



By Susan Idziak
Combined Security Transition Command -
Public Affairs

KABUL, Afghanistan—The Department of Social Relations, Parliamentary and Public Affairs at the Ministry of Defense recently held the first ever training seminar for its public affairs officers from the Afghan National Army components at the corps and command level and below. About 20 officers from the five regional corps and associated garrisons, Air Corps, Kabul Military Training Center and Logistics Command attended the three-day seminar in the MoD conference room in Kabul.

Col. Mohammad Ishaq Paiman, director of public information at MoD, was integral in putting together the seminar's agenda, which was approved by Minister Zahir Azimi, chief of the department. This seminar is only the beginning of many training opportunities being planned for both public affairs officers and noncommissioned officers at ANA units, said Paiman. "We plan to hold quarterly seminars here to build the effectiveness of the ANA's social relations, parliamentary and public affairs activities."

The first day of the seminar included presentations on a public affairs officer's duties and responsibilities with parliamentary affairs, as communications planner, budget and equipment manager, and most importantly, as advisor to the unit commander. The second day focused on media relations activities such as how to write a press release, how to arrange and conduct an interview with a high-ranking individual and conducting media analyses. A question-and-

answer discussion session filled the remaining day's agenda.

Maj. Mohammad Gul, chief of public affairs for the 203rd Corps in Gardez, enjoyed the seminar for both the face-to-face communication and

new information he learned. "It was good for all the PAOs to come together to talk about how to do our jobs better as PAOs," he said. "I especially learned how important it is for me to learn about and cooperate with other offices in my organization. It was also important that MoD was able to learn about and understand better the situations at our level," he added.

Maj. Mohammad Arif, from the 201st Corps in Kabul agreed. "We were able to talk with each other about our problems and our system of work and compare notes with each other," he said. At future seminars, Arif hopes to learn more about writing public affairs plans, including details about how to handle the logistics, security and escort procedures for the media, and how to develop a communication plan for operations. That will help me in my position as chief of public affairs, he said.

Sharing ideas among his colleagues

MoD sponsors first-ever public affairs seminar



Courtesy Photo

Col. Mohammad Ishaq Paiman, right, presents information about a public affairs officer's responsibilities at the first ever MoD PA training seminar while Efatullah Ghayoori from CSTC-A PA interprets.

was the favorite part of the seminar for Capt. Mohammad Shapoor Shreefyar, chief of public affairs for the Kabul Military Training Center. "We all exchanged phone numbers so we can keep in touch with each other," he said.

The closing of the seminar was marked by inspirational words from Azimi. "You have a very important responsibility to combat operations," he said. "You can provide help with recruiting efforts and you can guide soldiers to work with the media because communication activities are also important in war." In your positions as public affairs officers, your job is communicating to three separate audiences great messages, he said. "Encouraging the ANA soldiers to improve as much as they can, assuring the public that the ANA is a powerful army that will keep them safe and ensuring the world that Afghanistan is developing an army to protect itself." 