International Civil Aviation Organization

The First Meeting of the Ad Hoc Afghanistan Contingency Group Meeting (AHACG/1)

Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, 11-12 September 2014

Agenda Item 2: Afghanistan ATS Status and Capability Building

AGHANISTAN AIRSPACE CONTINGENCY PLAN

(Presented by NATO/ISAF)

SUMMARY

This paper presents ISAF's plan to continue military operations and accommodate limited civilian flights as good as possible without an airspace contract starting on 15 Dec 2104.

1. INTRODUCTION

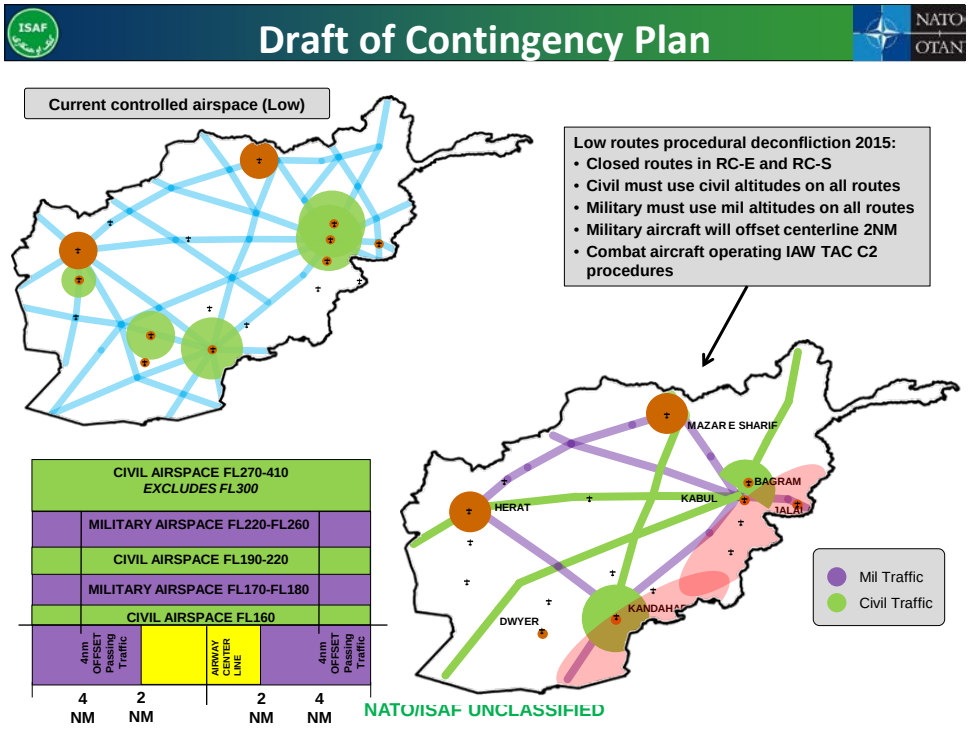
1.1 Some challenges exist in transitioning an aviation system designed primarily to support military operations to one that places civil operations in the forefront. The Afghanistan Civil Aviation Authority (ACAA) has made great strides in developing an organization that conforms with ICAO SARPs but still lacks human capacities to run control the airspace and operate major airports.

2. DISCUSSION

2.1 Background. Air traffic control services are provided by an AFCENT-funded contractor until 15 Dec 2014. GIRoA has concluded negotiations with at least two contractors (IAP Worldwide Services (iAP) and Global Aerospace Logistics (GAL) and started negotiations with a third company (Claymore Global Solution). iAP and GAL have both met the technical requirements of the contract.

2.2 Outcome. If the airspace contract is not funded, all air traffic control services (Kabul Area Control Center comprising the low and high airspace structure, but also Kabul Approach Control) and also deconfliction services from military operation will terminate on 15 Dec 2014. The associated ATC radars and radio antennas will also shut down, resulting in a loss of radar and radio coverage throughout large areas of Afghanistan. The current airway structure and radio frequencies will still be available; however, there will be no personnel controlling or advising pilots of aircraft on IFR flight plans in Afghanistan.

2.3 Low Airspace Contingency Plan. Our task is to ensure continued military operations in this environment. Therefore some de-confliction procedures have been established in order to mitigate the hazards of operating in uncontrolled airspace.



2.3.1 Lateral De-confliction-Currently; all airways can be used by both military and civilian aircraft. The contingency plan will limit military and civilian aircraft to designated separate airways. There will be 7 airways designated for military traffic and 4 east/west, north/south airways for civilian traffic. Additionally, military aircraft will be required to offset 2 miles from the centerline of the airways. All aircraft (Military and Civilian) on IFR flight plans will be required to make position reports at mandatory report points to ensure pilot to pilot positional awareness. All position reports will be transmitted on one Common Traffic Advisory Frequency (CTAF) for the entire Kabul FIR.

2.3.2 Vertical De-confliction-All civilian aircraft, on dedicated civilian airways, will also be de-conflicted by designated altitude blocks which will be reserved solely for civilian aircraft. (FL160; FL190-FL220; above FL310.) All military aircraft, on dedicated military airways, will also be de-conflicted by designated altitude blocks which will be reserved solely for military aircraft. (FL170-FL180; FL230-FL260; FL300.) This ensures that civil and military traffic are de-conflicted at all intersections created by dedicated civil and military airways. Aircraft must remain at last assigned altitude until reaching military controlled airspace around the five Resolute Support airfields. Note that Bagram and Kandahar have radar approach control while MeS and Herat have nonradar approach control. Furthermore, all military (manned and unmanned) aircraft on a mission can safely cross any airway outside of the published military and civilian altitude blocks. Hemispheric altitudes are used for deconfliction in the same altitude block in accordance with direction of flight. All aircraft must remain at last assigned altitude until reaching military controlled airspace around the five Resolute Support airfields. Note that Bagram and Kandahar have radar approach control while MeS and Herat have nonradar approach control and KAIA could have only a VFR tower.

2.3.3 Timing De-confliction-Air Traffic Control from adjacent countries will separate aircraft entering Afghanistan at the same entry point by a minimum of 50 miles per existing agreements. Air Traffic Controllers from the Air Mobility Division

(AMD) shall ensure that all aircraft published on the Air Tasking Order entering Afghanistan are separated by a minimum of 15 minutes. These timing procedures provide additional lateral de-confliction measure. Departing aircraft timing will be managed by terminal ATC at the RS airfields.

2.3.4 Air to Air Refueling (AAR) Tracks- For 2015, 6 AAR tracks have been moved or closed so that none of the remaining 20 AAR tracks cross or conflict with military or civilian airways in any way.

2.3.5 Air route restrictions- Due to the inability to de-conflict military and civilian aircraft on an IFR flight plan from military combat aircraft operating in a combat zone other than by "see and avoid", civilian airways mainly in the south and east will be restricted for military operations. Some other airways around the country will be restricted to mitigate the risk of civil and military aircraft on IFR flight plans. The number of available airways will be reduced by more than 50 %. The remaining structure is based on the existing airway structure and allows transition between KAIA, Herat, MeS, KAF, BAF and Jalalabad, but routes are prioritized for military operations, therefore resulting in adverse routings for civilian airlines.

2.3.6 Publications. All of the above procedures will be officially published in an AIP supplement and relevant military and civilian publications, to maintain maximum visibility of traffic for all aircraft in Afghanistan airspace and to ensure everybody is aware of the procedures, ensuring maximum compliance.

2.4 High Airspace Contingency Plan. All airspace in FL300 remains reserved for military operations. There is no requirement to change the high airway structure above FL310 for civilian traffic because there should be no military traffic. Same as in the low airspace, civilian traffic will be separated when entering the country, they will report at mandatory reporting points and they will fly on their designated airways, but there will be no controller available.

2.5 Assessment. Despite all mitigation measures, this plan has increased risk for potential mid-air collisions as compared to current operating procedures.

2.5.1 We can help to ensure safe separation with the employment of the above mitigation measures, however we cannot be sure to what extent civilian aircraft will adhere to the published procedures as there is no way to monitor their flight plan.

2.5.2 Another risk is the lack of approach control services at KAIA. Therefore as a requirement, IFR approach capabilities at KAIA should be established

2.5.3 Restricting routes and altitudes will undoubtedly lead to higher costs for civilian airliners. and will likely have an adverse impact.

3. ACTION BY THE MEETING

3.1 The meeting is invited to:

a) note the information contained in this paper; and

b) discuss any relevant matters as appropriate.

…….