIBED ABOVE.

CREATED: 16 Aug 2021 16:09:00

SOURCE: OAKBYNYX

Note: this OAKB NOTAM is also duplicated in DINS as M0002/21 NOTAMN. Further enquiry will be made by ICAO. In the meantime **all stakeholders are urged to check both the Afghanistan AIS portal and the DINS service for NOTAM updates, until further notice.**

6. Afghanistan has not notified ICAO of the activation of its ATM contingency plan. ICAO has not yet received any notification from Afghanistan or neighbouring States of the formal activation of any contingency plan.
7. All relevant States are urged to activate any contingency arrangements they may have relating to non-availability of ATS in the Kabul FIR.
8. All potentially affected States, **particularly Bahrain, India, Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Oman, Pakistan, Qatar, Iraq, Saudi Arabia and UAE**, are urged to take into account the likelihood of increased non-normal traffic through your FIRs, or traffic operating on other than the usual ATS routes.
9. NOTAMs should be coordinated with neighbouring States and published at the earliest opportunity where specific ATS routing or other requirements for contingency traffic become necessary (particularly Afghanistan-neighbour States **China, Iran, Pakistan, Tajikistan,**

Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan), and in accordance with any established contingency plan where applicable.

Request for Additional Information

As per the previous request in CCT Bulletin 001, China, Iran, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan are requested provide the following information, if available, to ICAO by return email to ssumner@icao.int, cc to htakata@icao.int, as soon as possible. Pakistan has already provided a response.

1. Has Afghanistan directly advised your State/ANSP of their contingency status?
2. Does your State/ANSP have a formal ATM contingency arrangement/agreement with Afghanistan?
3. Does your ATC Centre currently have voice or other communications with Kabul ACC?
4. Are flights entering the Kabul FIR from your FIR being fully coordinated with Kabul ACC?
5. Are flights entering your FIR from the Kabul FIR being fully coordinated by Kabul ACC or other ACC?
6. Are flights entering the Kabul FIR from your FIR establishing contact with Kabul ACC or other ACC?

Please provide any additional comment you consider relevant.

NEW: Outcomes of the CCT Video Teleconference #1

A video-teleconference of the CCT was held from 0830 to 1030 UTC on Monday 16 August. A Summary of Discussion is attached to this email.

Main outcomes:

- The greater majority of traffic is avoiding the Kabul FIR;
- Additional traffic is currently being handled by affected States without difficulty. However, this should be monitored closely and any issues reported to the CCT as soon as possible, through ICAO.
- Subject to confirmation from Pakistan (ICAO to coordinate), the meeting agreed there is currently no need to activate the contingency route and Flight Level Allocation Scheme (FLAS) of the *Inter-Regional Afghanistan Contingency Arrangements*. Additional traffic is being accommodated within normal procedures.
- There is no need for ATFM for aircraft transiting the Kabul FIR (if any).

ICAO Contact

ICAO will arrange rotational availability of staff to support, where necessary, 24 hour availability of contingency coordination.

Contact details: Mr. Shane Sumner, ssumner@icao.int, tel. +66 83 755 7504; and Mr. Takata Hiroyuki, htakata@icao.int.



ICAO

International Civil Aviation Organization

Kabul FIR Contingency Coordination Team (CCT) 2021

Coordination Meeting 01

Video Teleconference, 16 August 2021

KABUL FIR CONTINGENCY COORDINATION TEAM (CCT) 2021

COORDINATION MEETING 01

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION

1. INTRODUCTION

Kabul FIR CCT Bulletin #1.

1.1 The Kabul FIR CCT was formed on circulation of the Kabul FIR Contingency Coordination Team (CCT) Bulletin 2021/001, (Bulletin #1), on 16 August 2021 at 0315 UTC.

1.2 Bulletin #1 notified stakeholders that there were reports of major political/government instability in Afghanistan and potentially significant security challenges that airlines, IATA and ICAO considered could disrupt flight operations and/or the provision of ATS and AIS in the Kabul FIR.

1.3 No ATM contingency NOTAMs had been issued by Afghanistan. Information had been received indicating that normal ATS was being provided by Kabul Area Control Centre (ACC).

1.4 ACAA did not respond to multiple attempts by ICAO to establish contact and gather information on current and expected ATS capability. The CCT was therefore established, and the following Contingency Plans were circulated as attachments to Bulletin #1:

- *Kabul FIR Air Traffic Management Contingency Plan*; and
- *Inter-Regional Afghanistan Contingency Arrangements*.

Kabul FIR CCT Bulletin #2

1.5 At 0318 UTC on 16 August ICAO was informed that a third-party contact within the Afghanistan Administration had advised the Bay of Bengal Cooperative ATFM (BOBCAT) service provider (Aeronautical Radio of Thailand – AEROTHAI) that:

- the Kabul ACC had released its airspace to the military;
- Kabul airspace was uncontrolled;
- transit aircraft should be advised to reroute;
- Surrounding FIRs had been advised; and
- Lahore (Pakistan) would issue a NOTAM on behalf of Afghanistan.

1.6 The third-party contact also did not respond to subsequent ICAO communications.

1.7 CCT Bulletin #2 was subsequently issued, informing stakeholders of the unavailability of ATS in the Kabul FIR, and of the following NOTAM, which was also available through the ACAA AIS website:

(G1264/21 NOTAMN
Q) OAKX/QAFAM/IV/NBO/E/000/999/A) OAKX B) 2108160445 C) 2108180445 EST
E) KABUL AIRSPACE HAS BEEN RELEASED TO THE MILITARY. ADVISE
TRANSIT AIRCRAFT TO REROUTE.
ANY TRANSIT THROUGH KABUL AIRSPACE WILL BE UNCONTROLLED.
SURROUNDING FIRS HAVE BEEN ADVISED.)

2. DISCUSSION OUTCOMES - CCT COORDINATION MEETING 01

2.1 The CCT Coordination Meeting #1 was convened by video teleconference at 0830 UTC on 16 August 2021. The following States and International Organizations were invited to attend:

Afghanistan, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, India, Iran, Kuwait, Oman, Pakistan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Tajikistan, Thailand, Turkey, UAE, USA, CANSO, ICAO APAC, ICAO MID, ICAO HQ.

2.2 Afghanistan did not respond to the meeting invitation, and did not participate.

Agenda Item 1: Afghanistan Air Navigation Services SITREP

2.3 Afghanistan did not participate in the meeting. The CCT was therefore not provided with any summary of current and expected ATC and AIS capability in the Kabul FIR.

2.4 ICAO provided a summary of events, actions and communications up to this point, including known information on the unavailability of ATS.

Agenda Item 2: Current and Expected Security Situation

2.5 IATA provided a brief description of the difficult security situation on the ground at Kabul/Hamid Karzai International Airport:

- There was an incursion of militants/insurgents into the airport grounds;
- There was no perimeter security for the airport;
- Evacuation efforts and military operations were hampered by the very large numbers of civilians encroaching into the airport, including the runway; and
- A number of ATC staff were believed to have fled.

2.6 In response to a query on airline assessment of security risks for overflight, the meeting was informed by IATA that the primary concern of airlines considering operations through the Kabul FIR was the non-availability of ATS.

Agenda Item 3 – Traffic Data and Observations

2.7 IATA informed the meeting that:

- most flights were avoiding the Kabul FIR;
- there were some concerns about traffic avoiding the Kabul FIR that was also subject to additional restrictions that precluded operating in the Tehran (Iran) and Baghdad (Iraq) FIRs;
- Some flights may need to transit the Jeddah (Saudi Arabia) FIR;
- there was a need for expeditious granting of overflight or entry approvals for flights operating in FIRs other than those through which they usually transited;

- some flights may not be able to accept cleared flight level changes due to minimum level requirements;
- It was not clear whether the NOTAM serial numbers for Kabul FIR NOTAMs issued by another State on behalf of Afghanistan were assigned from Afghanistan or the from the supporting State.

Action Item: All States - to facilitate/expedite overflight and/or entry permission processes for flights avoiding the Kabul FIR.

Action Item: IATA to coordinate with States, or with ICAO if necessary on States that should be approached to expedite permissions.

Action Item: ICAO to clarify the serial-numbering used for Kabul FIR contingency NOTAMs.

2.8 The meeting was informed that the States that would be most affected by traffic avoiding the Kabul FIR were Iran, Oman and Pakistan. As Pakistan did not participate in the meeting, ICAO undertook to seek information on the capacity to handle additional traffic.

2.9 Iran informed the meeting that there had been no problems encountered in handling the additional traffic resulting from the Kabul FIR contingency, and there was no current restriction on accepting the additional traffic. Technical stops for refueling were also being accommodated.

2.10 Oman had not noticed any significant increase in traffic, but noted that the situation would likely become more clear in the next 24+ hours. ATC in the Muscat FIR was currently operating at about 42 – 46% of normal demand, and therefore could accommodate additional traffic. In terms of deviation from normal routes, Oman noted that current arrangements for handling traffic on ATS routes L301 and P307 from the Mumbai (India) FIR could also accommodate additional traffic. India noted that while there had been a marginal increase on L301, the capacity to handle additional traffic was available.

2.11 In response to the identified need for some flights to operate through the Jeddah FIR, the meeting was informed that Saudi Arabia could also manage additional traffic, particularly as current traffic was generally about 30% of the normal volume. Flight permissions could also be expedited.

2.12 UAE informed the meeting of close coordination between UAE, Iran and Oman to accommodate additional traffic. Every effort would also be made to facilitate flight permissions, but airlines should be aware that there were some restrictions on General Civil Aviation Authority (GCAA) operations due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

2.13 EUROCONTROL provided an analysis of expected route planning for flights seeking the shortest possible route from Europe to Asian destinations while avoiding the Kabul FIR (**Attachment A**). The meeting was requested to note the analysis only took into account flights that also operated within airspace known to the EUROCONTROL system.

2.14 It was noted that the greater majority of such flights would operate through the southern parts of the Tehran and Karachi (Pakistan) FIRs, but some would operate on more northerly routes through China. EUROCONTROL requested further information from airlines that needed more southerly routes than those identified in the analysis.

Action Item: IATA to coordinate airline requests for analysis of routes on more southerly trajectories.

2.15 The meeting was informed that due to the COVID-19 pandemic the current daily traffic levels of about 26,000 flights in Europe was about 70% of the 2019 traffic level. Revised routing for flights intending to avoid the Kabul FIR did not cause any significant issues.

2.16 It was noted by Oman that traffic analyses for previous contingency situations had included long-haul flights from Australia and New Zealand. EUROCONTROL advised that only those flights that operated during the representative week of traffic sampled were included in the analysis. Oman proposed that future analysis may be expanded to include such long-haul flights, and other routes where traffic was expected to increase.

Agenda Item 4: Contingency Planning and Responses

2.17 The meeting was reminded of the two contingency plans relevant to the Kabul FIR, as mentioned in paragraph 1.4, and briefly discussed several items of particular importance.

Kabul FIR ATM Contingency Plan

2.18 The meeting was informed that while operational arrangements relating to procedures in the Kabul FIR ATM Contingency Plan had been made between Afghanistan and neighbouring States, there were no formal agreements.

2.19 The States concerned were reminded of the coordination and communication transfer procedures stipulated in the Kabul FIR contingency plan, which must be followed in the event of a flight entering the Kabul FIR during the contingency period.

2.20 In response to a query, the meeting was informed that the ‘expectation’ in the Kabul FIR contingency plan that EUROCONTROL and AEROTHAI would provide 24-hour ATFM to achieve 15 minute trails between flights entering the Kabul FIR was not feasible, and had not been discussed with either agency. However, it was also noted that the low levels of traffic due the pandemic only barely warranted the BOBCAT ATFM service during its normal 2000 to 2359 UTC operating hours, and the need was even less while most traffic was avoiding the Kabul FIR, when the peak hourly traffic receiving the ATFM service was less than three movements. The meeting agreed that there was no current need for ATFM services for traffic crossing the Kabul FIR during this contingency situation.

2.21 Regarding the Flight Level Allocation Scheme (FLAS) included in the Kabul FIR contingency plan, IATA informed the meeting that some airlines were restricted to minimum flight levels, and this information would be shared with relevant parties.

Action Item: IATA to provide information on minimum flight levels for operations under the Kabul FIR ATM Contingency Plan.

Inter-Regional Afghanistan Contingency Arrangements

2.22 The Inter-Regional Afghanistan Contingency Arrangements were structured in three scenarios: Scenario A – *Degradation of ATS*, Scenario B - *Delegation of ATS*, and Scenario C – *Circumnavigation of Kabul FIR*. Discussion focused on Scenario C, which was the expectation for the greater majority of traffic that would normally cross the Kabul FIR.

2.23 In response to a query on the operation of the contingency ATS route structure and FLAS for airspace in the Tehran and Karachi FIRs west and south of Afghanistan, Iran informed the meeting that there had been no need to activate these procedures as any additional traffic was being readily managed under normal ATC procedures. While a reduction in the Karachi FIR requirement for 50 NM longitudinal spacing at the eastbound transfer point to 20 NM would be welcome, the traffic could be accommodated under the existing arrangements.

2.24 Due to the absence of Pakistan from the meeting ICAO undertook to seek their comment and inform the CCT.

Action Item: ICAO to coordinate with Pakistan on capacity to manage traffic expected traffic to avoid the Kabul FIR.

Way Forward

2.25 The meeting agreed that there was no need for another meeting of the CCT to be scheduled in the near term. All parties would, however, continue to monitor the situation and inform the CCT of any changes or new information that needed to be brought to the attention of the group. If a meeting was required, as much advance notice would be given as possible, but CCT participants should also be prepared for short notice meetings if required by circumstances.

2.26 A new CCT Bulletin would be produced reflecting the outcomes of this meeting.

2.27 IATA requested that any contingency-related emails be addressed to the dedicated contingency address IATA_AME@iata.org to ensure a prompt response

2.28 ICAO informed the meeting that a rotational responsibility for CCT matters would be established in the Regional Office in order to provide 24 hour support where necessary, with contact details provided in CCT Bulletins.

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Afghanistan ATM Contingency Plan

Kabul FIR unavailability - impact on traffic flows Europe - Asia and vice-versa

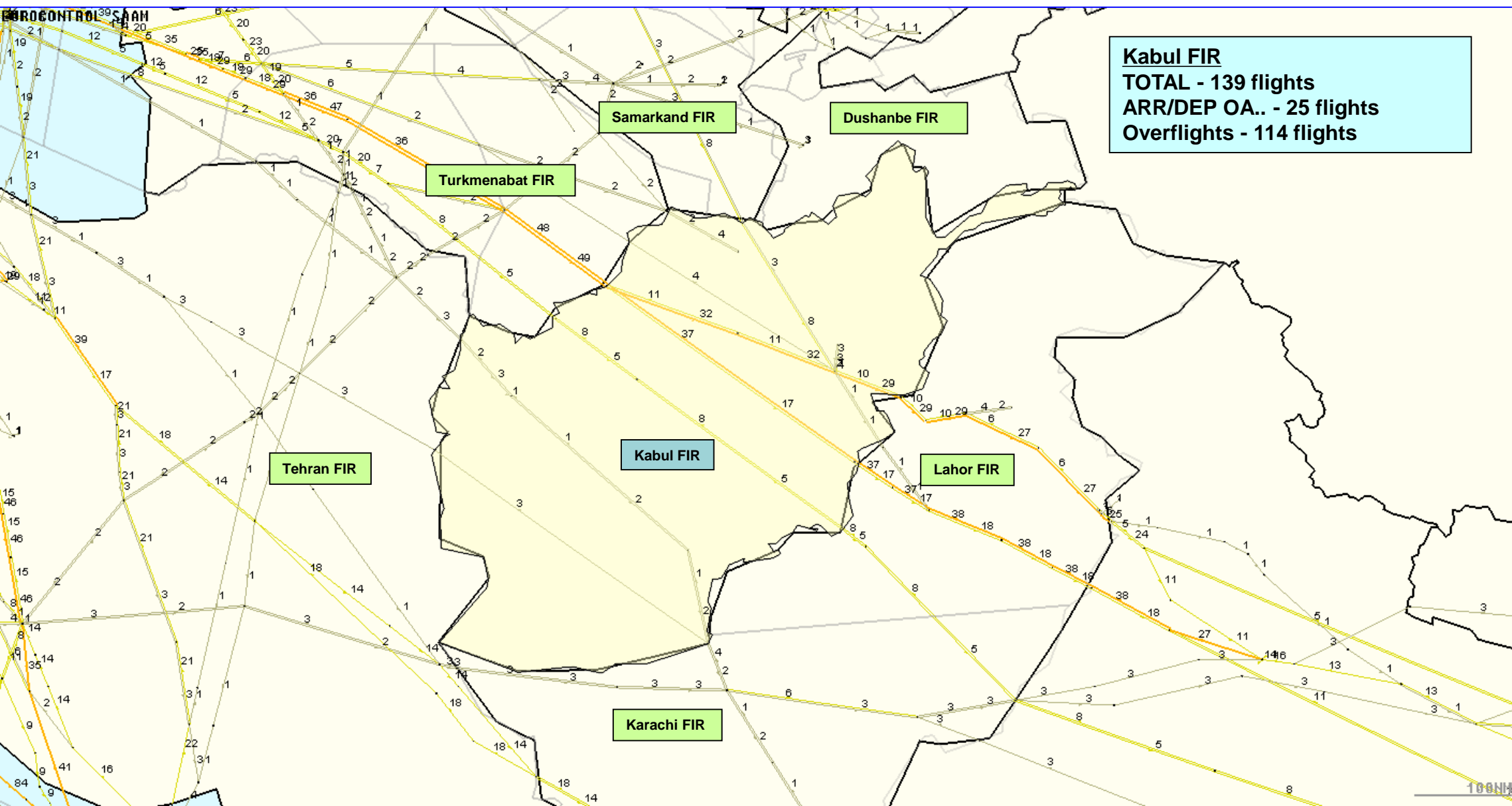
Network Manager Evaluations
Airspace Design Team
NMD/ACD/OPL/DES

Supporting
European
Aviation



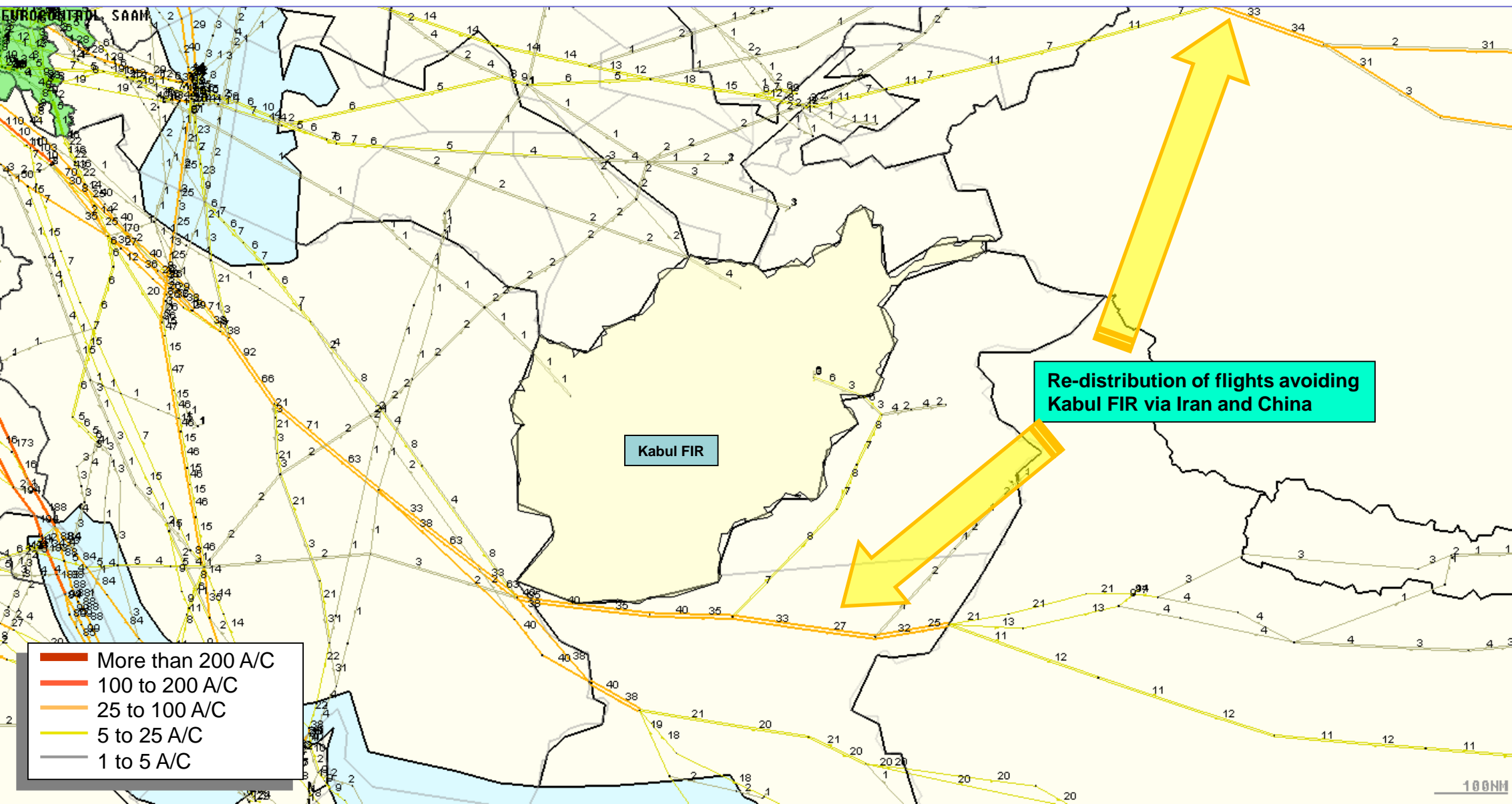
Traffic Load

AFG OPEN



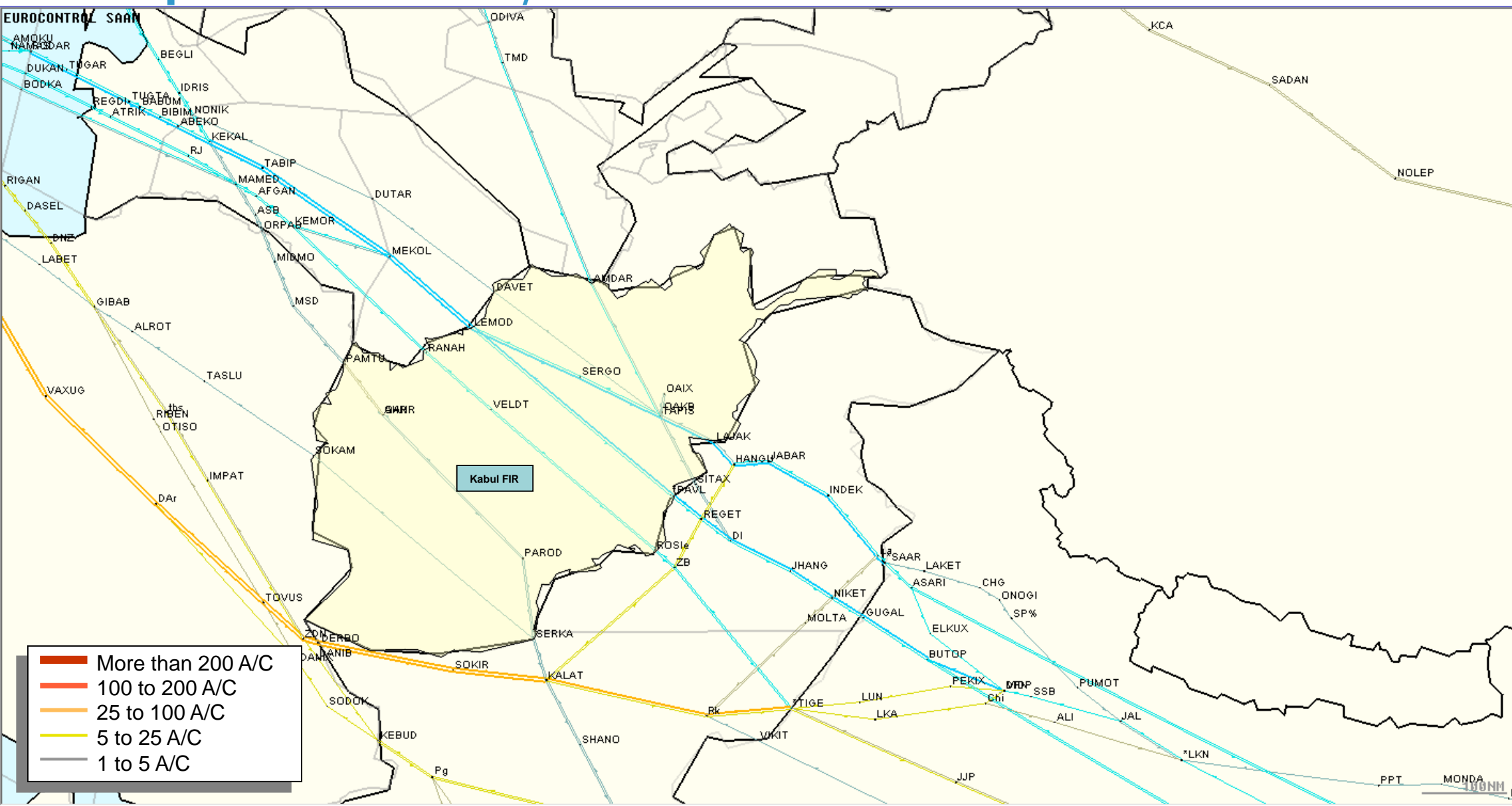
Traffic Load

AFG CLOSED



Traffic Load

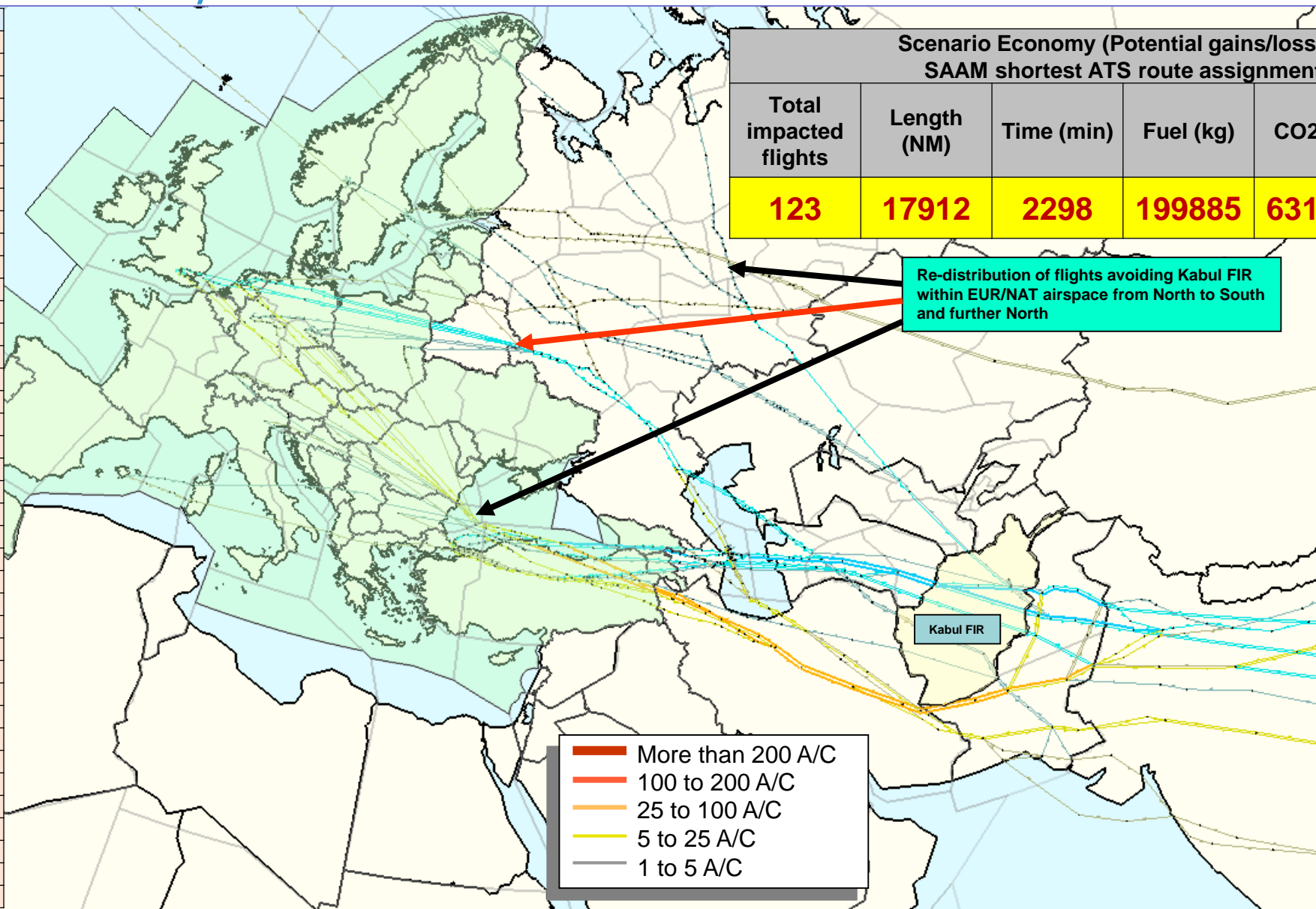
Comparison AFG OPEN / CLOSE



Traffic Load

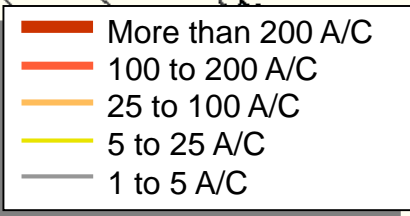
Comparison AFG OPEN / CLOSE

Origin	Destination	Length (NM)	Airline	Nb.
ETAR	OAKB	569	THY	29
OAKB	LBSF	565	SIA	21
LTFM	OAKB	550	KLM	9
LBSF	OAKB	543	BAW	8
OAKB	LTFM	530	AIC	8
LTAC	OAKB	526	AFR	5
KORD	VIDP	486	DLH	4
KIAD	VIDP	396	ADB	4
OPIS	UGTB	394	LOT	4
KEWR	VIDP	376	AZQ	4
EDFH	OPIS	346	FIN	3
LFPG	OPIS	346	UAL	3
OPIS	LFPG	334	KMF	3
OPIS	LTFM	307	VTI	2
VNKT	EKBI	296	SWR	2
VIDP	EPWA	292	AFG	2
EGLL	OPLA	275	N47	2
LEMG	VIAR	226	OAE	2
OPLA	LTFM	213	BOX	2
WSSS	EKCH	212	HFM	2
VTBS	UBBB	197	CLX	2
VIDP	EHAM	193	CAZ	1
VIDP	EDDP	174	UPS	1
VIDP	EGLL	173	BAR	1
VTBS	EHAM	161	THA	1
VIDP	EDDK	156	MAS	1
EHAM	VIDP	146	VIR	1
VTBS	EGLL	146	VJT	1
ESSA	WSSL	141	MMZ	1
EHAM	VTBS	139	AZG	1
EGLL	VIDP	125	AUA	1
EGLL	VTBS	118	SMF	1
UBBB	WSSS	116	N98	1
WSSS	EFHK	116	NCR	1
VIDP	EDDF	112	JEF	1
VIDP	LFPG	112	FDX	1
VIDP	EDDF	112	RCH	1
WSSS	EHAM	104	PIA	1
LFPG	VIDP	102	GIA	1
EDDF	VTBS	95		
LFPG	VTBS	95		
EHAM	WSSS	90		
VIDP	LTBA	87		
VGHS	LTBA	87		
VNKT	LTFM	87		
VTBS	LFPG	86		
VTBS	LOWW	85		
VTBS	LSZH	85		



Scenario Economy (Potential gains/losses) SAAM shortest ATS route assignment					
Total impacted flights	Length (NM)	Time (min)	Fuel (kg)	CO2 (kg)	NOx (kg)
123	17912	2298	199885	631642	3441

Re-distribution of flights avoiding Kabul FIR within EUR/NAT airspace from North to South and further North



Impact on EUR/NAT Region - Findings



- ❖ In general no traffic increase inside EUR/NAT Region airspace except encountered re-distribution of more than 100 flights for 2021 traffic demand from North to South and further North.
- ❖ The main traffic concentration is on axis Ankara FIR - Sofia FIR - Bucuresti FIR and beyond where for all FIRs except Ankara FIR traffic increase might be expected.
- ❖ Reduction of flights via Tbilisi FIR, Yerevan FIR and Baku FIR.
- ❖ Tehran airspace will become more loaded due to traffic re-routings more to the south.
- ❖ Prior information in case of unavailability of air navigation services within the Kabul FIR and traffic re-distribution inside EUR/NAT Region shall be properly communicated in order to assure necessary coordination inside the Region.