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Bill O'Reilly visits Camp Eggers

By Staff Sgt. Robert Wollenberg
CSTC-A Public Affairs

CAMP EGGERS, Afghanistan - Soldiers, sailors, airmen, and Marines from the Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan here at Camp Eggers came out to meet with Fox News anchor Bill O'Reilly on Nov. 16.

The best selling author, two time Emmy winning journalist and host on Fox News, "The O'Reilly Factor" spent more than two hours signing pictures, T-shirts, mugs, books, guitars and other personal articles.

"It was good to see (Bill O'Reilly)," said Navy Petty Officer 2nd Class Michael Wade. "I watch his show all the time. My whole family watches, so it was pretty neat.

"He does a lot of stuff to support the troops," Wade added. "I'm on his website all the time. He provides a place

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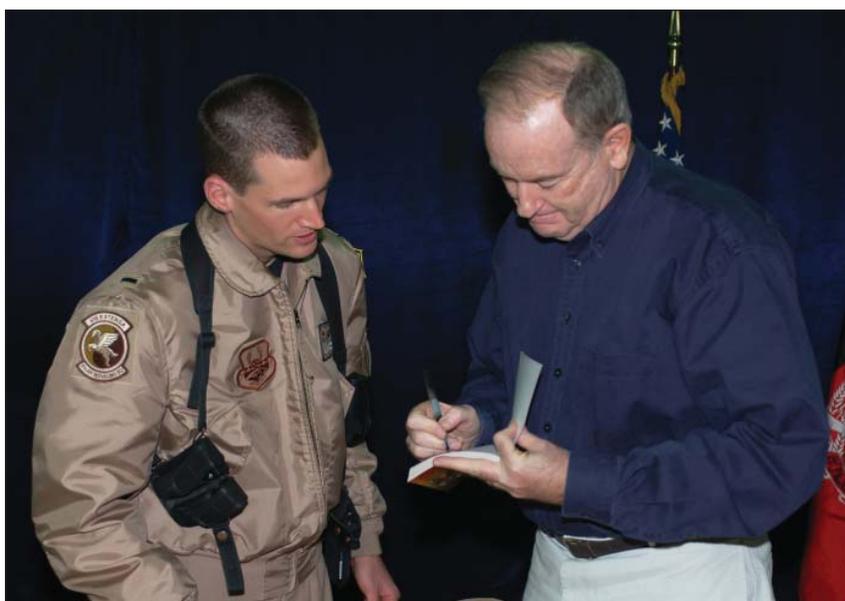


photo by Navy Petty Officer 2nd Class Brian P. Seymour
Fox News anchor Bill O'Reilly autographs one of his books for a servicemember assigned to Combined Security Transition Command -- Afghanistan during a visit to Camp Eggers in Kabul Nov. 16.

MoD moves toward civilian management

Petty Officer First Class David Votroubek
CSTC-A Public Affairs

KABUL, Afghanistan - The Ministry of Defense will someday be managed by professional civil servants, if the Minister of Defense Abdul Rahim Wardak has his way. He asked the British government to help train civil servants for work at MoD, and help has finally arrived.

The project to transform the MoD from an entirely military organization to being civilian-run has already been two years in the making. The plan is to convert 788 management positions within the ministry from being staffed by Afghan National Army officers to civilians.

In preparation for that transition, a Defense Business Learning team from the United Kingdom was sent to Kabul to help 54 ANA officers develop communication and team skills, and help future civil servants manage change. Two

classes, 27 students each, will be conducted over two successive weeks.

Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan is involved in the transformation insofar as it is part of the MoD's reform program. Deborah Bradley, a United Kingdom defense advisor, works with both the MoD and CSTC-A. To the MoD, she is a British defense civilian management advisor, but she does so within CSTC-A's CJI directorate. The ANA leadership training project was hers.

The first training session started at the Kabul Serena Hotel on Nov. 17. During the opening ceremony, Andrew Patrick, the minister and deputy head of mission for the British Embassy in Kabul, addressed the gathering of participants and dignitaries. He reminded them of the importance of

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partnership between civilian and military staff in a ministry of defense.

“Your job (in the MoD) is more difficult than any other, because you have to be a bridge between the military and civilians,” said Patrick. “Being successful in the long-term comes from having a mix of civilian and military staff.”

The leadership/management training project is the first step in transforming the MoD to become truly civilian-led. Most of the delegates sitting in class will remain in the military, but will become better managers of a defense ministry that civilians will eventually run.

Patrick encouraged them with this goal.

“You will all be building the new Ministry of Defense,” he said.



photo by Petty Officer First Class David M. Votroubek

Brendan Jordan introduces civilian management training to a group of leaders from the Afghan Ministry of Defense. Jordan is part of a team from United Kingdom Defense Business Learning that is teaching the course in Kabul at the request of the Afghan government.

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for military to talk back and forth on different policies.”

O'Reilly is in Afghanistan on a three-location, five-day tour to show his gratitude and support for the thousands of U.S. troops serving in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

“I think it's great how he supports the troops,” said Marine Cpl. Gregory Edander. “It takes your mind off stuff for a little bit, seeing a familiar face.”

O'Reilly was impressed with both the coalition forces and Afghans, and expressed how well American service

members are doing in Afghanistan.

“We were in Iraq last year at this time and so the comparison, it's much calmer here,” he said. “The Afghans are a little bit more friendly. The morale here is excellent as far as I can see.

“You guys are doing a great job and that's why we came; just to say thank you to everybody in this theater. Because most Americans - I'd say 90 percent - appreciate it very much,” he said.



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Mission Statement

The mission of the Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan, in partnership with the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and the international community, is to plan, program and implement structural, organizational, institutional and management reforms of the Afghanistan National Security Forces in order to develop a stable Afghanistan, strengthen the rule of law and deter and defeat terrorism within its borders.