



The *Combined Security Transition Command* **ENDURING** **Ledger**

DECEMBER 2007

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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.

About the cover: Staff Sgt. Jeffrey E. Mohr, an embedded training team mentor assigned to work with the Afghan Border Forces in Khowst Province, observes an Afghan Border Policeman in PKM machine gun marksmanship training in late November. (photo by Marine Staff Sgt. Luis P. Valdespino Jr.)

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From the top

Building an army that is right for Afghanistan

How would you do your job differently if you couldn't go back home until it was finished?

Tough question, but one we should be asking ourselves as we continue to train, coach and mentor the Afghan National Security Forces toward being able to stand on their own.

There is no doubt we live and work in a very dynamic and changing environment. What we are doing today, by design, is probably going to be different in the future. One great example of this is the Afghan National Army. A year to 18 months ago, the emphasis was training and teaching the basics of soldiering and leading at the squad, platoon and company levels. Today, the way ahead calls for concentrating on collective level training, focusing our efforts on command and control, and staff effectiveness at the corps and brigade levels.

All of us are trainers, advisors or mentors. Flexibility and adaptability are the keys to our success. We must never lose sight that the ANSF, as a whole, is a growing and developing organization.

As we continue to progress in developing our lines of operation – ministerial and institutional development, generate capable security forces, develop fielded security forces and political-military affairs – we must be cognizant that as the ANSF changes, so must we. We must avoid becoming comfortable with what “we” think is best. Instead, the question we should be asking ourselves is what is best for the Afghans?

In closing, I want to wish all of you happy holidays. Though we are away this holiday season and missing the joys and comforts of home, please take solace knowing your service to our country and the people of Afghanistan is not forgotten. The gifts of hope and freedom that our families and friends enjoy at home are the result of your commitment to our nation’s “call to duty.” I could not be more proud of you and of the superb work you do each and every day to help build a strong and independent Afghanistan. God bless each of you and your families this holiday season, and may He continue to watch over the CSTC-A team.



Cone

Maj. Gen. Robert W. Cone
 CSTC-A Commanding General

Sound Off:

What will you miss most this holiday season?



Army Spc.
 Reed Wilson
 Provost Marshall
 South Dakota
 National Guard

“I’m going to miss my family and friends.”



Navy Petty Officer
 1st Class
 Tammy Lowrey
 Cmd Surg
 Naval Hospital
 Oak Harbor

“I’m going to miss the big Lowrey family get-together, watching the kids, and my dog, Hunter.”



Air Force Staff Sgt.
 Rebecca Bishop
 Contracting
 San Antonio, Texas

“I’m going to miss my children.”



Marine Corps Capt.
 Tim Watkins
 ANP Comm.
 Camp Lejeune

“I’m going to miss everyone. I’ll be in Baghram for Christmas and Kuwait for New Years.”

Stay safe throughout the holidays

by Command Sgt. Maj. Ruben A. Espinoza
CSTC-A command sergeant major

Last month a 3rd Brigade Combat Team soldier in the 1st Armored Division was killed in a vehicle crash at Fort Riley, Kansas, when he lost control of the vehicle he was driving. The soldier was 26 years old. He died because he was careless.

You may be asking yourself, “Why is CSM Espinoza sharing this story about a soldier killed at Fort Riley? What does this have to do with me?”

The answer is; it has everything to do with you, me and every member of the CSTC-A team. Every time you depart Camp Eggers or Camp Phoenix, your safety is at risk. Not only are you on the lookout for possible terrorist attacks, you’re on the lookout for the dangers associated with driving here in Afghanistan.

With the exception of combat fatalities, vehicle accidents



Espinoza

continue to be the number one area in which we lose our most precious resource – you!

It’s the responsibility of us all to take time to carefully plan our routes of travel, and remain mindful of the enemies and hazards associated with driving here, in and outside of Kabul.

I encourage leaders at every level to employ tested and proven accident-preventive measures to protect your personnel. Leaders and supervisors must address each member of their directorate to increase awareness as individuals prepare their travel plans.

In closing, I want to wish you and your families happy holidays. Even though we are far from home, friends and loved ones, we can still be joyous in the spirit this time of year brings. We are blessed because we are part of a close-knit family — the CSTC-A family. I ask that you continue to be safe and remain vigilant as you go about your duties. God bless you, your families, our nation and our coalition partners.

Coping with holiday doldrums

by Army Chaplain (Capt.)
Ted H. Knach Jr.
CSTC-A Chapel

This month I would like to focus on a topic that has more questions than answers. The question we all have to face in life at some point is, “Where is God when I need Him the most?”

Who among us does not suffer, bearing persistent pain or hurt? Sickness, handicaps, broken relationships, isolation, loneliness, long separation from family and insufficient resources are all sources of pain and suffering.

Some of it may be by chance, when things are out of our hands. That is, we have no control of what happens.

Some of it may happen because of failure to plan, neglect, and procrastination or not taking things into account.

Suffering may also happen by design, when we were willing to take on enormous responsibilities wanting to achieve some goal, but fell short.

It may also happen because of sin in our lives. Especially when we are willing, and by choice, go against God’s commandments and suffer the consequences.

Whatever the source, and this list is by no means exhaustive, at some point we may all feel the dark shadow of suffering looming over us.

Some questions that may come up in some of our minds are: Why does suffering have to take



Knach

place in my life? What did I do to deserve this? What went wrong? How can I avoid it the next time around? Does God even know what I am going through, or does He even care? And on and on it goes.

An answer to some of these questions may not be right on the tip of our tongue.

During this time of year with the holidays approaching, some of us may be experiencing some type of suffering in our lives. There always seems to be lingering issues and concerns in our lives no matter what time of year, where we are located, or what we are doing.

One question I want to ask is, can anything good come from our time of pain, hurt or suffering? God says it can.

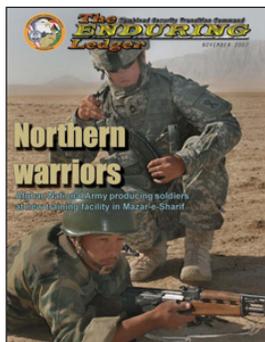
I submit that God does care for each and every one of us. Suffering and woundedness can bring great renewal and healing in our lives. You may be asking, how can this happen?

God says in His holy word in Romans 5:3,4, “We can rejoice too, when we run headlong into problems and trials, for we know that they are good for us -they help us learn to endure. And endurance develops strength of character.”

God allows valleys in our lives as well as mountain peaks, and He says to rejoice no matter what. That is what faith in God is all about.

Can we rejoice with God today regardless of our circumstances, especially during this time of year when we celebrate Thanksgiving and Christmas? God wants all of us to express praise to Him, even when it is tough sometimes. Your faith will be strengthened and you will grow in your character.

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Women's issues not forgotten in Herat

by Marine Staff Sgt. Luis P. Valdespino Jr.
CSTC-A Public Affairs

As coalition forces assist in building a secure nation with the Afghan National Security Forces, the unique issues Afghan women face in this country are being addressed as well.

Ten U.S. military women recently met with Afghan women at an elementary school and the Women Training Center in Herat to find out what issues they are facing, and how the ANSF can assist them in their concerns.

When the Taliban led the Afghan government, women were not allowed to pursue education or work outside the home. Now women and girls are attending schools throughout the country. Unfortunately, sometimes the new-found freedom comes with fear and complications.

During the visit to the elementary school, teachers asked for coalition forces to help teach Afghan men the country benefits when women work outside the home and earn an education.

Teachers also asked for more school supplies. Because of inadequate supplies, some women write in pencil so they can erase their work and re-use the paper, one teacher said.

The ladies at the Herat Women Training Center shared many similar concerns, and then some.

When Senior Chief Petty Officer Darlene M. Gonzales, contracting team leader for the Afghan Regional Security Integration Command-West at Camp Stone in Herat, asked how the ANSF can help in their concerns, the answer was clear, but not necessarily simple.

"Bring security for girls who are going out of the home," said Sima Shir Mohammadi, head of the Department of Women Affairs in Herat. She said many Afghans have fears, but women are a little more scared. It doesn't help, she said, that the Taliban, who are more prevalent in some villages, are completely against women earning an education.

After years of being suppressed by the Taliban, women do have more rights now



photo by Marine Staff Sgt. Luis P. Valdespino Jr.

Army Spc. Raven Gibbs, a medic assigned to Camp Stone in Herat, encourages children at a Herat elementary school to hold up their books. Gibbs and nine other U.S. military women met with female teachers in late September to drop off donated and requested supplies and to discuss ways coalition and the Afghan National Security Forces could be of assistance to the school and to Afghan women.

and several are working in various jobs. What many men consider "acceptable" work for women is limited to teaching, tailoring, and jobs that are done in a half-day schedule or inside the home, Shir Mohammadi said. Many men still look at the women and girls as objects – meaning they belong to the men.

Many men believe when women spend time being educated, they are not serving the men, which is expected of them, Shir Mohammadi said. This causes problems in Afghan households, which often leads to domestic violence against women.

Another issue Shir Mohammadi hopes to resolve is keeping the Ministry of Women Affairs open to continue the growth of women's rights. She expressed concern over word she had received from members of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan's Parliament, about six months ago, that the Ministry of Women Affairs would only be funded for a year.

Mohammed Noor Akbary, a current member of the IROA Parliament, acknowledged in a telephone conversation that the parliament recently discussed the need for the Ministry of Women Affairs. He said that in late September they voted to keep the

ministry intact, for now.

Shir Mohammadi contended that the existence of the Ministry for Women Affairs, which operates and funds the Women Training Center in Herat, is the Afghan women's way of taking on these challenges, in some regards.

Shir Mohammadi also suggested that one way to pass new ways of thinking is by educating the ANSF men and other Afghan government employees on the significant contributions women can make. The American women agreed that it is important to seek assistance in educating Afghan men.

Army Capt. Megan S. Detweiler, information operations officer for Task Force Phoenix in Kabul, told Shir Mohammadi and other Afghan women present that American women also faced challenges and a struggle for suffrage in the past, and they had to stand up for their rights.

While Shir Mohammadi and others like her continue to work toward educating the women, Gonzales assured her that the coalition will help in any way they can. For now, this often means providing basic learning materials, supplying copies of pamphlets and providing other supplies.



Remembering Mike Spann

by Petty Officer 1st Class David M. Votroubek
CSTC-A Public Affairs

Destroyed vehicles and rusted weapons still lay in the grass within the 100 year-old fortress, evidence of a week-long fight. It was six years ago, but the battle at Kala-Jangi prison seems much more recent.

Initially, the 19th century fort had been a Taliban base, but in November of 2001, it was being used as a headquarters and ammunition depot by Gen. Abdul Rashid Dostrum of the Afghan Northern Alliance. After talks with the coalition forces, it was decided that the Taliban prisoners who had surrendered would be held there.

Johnny “Mike” Spann, a 32 year-old former Marine captain, was working for the CIA when he died. Spann and his partner Dave Tyson were questioning Taliban prisoners at Kala-Jangi on Nov. 25, 2001 when an uprising broke out. The prisoners overpowered nearly 20 Afghan guards and killed Spann. Tyson was able to escape and call for help.

In the ensuing battle, hundreds of Taliban fighters were killed by numerous airstrikes, direct fire from tanks and heavy machine gun fire from circling gunships. After a week, their

fierce resistance was finally quelled. Only 86 surrendered.

At the request of Spann’s family, President Bush allowed him to be buried at Arlington National Cemetery. He also received a star on the wall at CIA headquarters, and was posthumously awarded

the Intelligence Star and the Exceptional Service Medallion.

Forward Operating Base Mike Spann near Mazar-e-Sharif was named in his honor and coalition soldiers from there regularly visit the site. One of them is Army 1st Sgt. Andrew Culbreth, who calls it,

“An impressive fortress that was the starting point of the U.S. involvement in the fight for freedom in Afghanistan.”

Navy Senior Chief Petty Officer Lewis Nunemaker has also been there, and has seen the memorial that overlooks the spot where American special forces recovered Spann’s body.

He said, “Being [based] here on Camp Spann ... Kala-Jangi is hallowed ground.”

The place is quiet now. Although it has been partially restored, the pock-marked walls still stand in mute testimony of the fight where America’s first casualty in Afghanistan fell. Mike Spann’s commitment continues with every U.S. service man and woman who has come to Afghanistan. He may have been the first, but he was not the last American to pay the ultimate price for both Afghan and American freedom.



photos by Petty Officer 1st Class David M. Votroubek

Combat engineers mentor, help Afghans with housing construction

by Marine Staff Sgt. Luis P. Valdespino Jr.
CSTC-A Public Affairs

Four combat engineers recently travelled from Kabul to Gardez to share their construction experience with Afghans who were hired to build housing units for military personnel assigned to Forward Operating Base Camp Lightning.

The engineers are assigned to Task Force Phoenix Engineer Company. Their job included teaching the Afghans how to become more efficient in the construction process.

The combat engineers said they have travelled to several forward operating bases in Afghanistan over the last few months mentoring and assisting Afghans with construction projects.

“We’re just helping,” said Army Staff Sgt. Lonnie L. Russell, from Beaufort, S.C., “trying to get the (concrete) blocks up so they can move everyone in before the snow.”

Russell said he and the other engineers have had an interesting experience with the Afghans. He has found that the Afghans’ methods for constructing “isn’t pretty” at times, but the end product is very similar to their own.

“We’re trying to teach them how to do four layers (of concrete blocks) at a time instead of one,” said Air Force Senior Master Sgt. Michael R. Jenks, who is assigned to Camp Phoenix and deployed from the 1st Civil Engineer Squadron at Langley Air Force Base, Va. This system would make the block-laying process faster than their current method.

As winter draws near, the engineer mentoring continues. Progress for the Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan might be measured in buildings as well as the strength of the Afghan National Security Forces.



photos by Marine Staff Sgt. Luis P. Valdespino Jr.

An Afghan construction worker mixes mortar for laying concrete blocks for a housing unit at Forward Operating Base Camp Lightning. Four combat engineers advised and assisted Afghan masons in Gardez. The engineers are assigned to Task Force Phoenix Engineer Company in Kabul.

Air Force Staff Sgt. Dwayne B. Jones assists in laying concrete blocks for a housing unit at Forward Operating Base Camp Lightning.



Army Staff Sgt. Lonnie L. Russell assists in laying concrete blocks for a housing unit at Forward Operating Base Camp Lightning.



photo by Petty Officer 2nd Class Brian P. Seymour

Gen. Sayeed-aga Saquib, Afghan National Police Chief of Kandahar Province, reassures his newly trained policemen that their duty to country is a great source of pride among its people. Saquib spent the day visiting several police substations in the Zhari district of Kandahar Province to see first-hand the progress his men are making alongside their coalition mentors.

Kandahar chief of police visits checkpoints in Zhari District

by Petty Officer 2nd Class Brian P. Seymour
CSTC-A Public Affairs

The Afghan National Police chief of Kandahar Province visited his troops at several substations and checkpoints in the Zhari District Oct. 25.

Gen. Sayeed-aga Saquib spent the day speaking with members of his force and acquainting himself with developments in one of the most volatile regions in the country.

With many years of experience in combat and in policing, Saquib realizes the future of the Kandahar Province, and ultimately the country, depends primarily on the preparedness and pride of his troops.

“It was my intention to visit these facilities today to see how they were doing, if they needed anything from me and if I needed anything more from them,” Saquib said. “I enjoyed seeing my police officers and letting them know I care about them.”

For members of the Zhari ANP, the visit gave new policemen the chance to meet

their leader, ask questions and show him what coalition police mentor teams have taught them.

The Zhari PMT, alongside ANP forces whom they’ve guided for more than three months, provided security and transportation for the general’s tour.

The 12-man team, deployed from the South Carolina National Guard, is tasked with assessing and training the district police force. Army 1st Lt. James Payne, Zhari PMT executive officer, believes visits from leadership like this are vital to the morale of younger members of the ANP.

“Gen. Saquib, who is a seasoned leader, looks good and seems to be sending the right message to his men, sets a good example to some of the privates and recruits-in-training,” said Payne. “He wants to show them he gives a damn and wants to see the Zhari District become successful once again.”

Zhari has not been successful in the eyes of its PMT leaders for some time

now. Prior to their assignment as district mentors, the region and much of its police force was controlled by Taliban forces.

The Taliban had their thumbs pressed so firmly on the district police they were unable to provide security and peace to the people whom they serve, Payne said.

Saquib already knows this, which he says is why he wished to come here. He wanted to reassure his men that they are not forgotten. To Payne, and other PMT members, that sense of understanding is critical to the development of the ANP.

“They need a leader to show them what it’s like to wear a uniform properly, to follow the lead of their commanders and always take care of the people they serve,” Payne said. “They need a leader to show them what ‘right’ looks like, and I think that’s what he is trying to accomplish.”

The tour marks the second time Saquib has visited the district since assuming command of its police force this past summer. And based on the hopes of PMT leadership, it cannot be the last.

IEDs: Polish soldiers excel at counter IED training in Afghanistan



photos by Marine Staff Sgt. Luis P. Valdespino Jr.

Polish Army Lt. Col. Rafal Sznajderowics (left), Polish Operational Mentoring Liaison Team commander in Gardez, Afghanistan, prepares his team for an improvised explosive device course in Gardez late September.

by Marine Staff Sgt. Luis P. Valdespino Jr.
CSTC-A Public Affairs

Polish soldiers assigned to mentor Afghan National Army soldiers recently underwent counter improvised explosive device training, earning high praise from other coalition troops.

Like other Operational Mentoring Liaison Teams, the Polish soldiers assigned to mentor the 203rd ANA Corps received similar training before deploying to Afghanistan. They still saw the additional training administered by International Security Assistance Force and Task Force Phoenix personnel as an opportunity to reinforce their skills as mentors.

The training was especially significant for the soldiers because they were involved in an ambush attack during their first week in country.

“In my opinion each training is important, even if repeated,” said Polish Navy Lt. Cmdr. Zbigniew Zachariasz, the international security cooperation training officer for Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan. “You see more things — more possibilities; you can develop skills better and better.”

During the training, instructors created a scenario in which the Polish soldiers encountered five “IEDs,” as well as several possible IED indicators. Instructors demonstrated sev-

eral types of IEDs, including remote-controlled IEDs, pressure-plate IEDs and stringed IEDs.

The Polish OMLT identified all the IED indicators planted by course instructors Sgt. 1st Class Raymond E. Odum, the counter IED chief senior assistant for ISAF, and Kris A. Anderson, a counter IED advisor with Ronco Consulting assigned to ISAF.

The instructors said the Polish OMLT performed better in the exercise than any previous group they had taught.

“They did an outstanding job. They’re the first ones to actually find all the IED indicators,” said Odum.

The exercise also saw the OMLT soldiers respond to a scenario with an improvised IED attack that “disabled” a vehicle from their convoy and create a secure perimeter.

Having been in Afghanistan for a couple months may have played a part in their training success, in that they were very alert during the exercise.

“I think it played a big role — they had actual experience with IEDs (while they have been in country),” Odum said.

Anderson told the OMLT soldiers they really impressed him with their skills during the exercises, and he encouraged them to share the training experience with the ANA soldiers they mentor.



Around CSTC-A

Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan



photo by Petty Officer 2nd Class Brian P. Seymour

Army 1st Lt. James Payne, Zhari district police mentor team's executive officer, passes out educational materials that help locals provide Afghan and coalition security forces with information on suspicious activities and objects they may know about.



photo by Al Smith

Navy Commander Marshall Millett, Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan CJ-Engineering, and his translator, Wahidi Ashraf, meet with Kabul Deputy Mayor Khwakhuzhi Gharzai to reach an agreement regarding the use of city land at the new Kabul compound.



Army Capt. Stewart Gast looks at an improvised explosive device that was found and disabled by members of the Afghan National Police. Gast and others from his Police Mentoring Team learned about the device when they stopped at the observation post to check up on the ANP officers. The officers were deployed during an operation against insurgents in Afghanistan's northwest Faryab Province.

photo by Petty Officer 1st Class David M. Votroubek



An Afghan National Police officer leads Army Capt. Hunter Hill and his Zhari district police mentor team on a patrol near Kolk. The kilometer-long march was conducted to clear a safe path of travel for the visiting ANP Kandahar Province Chief of Police Gen. Sayeed-gha Saquib

photo by Petty Officer 2nd Class Brian P. Seymour



PMT, ANP provide security during MedCAP

by Petty Officer 2nd Class Brian P. Seymour
CSTC-A Public Affairs

Afghan National Police and a police mentoring team provided security during a Medical Civil Action Project held in a remote village north of the southern tip of Highway One.

Team leader Army Capt. Hunter Hill and his 12-man police mentor team, alongside dozens of ANP forces, provided a security perimeter for the MedCAP while the medical team treated hundreds of ailing villagers over the course of three hours.

When the PMT visited this village in the northern Zhari desert a few weeks ago they determined that a MedCAP was needed. They initiated the request and created a plan to build a school and at least two wells in a central part of the village that houses some 7,000 Afghan families.

“I think it’s important to not only bring medical care to the villages, but also to build things like schools and wells because that area is completely separated from the rest of society,” said Hill.

Army Maj. Charles Blankman, Army Capt. Maureen Sevilla and Army 1st Lt. Nathan Marsh treated the locals for acute and chronic medical problems, passed out medications and provided instruction for proper use. If the ailment went beyond the capabilities of the medics, patients were referred to a local medical facility for further treatment.

“This was one of the better MedCAPs that I’ve ever done,” said Blankman. “It went pretty smoothly, and we saw a lot of people. We usually don’t see that many people in that timeframe.”

The MedCAP is also referred to as a village medical outreach, and is designed to both help ailing local citizens and earn their trust in coalition and Afghan forces. It’s a big part of information operations and a valuable program for turning locals in favor of their security forces and coalition mentors.

The main thing these people want is security, says Hill. He believes they all want the Taliban out and admits it is his team’s responsibility to do just that as they are the ones with the know-how. To him, these MedCAPs are essential, but are nowhere near as important as providing security to the local populace first.

“This place needs to be cleared of the bad guys before we can safely and properly rebuild it,” said Hill. “You win the hearts and minds by first bringing security.”

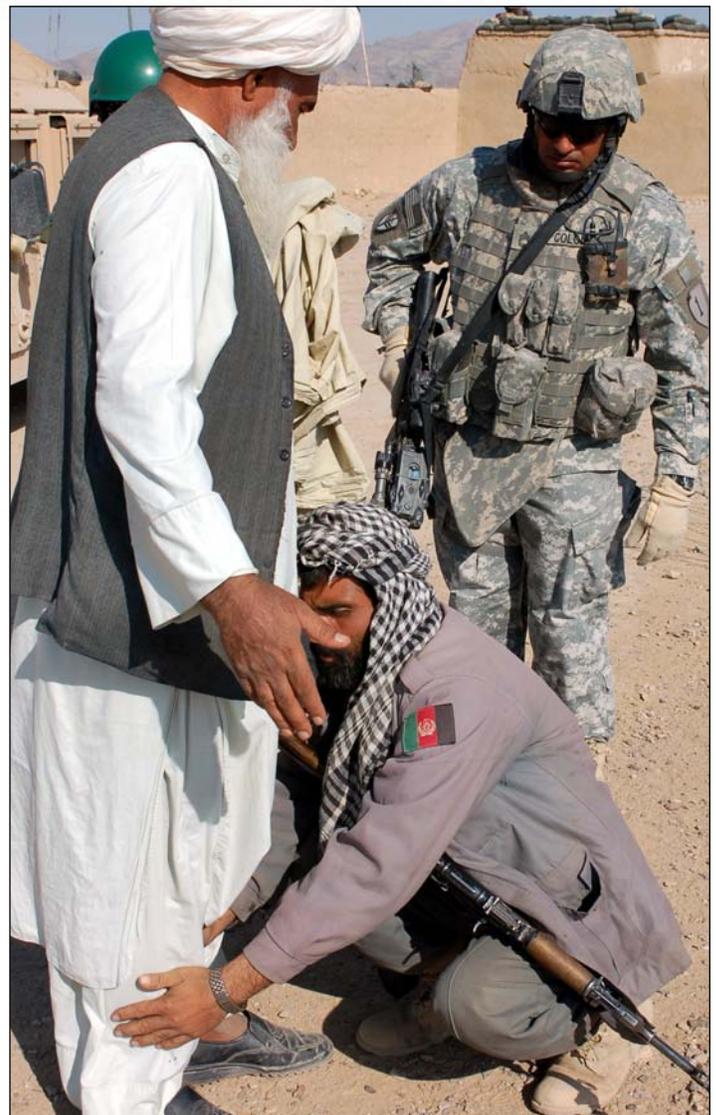


photo by Petty Officer 2nd Class Brian P. Seymour
An Afghan National Police member checks a MEDCAP patient prior to entering the treatment area as a police mentor team member looks on.

IO: Winning the war of information

by Petty Officer 2nd Class Brian P. Seymour
CSTC-A Public Affairs

As the war on terror continues to evolve, efforts to earn the trust of the local populace are becoming increasingly vital.

The success of this war may depend partly on a critical element known as “information operations,” a component of peacekeeping that is waged everywhere from the elected government in Kabul to remote villages in southern Afghanistan.

It’s a strategy that can be put into action on multiple fronts. And while the Taliban and other anti-government forces in Afghanistan continue to inflict fear upon their fellow countrymen in exchange for village sanctuary and supplies, the Afghan National Security Forces and their coalition counterparts in Kandahar are turning words of promise into action.

Successful IO may not win the war on terror, but to Army Col. Thomas McGrath, commander of Afghan Regional Security Integration Command–South, it is incredibly critical, especially for gaining intelligence on Taliban whereabouts.

“The big thing is that we’re out in the villages doing things to help the Afghans trust and support us,” he said. “When people feel like they have security, they’re more likely to give up intelligence.”

To provide security, the Afghan National Security Forces, accompanied by coalition forces, embedded training teams and police mentor teams, are trying to be the first to reach out to remote villages in the southern Afghan region.

Through the Commanders Emergency Relief Program, ANSF and coalition mentors have been more successful at winning over the local population by providing them with that which the Taliban cannot provide – a better life.

This recently established initiative permits the entry of ANSF and coalition forces into friendly villages to build wells, schools, mosques, medical clinics, roads and other community services to help make the Afghans safer, healthier and happier.

Meanwhile, in other Afghan villages, the Taliban continue to use coercive tactics such as torture and public executions to demonstrate their brutality by abusing the locals’ trust in them.

Coalition forces, on the other hand, have other ideas.

“We recently handed out leaflets that read, ‘Turn in your local Taliban,’ and we had a hotline where we got two or three hundred

calls in a couple of days,” said McGrath. “The amount of calls tells you that the people want a better life. They want the economic viability; they want to be able to go to school. They want hospitals.”

It is widely believed that the more you offer the Afghans, the more you get in return. With medical treatment for sick and wounded men, women and children, the prospect of healthier, longer-living citizens helps turn support in favor of ANSF and coalition operations.

“The life expectancy of women out here is shorter than that of men, which is usually the reverse throughout the rest of the world,” said McGrath. “And that tells you that it’s a hard life around here. People want to be taken care of; they want health. They want to support the government. And they’re just tired of empty promises from the Taliban. They’re sick of them.”

McGrath added that when the locals are taken care of, they’re quicker to point out suspected IEDs and Taliban hideouts.

As mentioned though, the information warfare is continuing to spread throughout various entities of the media, which inspires the coalition to teach the Afghans new tactics.

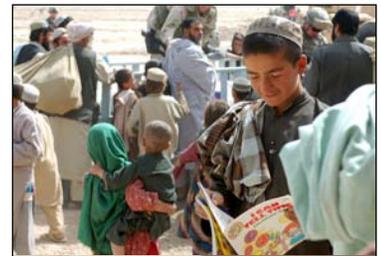
“One of the other ways we’re dealing with information operations is by training the senior leadership of the Afghan security forces on media relations and what they should say when approached by the media,” said Lt. Cmdr. Steve Parks, ARSIC-S public affairs officer. “This way they say the right things and don’t compromise operational security.”

This can become an issue during an attack on Afghan and coalition convoys near an otherwise benign village. According to McGrath, many of his soldiers have seen Taliban use civilians, particularly children, as human shields in order to protect themselves, but coalition and ANSF are sure to differentiate themselves.

“My guys have been shot at right through the windshield,” he said. “And they thought they saw where it was coming from, but we said, ‘hey, we don’t need to open up with heavy weapons here. We know where it came from, and we’ll come back later.’”

If we had shot the whole place up, that would play right into their hands, and would be an information operations victory for them,” he added.

McGrath believes the key to winning the information war is to be discriminate when entering a fight, and follow through with promises by turning words into action.



Warrior of the Month



photo by Master Sgt. Michael Wilkinson

Air Force Master Sgt. Scott Weems

Job title and unit: CSTC-A CAPTF, Communications Squadron mentor

Home station: Scott Air Force Base, Ill.

Hometown: Budd Lake, N.J.

Best part of the deployment: Working with my Afghan counterparts

Life after Camp Eggers: Retire

Favorite vacation spot: Atlantic City

Favorite movie: *Animal House*

Favorite music group: Rush

Favorite sports team: New Jersey Devils

Favorite meal: Lasagna

Favorite quote: "Just turn the power on," taken from a previous boss

Celebrity crush: Diane Lane

Book I'm reading now: *Ghost Rider*

Hobbies: Motorcycling and racing remote control cars

Pet peeve: People who want everything

Supervisor says: "Scott hit the ground running and has been the consummate professional. His ability to advise, train and equip the ANA, and manage the Air Corps Advisory Group's communications network make him the epitome of excellence and hard work."

-- Army Capt. Eddie Hall

ANAAC Communication Squadron senior mentor

Camp Eggers Salutes

■ The following individuals for earning the Bronze Star: **Army Col. James Cobb**, CJ5; **Army Col. Mark Harrell**, **Army Lt. Col. John Coulter** and **Army Maj. Matthew Prohm**, CJ7; **Army 1st Lt. Christopher Jones**, HHC; **Senior Chief Petty Officer Theodore Predko**, CJ1; **Army Col. Kurt Meppen**, DCG-PMA; **Army Sgt. Maj. Kenneth Russell**, CAPTF; and **Army Lt. Col. Howard Malone**, CJ3.

■ The following individuals for earning the Defense Meritorious Service Medal: **Marine Lt. Col. Sean Keane**, **Chief Petty Officer Kenneth Parker**, **Army Maj. Patrick Monroe** and **Marine Capt. Zachary Coates**, CJ1; **Air Force Lt. Col. Thomas Rampulla**, CAPTF; **Army Capt. William Hinson**, CMD SURG; **Marine Capt. Joseph Donnelly** and **Air Force Senior Master Sgt. Michael Harlan**, CJ4; **Army Master Sgt. Stephen Joe**, HHC; and **Marine Lt. Col. Stephanie Smith**, SJA.

■ The following individuals for earning the Meritorious Service Medal: **Army Staff Sgt. Jonathan Moore**, CMD SURG.

■ The following individuals for earning the Joint Service Commendation Medal: **Air Force Staff Sgt. Ricky Bradley**, CAPTF; **Air Force Maj. Paul Schwartz**, **Neil Hoffman**, **Air Force Capt. Kerry Colburn** and **Air Force Staff Sgt. Akilah Myles**, CJ5; **Lt. j.g. David Stanton**, Lt. j.g. **James Isbell** and **Air Force Staff Sgt. Demetrio Garcia**, CJ2; **Army Lt. Col. Stephen King**, operations directorate; **Petty Officer 1st Class Christopher Boyer**, CJ6; **Tech. Sgt. Cortchie Welch**, PAO; **Petty Officer 1st Class George Brooks**, **Army Staff Sgts. Nathan Jaworski**, **Andrew Buckingham** and **Damian Warner**, engineering directorate; **Petty Officer 3rd Class Ashley Urbanski**, DCG-PMA; and **Marine Cpl. Stephan Saunders**, JVB;

■ The following individual for earning the Army Achievement Medal: **Spc. Michael Yost**, CJ1.

Looking for a picture or story that appeared in a previous issue, but can't find it?

Check out the CSTC-A public site at, www.cstc-a.com.



The Marines have landed:
The Commandant of the Marine Corps, Gen. James T. Conway (front), leads a group of Marines off a UH-60 Blackhawk helicopter at Kabul International Airport Nov. 24 after spending Thanksgiving in Iraq. The commandant met with Army Maj. Gen. Robert W. Cone, the commander of Combined Security Transition Command–Afghanistan, followed by lunch with Marines at the International Security Assistance Forces’ dining facility. Accompanying Conway are (left to right) Lt. Col. Thomas V. Johnson, Sgt. Maj. of the Marine Corps Carlton W. Kent, Staff Sgt. Christopher M. Tirado, and Lt. Gen. John W. Bergman.

photo by Marine Staff Sgt. Luis P. Valdespino Jr.

MWR weekly events

Sunday

6 a.m. – Abdominal strength class at the Warrior Gym

4:30 p.m. – Spin class at the Warrior Gym

Monday

4:30 p.m. – Spin class at the Warrior Gym

6 p.m. – Hip Hop Fitness class at the Clamshell

6:30 p.m. – Country music night at the Clamshell

Tuesday

6 a.m. – Combatives class at the Clamshell

6 a.m. – Abdominal strength class at the Warrior Gym

4:30 – Spin class at the Warrior Gym

Wednesday

6 a.m. – Combatives class at the Clamshell

4:30 p.m. – Spin class at the Warrior Gym

6 p.m. – Hip Hop Fitness class at the Clamshell

Thursday

6 a.m. – Combatives class at the Clamshell

6 a.m. – Abdominal Strength class at the Warrior Gym

4:30 p.m. – Spin class at the Warrior Gym

6:30 p.m. – All Request Night at the Green Bean patio

Friday

9:30 a.m. – Read to Your Kids program at the Armadillo House

4:30 p.m. – Spin class at the Warrior Gym

6 p.m. – Karaoke outside the Green Bean patio

Saturday

4:30 p.m. – Spin class at the Warrior Gym

7 p.m. – Salsa Night at the Green Bean patio

Chapel weekly schedule

Sunday

11 a.m. – Protestant Traditional service at the Clamshell

5 p.m. – Christian service at the U.S. Embassy

6 p.m. – Refuge Praise Band practice at the Clamshell

7 p.m. – Protestant Contemporary service at the Clamshell

Monday

4:30 p.m. – Catholic Liturgy of the Word at the Chapel House

Tuesday

4:30 p.m. – Catholic Liturgy of the Word at the Chapel House

7 p.m. – Women’s Bible Study at the Pool House

Wednesday

6 a.m. – Christian Officer Fellowship at the Chapel House

4:30 p.m. – Catholic Liturgy of the Word at the Chapel House

7 p.m. – Men’s Bible Study at the Pool House

Thursday

4:30 p.m. – Catholic Liturgy of the Word at the Chapel House

6 p.m. – Gospel musicians practice at the Chapel House

7 p.m. – Gospel choir practice at the Chapel House

Friday

12:30 p.m. – The Church of Latter Day Saints at the Chapel House

6 p.m. – Jewish Lay service at the Pool House

6 p.m. – Refuge Praise Band practice at the Chapel House

7 p.m. – Gospel service in the Chapel House

Saturday

4 p.m. – Roman Catholic Vigil Mass at the Clamshell

4:30 p.m. – Mighty Voices of Praise at the Chapel House

6 p.m. – Gospel Choir Practice in the Chapel House

7 p.m. – Bible Study at the Swamp Conference Room

7 p.m. – Gospel service in the Chapel House

Saturday-Thursday

1 p.m. – Muslim prayer time at the Chapel House (prayer rugs are available)

Watch for MWR updates by going to the CSTC-A intranet portal, then click on MWR in the left column.



Mentoring Afghan security

Army Maj. Kevin Shegag, Kandahar City police mentor team leader, peeks around a mud wall near the village of Kolk in the Zhari district.

photo by Petty Officer 2nd Class Brian P. Seymour