



ISAF MIRROR

Issue 27 April 2006

KMNB MNEG
"Desperado Road"

RAC NORTH
Change of Command

BIRD FLU
Avian Influenza
in Afghanistan

NATO
Military Committee
visits Afghanistan

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ISAF VIII CONCLUDES ITS TENURE IN AFGHANISTAN



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This month represents a landmark for the NATO campaign in Afghanistan in many respects. As the outgoing commander, it is time, for me, to draw a summary of these intense, demanding and successful nine months.

Since the beginning of our tour, we have seen this great country growing and consolidating the pillars of the democratic institutions. In fact, during the past months, we had a succession of key events that drove the overall process such as: the elections of the Parliament and of the Provincial Councils, the complete implementation of stage two, that is the expansion of ISAF area of operations to Western Region and finally all the activities aimed at setting of the conditions for the expansion of ISAF area of operations to the Southern and Eastern regions.

ISAF has also strengthened the Provincial Reconstruction Teams system, which I consider to be the key factor for success of our mission here in Afghanistan and, last but not least, the ever growing cooperation with the Afghan institutions. Now this country has a democratically elected President, Parliament and Provincial Councils. The government is running well and all the institutions are steadily growing under the enlightened leadership of President Karzai and those who support the democratic reconstruction of Afghanistan, the Afghan people have moved forward toward a new course.

The job is yet to be completed, new initiatives are to be carried out, but I am confident that Afghanistan can count, now and in the future, upon ISAF support. As for NATO, it is now time to move on; to our successor the Allied Rapid Reaction Corps who have the demanding task of expanding ISAF influence in the south of the country.

All Afghan authorities involved in security sector reform showed resilience in overcoming several issues and in achieving outstanding progress in building confidence and capabilities. I am sure that the Afghan National Security Forces will be acting increasingly for the security of their own country and will continue to improve their ability to cooperate with ISAF. These forces are paying their tribute in lives to defeat terrorism and to grant the stability that this country needs for its progress. To them, my gratitude, and my sincere esteem in what they have done and they do every day.

My reverent thoughts and feelings, in this moment, are with the families of those who have given up their lives for our cause and for all our families, who withstood such a long time without their loved ones; my personal gratitude to all of them.

Men and women of ISAF VIII, you have faced many challenges and I recognize the efforts you have made during your daily routine in order to face them. I remember very well all the events that occurred throughout ISAF area of operations. But all the attacks directed at ISAF failed in achieving their aim.

ISAF forces have not and will not be deterred in their important work to support the government and people of Afghanistan and will never allow those criminal elements to interfere with the democratic process of the country. I thank you for the firm commitment to NATO and for the essential contribution to the ISAF mission of your nations. You have certainly achieved your task in providing, and maintaining, a secure environment in order to facilitate the rebuilding of Afghanistan.

Your performance has been outstanding for two main reasons: - you have respected the culture and traditions of the Afghan people; - you have worked hard at developing close ties with the people and indeed you have won many hearts and minds.

To our successors, men and women of the ARRC, my best auspices for the challenges you will face during your tenure; I know that this experienced staff will be ready to answer to what lies ahead. I am also sure they will do their best to meet the demands of this unique country and her noble and proud people. Good luck to all of you !!!!

Lt Gen (ITA Army)
Mauro Del Vecchio
COMISAF VIII



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SPRINGTIME

Lt. Riccardo Costa (ITA Army)
ISAF HQ Chief Internal Information

Nine months have passed since that far off day in August 2005 when General Ethem Erdagi, the Commander of ISAF VII, handed over command of the mission to General Del Vecchio . . .

ISAF VIII, led by the NATO Rapid Deployable Corps Italy (NRDC-IT) has had a very successful nine months, continuing the UN mandate to assist the Government of Afghanistan in maintaining security in its area of responsibility and supporting the Government in expanding its authority in the rest of the country. Most significantly during this period ISAF VIII supported the first parliamentary elections in the country for over twenty years, a huge step forward for the country and a highlight for everyone involved.

Spring has arrived, and the winds of change are being felt in the ISAF HQ. The Allied Rapid Reaction Corps (ARRC) is about to replace NRDC-IT in leading the mission in Afghanistan. On 4 May the handover will be officially commemorated with a formal ceremony and then the work will continue in earnest, followed quickly by another important new challenge for NATO as ISAF prepares to expand into the South.

ISAF will take command of four additional PRTs, Lashkar Gah, Kandahar, Tarin Kot and Qalat. Extensive preparations have been made for the extension of ISAF's framework of responsibility, and it is perhaps no coincidence that NRDC-IT was totally involved in moving this work forward. "UBIQUE CELERE" means everywhere – rapidly, and the Corps has lived up to its motto.

The in-coming ARRC Commander General Richards has recognised all the solid groundwork that has been achieved in laying the foundations for expansion and has said, " ISAF will now be able to concentrate on those activities that will most quickly assist the Government of Afghanistan in its drive to establish sustainable economic growth on which the future of the country depends: helping ensure the security of resources, border crossing points and the transport network, water and power supplies, supporting the GOA in the development and prosecution of its Counter Narcotics campaign and assisting in the GOA's economic and human resource development strategy."

Finally, I would like to thank all the contributors to the ISAF MIRROR over the past nine months. It has been a pleasure, both professionally and personally, to be editor of the Mirror and I feel I have grown exponentially in the short period I have been in the post, just as Afghanistan has grown! It has been a sensational experience and I thank the people of Afghanistan for giving me such a unique opportunity. Last but by no means least, I would also like to extend my appreciation to all the ISAF soldiers who on a day to day basis, with their unfailing efforts, good humour and willingness, contribute to all our lives and most importantly contribute to the growth of a brighter Afghanistan.

TASHAKUR!

NATO MILITARY COMMITTEE VISITS AFGHANISTAN

Cdr Sue Eagles (UK Royal Navy)
ISAF HQ Chief Media Ops/Spokesman

NATO's Military Committee visited Afghanistan in April for meetings with the Government of Afghanistan, the United Nations and a working visit to the Provincial Reconstruction Teams at Kandahar, Herat and Chaghcharan to discuss final arrangements for ISAF expansion into the south of the country planned for July 2006.

The Military Committee is the senior military authority in NATO, providing NATO's civilian decision-making bodies – the North Atlantic Council and the Defence Planning Committee with advice on military matters. It is made up of senior military officers from the NATO member countries who, serve as their country's Military Representatives to NATO, representing their Chief of Defence Staff. The Committee's principal role is to provide advice to NATO's political authorities on military policy and strategy and particularly advising on the implementation of decisions regarding NATO's operations and missions.

The Committee members received briefings on the detailed arrangements for ISAF expansion including the provision of logistics, communications and close air support for the additional 6000 troops that will be deployed to the south by the end of July. The NATO led ISAF mission is expanding its presence in Afghanistan under a UN mandate and at the request of the Government of Afghanistan, to provide a safe and secure environment for the Afghan people and to extend the authority of the Government of Afghanistan into the southern provinces.

The Deputy Chairman of the Military Committee, Lieutenant General Thomas Baptise said, "*When the Military Committee visited Afghanistan a year ago the focus was on expansion into the west. During this visit committee members were able to see the very significant progress that has been made in twelve months*".

General Baptise continued, "*While expansion into the south is undoubtedly a greater challenge, we have a full appreciation of all the factors and are confident that our Forces will have the resources and capabilities they need to do the job.*"

During the visit to Kandahar the Military Committee was able to see at first hand the ongoing construction and future plans for the development of Kandahar as a primary Air Port of Debarcation. "*The Military Committee was impressed by the high levels of activity in all areas to meet the scheduled timelines and by the commitment and co-operation of all nations involved in this very critical and important next stage for NATO.*"





RAC NORTH CHANGE OF COMMAND

COM ISAF VISITS CAMP MARMAL



Yahya Najafizada (LN)
MeS Media Ops

Recently COMISAF, Lieutenant General Mauro DEL VECCHIO, visited the Regional Area Coordinator North (RAC North) in Mazar-e-Sharif to participate in the Change of Command Ceremony held on April 8th. The RAC North is lead by German Armed forces operating under the command of ISAF in Afghanistan. More than 13 nations' such as Germany, the lead nation, Sweden, Romania, Norway, Denmark, Finland, Czech Republic, France, Croatia, Lithuania, Netherlands and Belgium have military forces here who are working in coordination with the Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) in the RAC North area.

RAC North commander, Brigadier General Bernd Kiesheyer, handed over the command of RAC North to his successor Brigadier General Markus Kneip in an official ceremony which was attended by Mazar-e-Sharif PRT commander, Colonel Sandstorm, RAC North troops, and many other Afghan Governmental Staffs and foreign diplomats based in the northern cities of Afghanistan. Additionally the German ambassador for Afghanistan came from Kabul to attend the ceremony at Camp Marmal.

In his address COMISAF said, *"This unique entity embodies, and rightly so, the essence of NATO's commitment here in Afghanistan, that is, to support the central and local authorities in their efforts to rebuild the institutional and economic structures"*.

He reminded the audience that ISAF troops are here to assist the Afghan people and added: *"I strongly believe that all of you, together with the Afghan institutions, are following the right ways to enable peace and democracy and bring Afghanistan toward a safer and stable future"*.

COMISAF then presented the NATO medal to Brigadier General Kiesheyer and said: *"men and women of RAC North, through the firm and secure leadership of Brigadier General Kiesheyer, you have certainly achieved your task in providing the necessary support to local institutions to facilitate the reconstruction of Afghanistan"*.



He thanked the ISAF troops for showing respect for the Afghan culture and traditions and said: *"You have developed excellent relations with the Afghan civilian and military authorities as witnessed by their presence here today"*. He added: *"You have respected the culture and traditions of the Afghan people which has enabled success. You have worked hard at developing close ties with the people and indeed you have won many hearts and minds"*.



Brigadier General Kiesheyer, RAC North Commander, presented NATO medals to staff members from various countries who had worked within the RAC North, and said: *"During our duties in Northern Afghanistan, we have been proud to be able to serve in this beautiful place and in this culturally and historically important city that is also home to the blue mosque, the religious center of the Shiites and the Sunnites likewise"*.

He mentioned: *"The decision to place Regional Area Coordinators in the different regions of the country, has led to NATO, and thereby ISAF, making a significant contribution to the reconstruction of this country"*.

Gen Kiesheyer stated that, *"Without security, there is no development and no improvement. Without improvement, there is no security. So, security and improvement are two communicating tubes and*

they are conditions for each other. That is why the development of this country's security organizations and the cooperation with them is so important for us". He further added, *"The monopoly of power must lie solely within the hands of the government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. In this sense, illegal armed groups are hampering the development of the country, therefore, their disarmament will have to be pushed on by the continuation of the DIAG process"*. This General Kiesheyer stated that the containment of organized criminality, such as the cultivation of illegal poppies, would be of paramount importance in the stabilization of Afghanistan.

There are five PRTs in the northern cities of Mazar-e-Sharif, Kunduz, Fayzabad, Pul-e-Khumri and Maymana, which have been established to improve security and assist the people of this area to reconstruct their country. These PRTs are working in coordination with RAC North and are commanded directly by COMISAF, for NATO.





KMNB MNEG REPAIRS TO THE “DESPERADO ROAD”

LTC. Gianpaolo Mirra (ITA Army)
KMNB MNEG Commander

On the 29th March 2006 the Multinational Engineer Group (MNEG) began reconstruction work on the, badly damaged, “Desperado” road. The road is an important route for both ISAF troops, linking Camp Invicta to the KMNB and as an alternate route to the airport from Eastern Kabul, and for civilians as an alternative to the Jalalabad road to get to down town Kabul.



Desperado improvement works are not only important for the freedom of movement they provide, but also because it represents a tangible example of what cooperation between the different actors operating in Afghanistan can achieve. The responsibility of carrying out this task belongs to the MNEG, KMNB Unit, whose framework

revolves around the Trasimeno Battalion of the 6th Italian Engineer Regiment, led by Lt Col Gianpaolo Mirra. In addition to this unit, the project also involves ANA Engineers and KCP Officers, whilst HQ ISAF funded the works and the Office of Military Cooperation in Afghanistan (OMC-A) provided some of the earthmoving equipment.

The employment of the Afghan engineers was possible thanks to previous training sessions on earthmoving equipment, which lasted three weeks, arranged and conducted by MNEG at Camp Invicta. The increasingly difficult training was just one of the different aspects contributing to the creation of an operationally capable Afghan engineer unit. Another means to achieve this end has been for the Afghan engineers to conduct ‘On The Job’ training, which they have done with the ISAF engineers throughout this project.

With this in mind, the Desperado project could also be seen as a progression in the ANA training. During this project, Afghan engineers will put into practice what they have learned during their previous courses, under the supervision of the same expert instructors who taught them.

Regarding the technical part of the works – On Desperado 3,500 cubic meters of gravel will be moved by 10 heavy earthmoving machines, including dozers and excavators. This will be done in order to improve the road surface and to create a drainage system on the side of the road.

Whilst this work was ongoing, another concurrent joint activity was taking place, with the MNEG and ANA Engineers, once again, working side by side on the Kabul Entry Points (KEPs) reconstruction. This project provides for the building of permanent checkpoints along all the main routes entering Kabul, with the aim being to fight the drug problem and arms smuggling, thus increasing the security of the Afghan Capital. During this work the ANA Engineers who attended the earthmoving equipment course will be able to gain more ‘On The Job’ experience as they complete all the planned earthmoving works under MNEG supervision, in each KEP reconstruction.



A KMNB and Afghan soldier work together

These are just two examples of the increasing collaboration between MNEG and the ANA. This collaboration will continue and strengthen with time, thanks to other projects which are in the process of, or already have been, planned. These works will let the ANA achieve the capability to conduct autonomous heavy construction engineering work, thus being at the forefront of the infrastructure development within Afghanistan.





SWEDISH DONATION TO AFGHAN CHILDREN

Capt. Orlin Garkov (BUL Army)
KMNB IX PIO Media Plans

On April 1, Swedish troops, accompanied by members of the Finnish CIMIC, team paid a visit to two local Kindergartens in order to distribute some toys to the children. The Swedish troops are not part of a CIMIC team and, as such, they do not have the funds to buy these toys through official means, therefore they began a voluntary initiative in order to raise the money they needed. Every Saturday morning volunteers from the Swedish contingent at Camp Warehouse baked waffles and made coffee for all KMNB and ISAF personnel, who would then give a small donation, all the monies raised were put towards buying toys for the kindergartens.

The first stop of the day was to the Fuel and Gas Department Kindergarten, based in Dasht-e-Chamtalah area, the Director of the Fuel and Gas Department, Mr. Saib Abdula Garibiar, founded the Kindergarten one year ago. The Director of the Kindergarten, Mrs. Fahima Sidik, met the group and told them that when they started one year ago they had nothing but empty rooms, however, this changed when a Finnish CIMIC team brought blankets and beds for the children last November. Mrs. Sidik said that she wanted, once again, to thank the CIMIC team for this kind donation. The children each received a soft toy from the group and within a few minutes they were all playing with their new toys.

Mr. Garibar explained to the group that he and his staff want to increase the number of children attending the Kindergarten from 56 to 70, by opening another room which would house young

babies from 6 months to 1 year old. Additionally the Director wants to build an outdoor facility so that the children have somewhere to play during the warm summer days, obviously, the main problem is funding. The teachers are paid by the government, an average of 2500 Afghanis, but all other expenditure is raised through voluntary means.

The second Kindergarten the group visited is located within the compound of Wilayati Kabul Governor and Police HQ. The visit had attracted some media interest at the compound and several journalists from Radio Free Europe, European Press Photo Agency and Afghan France Press Agency met the group.

The Kindergarten is mainly supported by the Police HQ and provides care for children between the ages of 3 months to 7 years old. It was established four years ago through a police initiative in order to help the parents of the children, who all work for either the police or the Governors office. Currently the kindergarten employs 7 teachers, 3 supporting staff and 1 Deputy Director, they are paid between 2000 – 2500 Afghanis each. The parents pay a small fee for the children to attend but this is a nominal amount, only 300 – 600 Afghanis a year. The children are given lessons, which include Dari, Maths, and, for elder children, English. At the end of the visit the Director of the Police HQ, Mrs Nasrim Moushtak, who had hosted the visit, said, *"We thank you for all your help, without it we would not have a Kindergarten"*.



FINNISH CIMIC TEAM DONATION OF EQUIPMENT TO ORPHAN SCHOOL

Capt. Orlin Garkov (BUL Army)
KMNB IX PIO Media Plans

The Finnish CIMIC team, led by SLT Ari Suontausta, recently spent a day at a school for orphans located in Qala-I-Khawaja. The aim of their visit was to see for themselves the good work conducted by the school and to donate vital equipment. Members of the KMNB CIMIC branch, representatives from PSYOPS and personnel from the PIO also joined the Finnish CIMIC on the visit.



The team was welcomed by the Deputy School Director Mohammed Jan, who took them on a tour around the school and classrooms to see some lessons taking place. There are 280-orphaned students at the school who study in two shifts the morning shift has 150 students, studying from 0800 – 1130 hrs, and 130 students attending the afternoon shift that takes place between 1300 – 1630 hrs. The school teaches from first to sixth grade with the children's ages varying from seven to fourteen years old. The main subjects taught are Dari, Pashto, Mathematics and general studies, for the older girls there are also lessons in sewing and English.

The Director of the school is Mrs. Mariam Zamon, a woman who has dedicated her life, and money, to helping orphaned children. She began creating schools for orphans 18 years ago in Pashivar Province, Pakistan, a school which now has over 1000 students. Today she is the sponsor of three schools, 1 in Pakistan and 2 in Afghanistan, the second Afghanistan school lies in Faryab Province. Mrs. Zamon also ran a school during the Taleban's reign, an experience she cites as being one of the toughest of her life.

The school has a staff of 18 people including teachers, doctors and other staff; it has eight classrooms, without desks, and there are

no windows throughout the school, in the winter they simply cover the windows with sheets of plastic. The children do not have school holidays as they have nowhere else to go, but this has led to them achieving better grades than their fellow students in other schools. However, the Director did raise the problem about the need for better conditions, currently they have 8 children in the hospital who have contracted Hepatitis and the availability of a medical clinic is of vital importance.

Financing the school has also been difficult for the Director, especially since the school has to pay large rents each month, a point which was raised during a recent meeting between the school and President Karsai. The teachers only receive 2000 Afghanis a month and Mrs. Zamon tries to help by buying them supplies but it is hard work.

At the end of the visit the donations to the school was made. The Combined Joint Psychological Task Force provided 260 school bags, which each contained a notebook and a pencil, whilst the Finnish CIMIC team provided other school materials such as desks, chairs and stationary. The team found the day extremely rewarding and were happy to support the school in this way.



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ADVANCING AFGHANISTAN INTO A SECURE FUTURE TOGETHER

SSgt. Rabih Boulos (GER Army)
PRT Kunduz

Understanding the patterns of behaviour of Islamic people and Islamic laws requires studying the people and their religion. For this reason, on 26 March and 2 April 2006, Colonel Hans Werner Patzki, Commander of the Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) Kunduz, organised a special event and invited the spiritual leaders of Kunduz and Takhar provinces for a visit to the PRT.

Colonel Patzki provided details on the tasks of PRT Kunduz reassuring the spiritual leaders that the German military was there to speed up the reconstruction of the country which could only be successful in close cooperation with the Afghan population.

“After many years of war, Germany, too, was completely devastated and could only be built up again with the help of foreign countries”, Colonel Patzki said. He went on to explain that the reconstruction of Afghanistan could not be compared to European standards and would still take some time.

The spiritual leaders, also called Mullahs, were very happy to receive the invitation and seized the opportunity to share their worries and problems. They were even more pleased to learn that Colonel Patzki was diligently studying the Islam and was even able to quote verses from the Koran, which was sitting in front of him during the entire meeting, a gesture, the Mullahs greatly appreciated and which inspired confidence.

“We are holding the Germans in high esteem”, Mullah Najibullah said, “and we know, they are here to support us.”

He placed particular emphasis on the fact that in their sermons the Mullahs always stressed the good relations with the Germans calling on their countrymen to have confidence in the ISAF troops.

All Mullahs agreed in their request to ask for support to refurbish their mosques. Many of them were lacking washing facilities for ritual cleansing and toilets. Further-more, many roofs were in urgent need of renovation, a request which Colonel Patzki could fully understand. He assured them that he would take down their complaints and that he would pay a visit to get an impression of the situation. However, he pointed out that he could not make any promises.



Colonel Hans Werner Patzki talking to the Mullah



CHANGE OF COMMAND CEREMONY KABUL INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

FL LT. Phill Davies (UK Royal Air Force)
ISAF HQ Media Ops Air

On March 30th, Colonel Adrian Marinescu from the Romanian Air Force assumed command of Kabul International Airport (KAIA) from the outgoing Hellenic Air Force Colonel, Konstantinos Prionas. The ceremony was marked by a parade and the official passing of the KAIA Flag to the new Commander. The ceremony was presided over by the Deputy Commander ISAF, Major General Hans-Werner Ahrens.

Following the National Anthems of Afghanistan, Greece and Romania, an address was given by Colonel Prionas in which he said, “After four months here I feel myself lucky to have exercised command of these multinational troops. I am grateful to the President of the International airport and to the authorities of the Ministry of Transport for their hospitality, their understanding and cooperation, as we have solved problems of mutual interest and have expedited the development of this airport to meet as soon as possible the expectations of the Afghan authorities and so to play a pivotal role in the development and prosperity of the whole country”. After the address the Deputy Commander ISAF presented Colonel Prionas with the NATO medal.

The formal handover of responsibility was then completed and Colonel Marinescu began his tenure by stating that, “I am proud to be part of the KAIA family which has had the privilege to conduct, with honour, the activity of this airport, to develop cooperation with local authorities and servicemen and women from a multinational environment supporting the peace and security in Afghanistan”. The ceremony was then brought to a close with a speech given by General Ahrens who

gave thanks to the Hellenic Air Force for “(their) professional work, their good advice and for all the energy they put into KAIA”. He then went on to welcome the Romanian Air Force and wished them every success in their forthcoming tour.

Over 39 Romanian personnel are now located in key posts throughout the airport including: Air Traffic Control, Air Operations, Flight Safety, Supply, Logistics, Communications and Combined Air Traffic Operations. Romania currently has around 700 personnel serving with ISAF in Afghanistan.



Maj General Ahrens passes the KAIA flag to the new Commander, Col Marinescu.

NATO leads the operation and control of KAIA in support of the Government of Afghanistan. This extremely busy airport receives both military and civilian air traffic and it is NATO’s aim to transition to an Afghan-led, 24-hours, 7 days a week operation. The rebuilding of the airport and the opening of Afghan airspace by providing effective air traffic control capability is vital to the economic and social development of Afghanistan.



ISAF DOCTORS JOINTLY SERVING UNDER THE RED CROSS



LTC. Klaus Geier (GER Army)
Chief PIO GECON

It benefits everyone when highly qualified doctors are given the opportunity to exchange ideas and experiences in their respective fields of work with Afghan colleagues from hospitals in Kabul. And this is exactly what happened recently when a delegation of Doctors from the, German led, Medical Task Force ISAF visited the GSM Leprosy Hospital, Kabul. Medical colleagues shared their expertise in order to foster, positive, further development which will be of benefit to the medical situation in Afghanistan.

Neither should this be considered a one way street, on the contrary, it is very much a two-way exchange of expertise. Col Dr. Robert Blenk, commander of the Medical Task Force, acknowledged this during the visit, where, among other things, patients suspected of suffering from Leishmaniasis are being diagnosed and treated. Leishmaniasis is an infectious disease found all over the world. It is caused by parasites of the Leishmania species, and affects people and animals alike, it is transmitted by the female sand fly. Unfortunately the disease is found in many regions of Afghanistan.

On average, Dr. F. M. Amin sees between 50 to 90 cases from all age groups each day, most of which, according to the 74-year old doctor and his team, are of the cutaneous type. Ten years ago, he went to medical school in Kabul and – following stays in other places including Pakistan, Thailand and the USA – returned to his home country to aid in its reconstruction. LTC. Katrin Kolbus, doctor for internal medicine, and an ear, nose and throat specialist, looked on intently as the Afghan doctor dealt with his Leishmaniasis patients. *“So far, I have only known about this disease from textbooks, as it does not exist in Germany. To see the condition live, to feel the skin infiltrations and learn about the new therapy is practical follow-on training of the best possible kind for any medical specialist”*, LTC. Kolbus commented.



Brother Reto from Switzerland, who has lived in Afghanistan for 30 years, is the director of the hospital. With financial support from CARITAS and a manufacturing company he was able to buy a 50,000 euro, carbon dioxide laser for the treatment of cutaneous Leishmaniasis. If the microscopic examination of a skin swab confirms the diagnosis of cutaneous Leishmaniasis, the lesion is locally anaesthetised and the uppermost skin layers of the seat of the infection are removed. *“The success rate of 90 percent and the way the skin regenerates following post-treatment care is amazing.”* We should think about having some of our medical personnel come here to sit in for some time”, Col Dr. Blenk said.



Conclusion: We are bound by serving under the Red Cross, a symbol of peace and humanitarianism – also in Afghanistan.

The subsequent short visit to Salini Hospital has become something of a tradition. For years there has been a close cooperation between the Medical Task Force and the German couple who founded and run this hospital. *“We will definitely keep up this relationship”*, the Commander of the Hospital Coy, LTC. Mayk Müller, announced, adding that he was planning another “hands-on medical” visit in the near future.





SHEBERGHAN CEREMONY

MARKING THE FIRST INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR MINE AWARENESS AND ASSISTANCE IN MINE ACTION



FL LT. Phill Davies (UK Royal Air Force)
ISAF HQ Media Ops Air

On Tuesday 4th April a ceremony, arranged by the Afghan New Beginnings Programme, took place in Sheberghan, Jawzjan Province to celebrate the International Day for Mine Awareness and Assistance in Mine Action. This was one of thirty similar events which were held all over the world to raise awareness about landmines and the progress being made towards their eradication. Among the guests at this event were Mr Koenigs, the UN Special Representative to the Secretary General; Major General Ahrens, Deputy Commander Operations ISAF; Ms Baldwin-Jones, Canadian Embassy and Governor Hamdard, Governor Jawzjan Province.

thanks for the assistance he had received, both nationally and internationally, in the pursuit of the eradication of mines from the province. He ended by stating that, *“from now on we promise to work even harder towards the eradication of mines in Jawzjan Province.”*

The next speaker was the Mr Koenigs who claimed that, *“Mine eradication is a symbol of importance for the United Nations in Afghanistan and throughout the world.”* Mr Koenigs then went onto talk of how the surface area of Afghanistan covered by mines has been reduced by half during the past twelve months. Additionally over 2 million Afghan men, women and children had received mine awareness education over the past twelve months and this had significantly decreased the number of injuries from mines throughout Afghanistan.

A further tribute for the Afghan Government and the ANBP came from the Canadian Representative, Ms Baldwin-Jones. The representative praised Afghanistan *“for being the first country in the world to develop an indigenous program to address the problem of mines and thus become world leaders.”* This was followed by an address from Mr Sayed Noorullah, the acting head of the Jumbish Party. Mr Noorullah said that, *“mining is the worst inheritance we have from the war and it will continue to affect us all, until all mines have been cleared.”*

DCOM ISAF was the next guest to address the ceremony and he spoke of Afghanistan’s future. He stated that, *“The Government of Afghanistan (GoA), is ultimately responsible for leading the landmine and ammunition stockpile destruction projects. UN, ISAF and others will continue to assist and support the GoA in this demanding and long lasting challenge.”* He continued by saying that Afghanistan’s future lies in private business and initiatives, but that stability and security need to come first. He added, *“Afghanistan is making a remarkable step forward here today. However, much more needs to be done in the near and mid-term future.”*



VIP's prepare to detonate mines cache



The ceremony began with a welcome song from local children dressed in traditional Afghan clothes and was followed by an address from the Jawzjan Governor who expressed his

The first part of the ceremony concluded with a speech from a local elder who thanked the GoA and the International Community for its assistance in ridding Sheberghan, and Jawzjan province of all mines. Before the detonations took place a song from the local children once again entertained the guests. The ceremony ended with the simultaneous detonation of several hundred mines in seven different bunkers. Each bunker was detonated by one of the VIPs at the reception, including Mr. Koenigs and Major General Ahrens.

Globally, to date over 40 million mines have been destroyed. *“A world free from the threat of landmines is achievable in years, not decades”* said Max Gaylard, Director of the United

Nations Mine Action Service. *“Unlike so many of the global problems of our day, this one can be solved. April 4 is an opportunity to remind the world that there is light at the end of the tunnel.”*

According to the Landmine Monitor Report 2005, 84 countries are affected to some extent by landmines and unexploded ordnance, which together kill or maim between 15,000 and 20,000 adults and children each year, down from an estimated 26,000 in the late 1990’s. Fourteen UN agencies, programmes, departments and funds are together helping find and destroy these devices and providing other mine-action services in 30 countries and three territories.





GERMAN ISAF PERSONNEL RELOCATE HISTORICAL RAILWAY ENGINE

LTC. Klaus Geier (GER Army)
Chief PIO 10th German Contingent ISAF

A joint venture between the Deutscher Entwicklungsdienst and the German Supply Company 2, has led to the staging of a major attraction at, or to be more precise, in front of, the Kabul National Museum. A major operation was conducted in order to assist soldiers from the recovery unit lift a historical locomotive from its resting place with the help of their crane and a heavy multi-purpose truck. The engine, which had been neglected in the museum's backyard, is one of just three historical railway engines left in Afghanistan. Now, after 80 years, it has been granted a place of honour in front of the National Museum, directly opposite the Darulaman Palace.



into his country", Emir Abdul Rahman (1880 – 1901) stated. Still today, Afghanistan remains one of the few countries in the world without a railroad system.

The idea to put the best preserved locomotive on display in front of the museum's entrance came from the Deutscher Entwicklungsdienst and with the help of the German supply company the 10-ton engine was moved 200 meters and placed on a track bed which had previously been raised by the recovery unit. In view of the considerable age of the engine, this procedure had to be executed with great care and the utmost precision by the crane specialists. Finally, after almost three hours of nail-biting work, First Lieutenant Boris Barchanski reported, "Locomotive in place, mission accomplished!"

For five years only, between 1923 and 1929, Afghanistan had its own railway. Three steam engines manufactured by Henschel, a German enterprise, travelled on a test track running from Kabul, southwest to the Darulaman Palace, located 7 km from Kabul, at that the time, the fare for a one-way ticket was one Afghani or 0.02 Euros.

The project, however, was short-lived, "As long as Afghanistan does not have enough weapons to ward off acts of aggression by the big powers (British Empire and the Tsar) it would be crazy to allow the construction of a railroad track leading

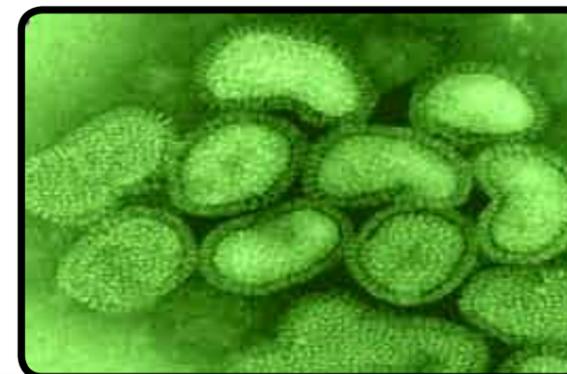


AVIAN INFLUENZA IN AFGHANISTAN

LTC. Dr. Francesco Gaeta (ITA Army)
ISAF HQ SO Med Plans

LTC. Dr. Ratimir Bencic (CRO Army)
ISAF HQ MEDAD Prev Med

Bird flu is an infection caused by avian (bird) influenza (flu) viruses (type A influenza viruses).



There are many different subtypes of type A influenza viruses, all occur in birds. These subtypes differ because of certain proteins on the surface of the influenza A virus (hemagglutinin [HA] and neuraminidase [NA] proteins):

Hemagglutinin (**HA**) - (Can be confirmed by Test Kit) Enables the virus to enter the host cell.

Neuraminidase (**NA**) – (Needs sophisticated test as PCR) Enables the virus to leave the host cell.

Influenza A viruses infecting poultry can be divided into two distinct groups on the basis of their ability to cause disease. The very virulent viruses cause 'fowl plague', now termed highly pathogenic avian influenza [HPAI], in which mortality may be as high as 100%. These viruses have been restricted to subtypes H5 and H7, although not all viruses of these subtypes cause HPAI. All other viruses cause a much milder, primarily respiratory, disease, which may be exacerbated by other infections or environmental conditions.

These flu viruses occur naturally among birds. Wild birds worldwide carry the viruses in their intestines, but usually do not get sick from them.

However, bird flu is very contagious among birds and can make some domesticated birds, including chickens, ducks, and turkeys, very sick and kill them.

When we talk about "bird flu" viruses, we are referring to influenza A subtypes chiefly found in birds. They do not usually infect humans, even though we know they can. When we talk about "human flu viruses" we are referring to those subtypes that occur widely in humans.

There are only three known A subtypes of human flu viruses (H1N1, H1N2, and H3N2); it is likely that some genetic parts of current human influenza A viruses came from birds originally. Influenza A viruses are constantly changing, and they might adapt over time to infect and spread among humans.

Infected birds shed flu virus in their saliva, nasal secretions, and feces. Susceptible birds become infected when they have contact with contaminated excretions or surfaces that are contaminated with excretions.

It is believed that most cases of bird flu infection in humans have resulted from contact with infected poultry or contaminated surfaces.

Afghanistan is one of the world's poorest countries, a post conflict country that has suffered for 23 years of war and had one of the lowest medical and social indicators in the world even before the Soviet Invasion. Majority of its population is involved in agricultural crop and livestock production. Poultry are mainly kept by rural household with flock sizes below ten birds.

Most birds are of local breed and fed on household waste and crop residues resulting in a productivity of 40-60 eggs per year per hen. Annual mortality of chicken under these conditions often exceeds 50 percent due to the poor management, Newcastle Disease and some other contagious diseases.

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According to the World Health Organization Afghanistan is considered a country at “high risk” for Avian Influenza as it lies along the migratory pathways of wild birds travelling south westerly from Siberia, and has several geographically distinct wetlands serving as transit points for migratory wild birds in the North and South of the country.

Low community awareness and a health system that is in the early stages of delivering effective health services equitably makes Afghanistan especially prone to dangers of an outbreak of a virulent form of Avian Influenza.

Since the first cases of H5N1 (highly pathogenic avian influenza [HPAI]) were officially reported in Afghanistan there was a strong level of recognition by senior policy makers and government officials of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan of the importance of preventing avian influenza, the Deputy Minister of Public Health (MOPH) leads an Avian Influenza Task Force within the MOPH, and one of the Vice-Presidents chairs an inter-ministerial, cabinet level emergency response team, which is beginning to address the coordination issues required for a country-wide Avian Influenza response.

The MOPH AI TF includes representatives of all the major international health organizations (Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Health and Food, WHO, UNICEF, FAO, US Department of Health and Human Services, Center for Disease control (HSS/CDC) NGO’S and donors such as World Bank, European Commission and USAID.

The Task Force has produced several technical documents and plans on Avian Influenza for the Afghan setting.



Official leaflet on Avian Influenza edited by MoPH

In particular seven point for prevention were identified:

1. Report (any animal suspect case)
2. Get treated (seek immediate treatment in case of fever, cough and cold, or breathing difficulty after contact with poultry)
3. Separate
4. Wash your hands
5. Cook (eat well-cooked poultry products)
6. No hunt
7. No bird transports

ISAF involvements

Since the beginning the MEDAD office of ISAF HQ was involved in this issue, with active participation in this Task Force of MoPH and with an active link with the major international organizations (in particular USAID, HSS/ CDC, FAO, medical expert from Japanese Embassy).

In the weekly medical meeting, involving all the ISAF medical officer operating in the military medical facilities in Kabul, was often discussed on avian influenza, maintaining informed the Kabul Medical Military Community about the situation development, the possible impact on the military population in Afghanistan and the force protection measures to be adopted in the different phases of the possible spread of this disease to the humans.

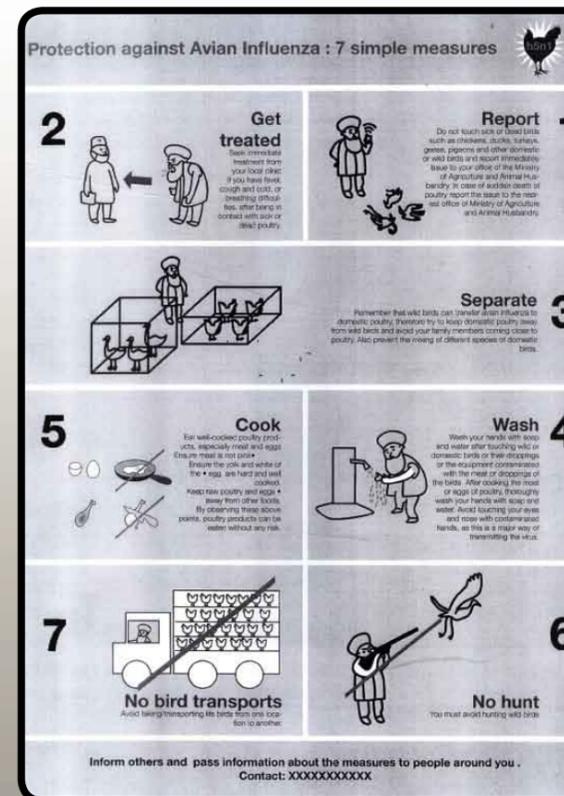
A Working Group was also established with the CFC-A and OSC-A experts in order to coordinate the military response on the force protection measures to be adopted and establish a common action plan.

MEDAD Office is also creating a database with the availability of PPE, Disinfectants and Tamiflu for each ISAF Medical Treatment Facilities.

As answer to the official request from MoPH and MoA in providing any available technical assistance, resources and equipment, ISAF is quickly giving help in different activities:

- Spreading the information messages edited by Afghan Health and Vet Authorities
- Facilitate the sending of sample, token by FAO, in the referral laboratory in Italy through the Italian military air bridge
- Organize a donation of PPE (Personal Protective Equipments) and Disinfectants by Contributing Nations

Information for the ISAF soldiers has been spread through briefings and information published on the ISAF Preventive Medicine wise page.



Official protection poster



ISAF preventative medicine WISE page



