



Gen. Bismullah Khan, Afghan National Army General Staff chief of staff, showed Gen. Dan McNeill, International Security Assistance Force commander, the new headquarters at the ANA base in Herat, Afghanistan. The corps commanders and General McNeill convened for a conference March 6 in Herat to discuss mission operations, current obstacles and new goals.



Corps commanders convene at Herat conference

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The corps commanders of the Afghan National Army convened March 7 in Herat for a three-day conference to discuss mission objectives, new goals and current obstacles.

Army Gen. Dan McNeill, International Security Assistance Force commander, attended the conference and listened to the proposed restructuring of the corps, added words of praise for their progress and offered insight on how to achieve success in ANA organization.

“A hallmark of a good army is its flexibility and ability to adapt to its surrounding environment,” the general said. “Make decisions that will help you fight terrorists successfully and you will always be in the right. If it means moving an entire kandak (brigade), then do it.”

The ANA is creating a new schedule for active duty, training and liberal leave. This plan is designed to help reduce desertion rates by allowing them time to visit their families and serve in areas closer to their homes. In an address to the corps commanders and mentors, Gen. Bismullah Khan, ANA General Staff, explained the need for the schedule.

“In the ANA, we have a commitment to each other,”

General Khan said. “If the soldiers can learn to follow orders, then we must do what we can to care for our subordinates – which means finding a better way for our men to serve their country.

“Too often men who go (absent without leave) come back on their own. They know this is a good choice of lifestyle and they just miss their old way of life,” General Khan said. “It’s our job to make their choice as a soldier easier.”

General McNeill agrees it’s steps like these plan have enabled the ANA to grow into a strong and reliable force.

“In 2002, your military was only a band of militias,” he said. “Now five years later, you are emerging as a real army prepared to take on increasing responsibility. Although the generosity of the international alliance has helped, the Afghans’ sacrifices are responsible for most of the progress you have made.”

In a parting speech, General Khan praised the corps commanders for their hard work in helping the ANA emerge as a reliable security force.

“The ANA has been extremely successful,” he said. “We continue to be successful because of the commitment of everyone to strengthen our country. The soldiers and officers are the reason why we’re so strong today.” 