



ISAF MIRROR

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**General Dan McNeill assumes
command of ISAF X**



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Commander's Foreword
General Dan McNeill



I am Gen. Dan McNeill and it is my profound honor to take command of the International Security Assistance Force and the military members of 37 nations that comprise this great alliance. I first served in Afghanistan from 2002 to 2003 as the commander of the Coalition forces. Afghanistan was a vastly different place then. The destruction resulting from two and one half decades was evident everywhere and in everything.

Today, while we have many remaining challenges, Afghanistan is clearly on the road to recovery: a president and parliament elected by the people; a constitution that is among the best in central and south Asia; an Afghan National Army and National Police that are growing in capability by the day; and reconstruction and development that are steadily improving the quality of life of the Afghan people.

While it is ISAF that perhaps provides the most visible example of the international community's commitment here, our efforts involve much more than a military solution. Working in concert with governments, humanitarian and non-governmental organizations, and all who are party to this noble endeavor, we will enable the institutions of Afghanistan so that the Afghan people might enjoy self determination, education, health and the peaceful realization of their hopes and dreams.

To be clear, we face great challenges in achieving these basic rights for the Afghan people, including a brutal enemy determined to impose its dark vision on the Afghan people. But in the past several months, ISAF clearly has the initiative and we will maintain our forward momentum in facilitating reconstruction and development. We will remain prepared to overcome any threats from those who stand in the way of a better life for the Afghan people, to include conducting combat operations when we must. But these operations will be done to enable our primary objective of facilitating reconstruction and development.

In the coming weeks and months, I will be visiting various ISAF units. I look forward to working with each regional command and its various national elements as, together, we continue the all-important work of helping the Afghan people secure and rebuild their country.

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Afghan Government assists citizens through winter hardship



Winter in many parts of Afghanistan is a brutal conflux of snow and ice with temperatures dipping into the single digits and below. The resulting blizzards and snow drifts can cause tremendous damage to property, crops and farm animals, and render roads impassable, cutting off critical supply routes used by citizens to gather their food and living essentials.

The Government of Afghanistan, working with Coalition forces, devised a comprehensive “Winterization Plan” to assist the citizens in getting through the frigid season.

The government’s winterization plan, has two primary areas of emphasis: The Snow and Ice Control program and the Humanitarian Civil Assistance program. Governors throughout the country’s eastern provinces, in cooperation with the Regional Director of Disaster Relief and Director of Public Works, collaborated to bring these services to districts throughout their provinces.

Some 6,000 Afghans from areas all across the region were hired to remove snow and ice from designated provincial roads, district centers, the Afghan National Police headquarters, clinics, schools and bazaars. Over 1,800 kilometers of road is slated for inclusion in the project.

During periods of snowfall, the contractor is

responsible for initiating snow removal operations when the snow coverage reaches 5-7 cm in depth. If the designated road has not been cleared, citizens can contact their Provincial Coordination Councils for assistance. The Coalition’s Provincial Reconstruction Teams work with the Department of Public Works to offer mentorship and assistance in managing the SNIC program when needed.

The HCA program provides food, clothing, and supplies to the regions citizens. This program is in effect all year long and has been refitted to include winter need items. In the last three months, the government has hired 93 jingo trucks to deliver over 280 pallets of HCA goods worth in excess of \$800,000. Delivery will continue through the winter, especially to those villages located in remote areas where access to roads and towns are limited. Citizens requiring HCA items need only contact their local PCC or PRT to have their requests evaluated and granted.

“The Afghan government cares about the needs of the people and is established to serve and assist the people in seeking a better life,” said Khost Governor Arsala Jamal. “The government, with the help of our coalition brothers, is committed to the security of Afghanistan and to the welfare of the Afghan people.”

Joint Intelligence Operations Center opens

**Story by Capt. Stacie N. Shafran
HQ ISAF PIO**

The Joint Intelligence Operations Center (JIOC), a significant strategic and operational achievement in Afghanistan-Pakistan border security, officially opened Jan. 25 during a ceremony at Headquarters International Security Assistance Force (ISAF).

The JIOC is unprecedented. Its debut publicly acknowledges ISAF, Afghanistan and Pakistan’s resolve to cooperate closely to counter terrorism and insurgent activity along their shared southern and eastern border.

In the past, the primary venue for Afghan, Pakistan, and ISAF military leaders to share information or collaborate on issues of joint concern with reference to the shared border between Pakistan and Afghanistan was through bimonthly meetings at the four-star level Tripartite Plenary Commission. Last November, the Military Intelligence Sharing Working Group (MISWG), one of the commission’s sub-committees, finalized the planning initiative to establish the JIOC and its concept of operations.

Now, Afghan and Pakistani military officers will work, side by side, in one facility, in support of joint campaign planning for operations, intelligence, technical exchange of counter improvised explosive device (C-IED) information, and information operations.

“The JIOC will facilitate critical and timely information needed by the Afghan National Army and Pakistan Army units operating along the border to prevent and disrupt insurgent activity common in the eastern and southern areas of Afghanistan,” said Maj. Andrew Zeigler, ISAF’s Government of Afghanistan intelligence representative and facilitator for intelligence sharing between the JIOC, ISAF and the Afghanistan-Pakistan entities.

The JIOC is manned by six Pakistani and six Afghan liaison officers, as well as 12 ISAF staff officers. As members cooperate and collaborate on matters related to border security, the team will produce intelligence reports and distribute them to the intelligence community and as necessary, to other organizations also concerned with border security.

“We need everyone to understand that cooperation does not only rest within the JIOC, but between the citizens of Pakistan, Afghanistan and the international community that is working toward security. This is just one small step in support of that end state,” said Major Zeigler.

The JIOC is capable of 24-hour operations and is located within a secure working area inside the HQ ISAF encampment. Personnel share common work stations and also have access to private planning rooms.

“In the short time they’ve been here, the Pakistanis have been cooperating and communicating well with the Afghans, as well as integrating themselves within the ISAF community,” said Major Zeigler. Despite their differing languages, the team has yet to experience major language barriers. “It’s a benefit that the Pakistani officers speak English, as well as Dari and Pashtu, Afghanistan’s official languages, and that we have translators who help us communicate with the Afghan officers,” said Major Zeigler.

As for the JIOC’s extensive communication network, more than \$100,000 worth of Communications and Information Systems (CIS) equipment is enabling the intelligence mission. There are several secure communications networks and additional capabilities will be implemented as the mission expands.

“It’s been really rewarding to get the JIOC off the ground and to have a direct role in enabling the future stability of these countries and the ISAF mission,” said 1st Lt. Stacie Hartert, CIS control center engineer, who planned and implemented the JIOC’s communications capabilities.

Lieutenant Hartert and her team equipped the facility with its own secure network that enables the Afghan, Pakistani and ISAF officers to liaise with each other, as well as exchange information with their respective countries.

“Trust is the focus; we have to support one another in our efforts to ensure stability, security, and cooperation between both countries,” said Major Zeigler. “Without it our efforts will be fruitless. At this point, I’m very optimistic about the prospects toward stabilization and security as a result of everyone’s efforts.”

ISAF is currently comprised of more than 35,000 troops from 37 NATO and non-NATO nations. Its primary role is to support and assist the Government of Afghanistan in providing and maintaining a secure environment in order to help in the rebuilding of Afghanistan. The JIOC is one milestone in support of that overarching goal.

Together, let's make peace progress

Story and photos by:
 Ltn Sarah Boulanger (FRA)
 Cpt Kamil Erdogan (TUR)
 PIO RC-C

At the beginning of his command of Regional Command Capital (RC-C), Brigadier General Pierre de Villiers said "I will continue the work in this multinational environment and together we will carry on providing security in our area of responsibility, side by side with our allies and always in close-cooperation with Afghan National Security Forces, local authorities, population, and on support of the Government of Afghanistan. Together, we will make peace progress".



RC-C has organized exercises for Kabul City Police and Afghan National Army since December 2006. For these programs all three battle groups of RC-Capital, French, Turkish and Italian, committed themselves to the organisation of joint training with Afghan Police and soldiers.

RC-Capital commander, Brigadier Pierre de VILLIERS (FR-AR), stresses in his directives the importance for the police, Afghan soldiers and ISAF soldiers to develop

programs for Musahi district police. The first program was conducted in mid-December, and 15 policemen participated. A second one was conducted for 20 policemen on the first week of January, and a third one for 10 other policemen in mid-January. The last course began on 30 Jan. and ended on 5 Feb. 10 policemen attended this course. Until the beginning of February, 55 policemen collaborated with IT BG for more efficient joint work on the ground.

Usually, on the first day of IT BG course, policemen were reminded about the theoretical and practical use of force and weapons. On the second day, an Italian platoon went to Musahi in order to conduct joint vehicle checkpoint training. IT BG and KCP set up joint patrols on the third day of training. The last day of collaboration, policemen participated in joint live range competitions.

In Camp Dogan, home to the Turkish battle group, another kind of joint training program was performed for 25 policemen in a three-day period. The purpose of this course was to facilitate joint patrols and checkpoint activities, to ensure unity and to improve mutual cooperation,

coordination and confidence between nationalities.

In order to reach these goals, TU BG Gendarmerie Special Operations Company performed the 3-day training program between 16 and 18 January. 25 KC policemen received training on how to search (individuals, vehicles, buildings), the set up of a vehicle



cooperation work for joint training, in order to facilitate combined operations during joint patrols or the manning of the checkpoints. This cooperation completes course actions led at national level. This is the best way to make collective procedures easier.

Italian battle group organised four-day training

checkpoint, crime scene investigation, crowd control and how to defend against attack.

"Police is the guarantee of justice, public and individual safety. A peaceful future for Afghanistan depends on strong national security forces. I am very happy to see your eagerness of being trained. RC-C will continue to train



KCP by repeating such programs" said Colonel Ates, deputy commander of RC-C during the ceremony. This kind of training was conducted again at the beginning of February.

At the same time, the French Battle group worked in collaboration with Surobi Police. For FR BG, it is more important to develop that joint concept directly on the ground. In the same way, they proposed to the policemen a 2-week training period in their area of responsibility in Surobi to show them how French soldiers patrol.

The French detachment in Forward Operating Base Hawkeye Surobi district began the collaboration with the city police at the end of January, and from this time, they have conducted patrols together around Surobi.

The deputy governor of Surobi, Habibul Rahman Malekzoi, said he was very happy with this Afghan-French collaboration and wishes a large joint development of these activities for the whole district.

Besides, during two weeks the French battle group trained in Darulaman with 201st Corps of Afghan National Army (ANA) to strengthen the security in

the whole area of RC-Capital Area of Operation. An Afghan and a French platoon were paired up to enable each other to share their operational experience. This joint training work requires a constant dialogue between the two unit commanders. Thanks to this training and the briefings to determine their improvement, a true relationship has been established. Capt. Hayaduin, unit commander of 201st Corps Company, is very pleased with "the cooperation between French and Afghan."

Each course is jointly reviewed in order to make security progress. Soldiers on each side gain confidence in the other side and share their know-how in a friendly way to increase their efficiency on the ground. Regional Command Capital increases the collaboration between ISAF troops and Afghan Security Forces.

Soldiers on each side are happy to meet and discover another culture, because every one of them can bring new elements to the others and learn a lot. It is important to develop a mutual confidence, in order to be efficient during joint missions on the ground.





When ANA takes the lead of an ISAF operation

Story and photo by:
Lcl Philippe Bou
RC-C PIO Chief

Regional Command Capital keeps on developing privileged relations with Afghan national security forces. Brigadier de Villiers in his guidance wanted these relations to be as concrete as possible. They should aim at bringing the necessary support to the Afghan institutions represented by ANA, ANP and NDS, so they can provide on their own security to Afghanistan and its population.

So, according to Brigadier de Villiers, initiatives realised at the lowest local level are complementary to training received at national level.

On the occasion of the conception of OQAB MAGNET operation, that will be conducted in Surobi district, COM RC Capital and his staff have begun a study, not only on a joint ISAF/ANSF initiative but on the possibility to leave the lead of the decisive phase to ANA 201 corps, making it then, a first in Afghanistan.

The concept of ISAF success operation OQAB ALPINI, conducted in December 2006 in Musayi valley has been adopted and completed.

So, phase one consists in dialoguing with the population to determine its practical aspirations in terms of security and development. Through dialogue ISAF receive the trust the population and encourage their participation to a common goal: "make peace progress." The authorities of the Afghan security forces have therefore actively participated in the shuras organised jointly with the government representatives, Surobi district representatives and RC Capital staff. This phase is complemented on the ground with winter donations for the poorest families.

The second phase consists in the deployment of national security forces in Surobi district. So, RC Capital has already begun in cooperation with ANA 201 Corps, different chiefs of police and NDS the draft for NATO orders. Joint terrain reconnaissance, meetings according to fields of expertise are under the authority of RC Capital Chief of Staff, Col LAUGEL. In the mean time, FR BG and ANA companies conduct joint training sessions.

Thus, in March the deployment of forces for the operation in SUROBI district will be led by 201 Corps and the other national forces and ISAF will only be there as a support. Joint Forward Command Post (ANA/ANP/ISAF) will be deployed to enable



ANA to command the manoeuvre phase. Following battle rhythm, large scale development operations will be simultaneously conducted by CIMIC teams. Strengthen local police should then be able to maintain this level of security in the district with the support of RC Capital forces and a population that would have joined the "peace makers side"

The reinforcement of security obtained in the region through the combined action of the population, ANSF and ISAF then permits to reach phase 3 or consolidation phase. This last phase should see the increase in development and reconstruction initiated since the beginning by the government. Indeed, the government desires to get involved in all the regions of the country in liaison with organisation in charge of development (GO, NGOs...)

"ANA has made some tremendous progress. It is motivated and is better and better equipped. We support ANA in a practical way to enable it to assert day after day its commitment to the population. It is our mission" declared Brigadier de Villiers.



Provincial Reconstruction Team on new paths

Wreckage in Baglan

Story and photos by: Capt Andrea Nagy PIO PRT PeK

On a recent winter day trucks and cranes lined up on the outskirts of the city of Baglan. They worked for two weeks to carry away and collect the wreckages of armor scattered all over the countryside since the anti-Soviet jihad. The project is sponsored by the Hungarian PRT of Baglan Province. The wrecks bared to their chassis served as a playground for the children: they played hide-and-seek or - which is worse - wargames in them. The wrecks, organic part of the townscape by now, not only disfigured the environment, but also kept alive the memories of a bloody war.



The governor of Baglan city wanted to change this, when he asked the PRT to transfer the wrecks, that otherwise are the property of the Afghan Government, to a designated area. The PRT's EOD team checked the locations and a local entrepreneur carried away the tank-frames.

The project began in early December and the transfer of the 31 wrecks was finished in one month by the beginning of January. The transport of the most visible wrecks was only the first phase of the wreckproject. It will continue,

since there are a lot more wrecks throughout the province.

Both the PRT and the governor of Baglan city agree, that beside improving the townscape and removing war-reminscences, the project helps changing the worldview of the next generation. If this rising generation do not have to grow up among the war heritages playing wargames, we might have contributed somewhat to a more peaceful, more secure future, which is the sound foundation of the reconstruction of the country.



Drawing competition

Story by: Capt Andrea Nagy PIO PRT PeK

The way to the Afghans' hearts goes through their children." This motto was chosen by one of the Hungarian PRT's mission teams in Baghlan Province.

Although the mission team changed its motto to the meaningful slogan of 'Wherever you go, we have already been there' since then, their previous motto is echoed in the new project of the PRT's PSYOPS unit.

The PSYOPS has prepared television and radio broadcasts, disseminated newspapers and leaflets about the activity of the ISAF and the PRT, performed roadshows where they showed introductory movies on Hungary and CIMIC projects and glued posters on every single bare wall they found in the province. These activities reflected the classical and well-tried PSYOPS methods, but they were still not satisfied. They wanted to try something different, something which can be a new method of reaching the population of the province. So one day, they came up with the idea of a drawing competition for schoolchildren. They gave the project the title of 'How do I imagine my future'. The

commander of the PRT found it an excellent initiative, so after getting the official approval, they started to visit the elementary and highschools of the province. The students involved represented both genders and all of the ages between 8 and 16. They gave papers and color pencils to the students and asked them to draw how they imagine their future, what they wish to become.

And the children drew and painted. Some of them even prepared wall-posters for the PRT. After a month the drawings

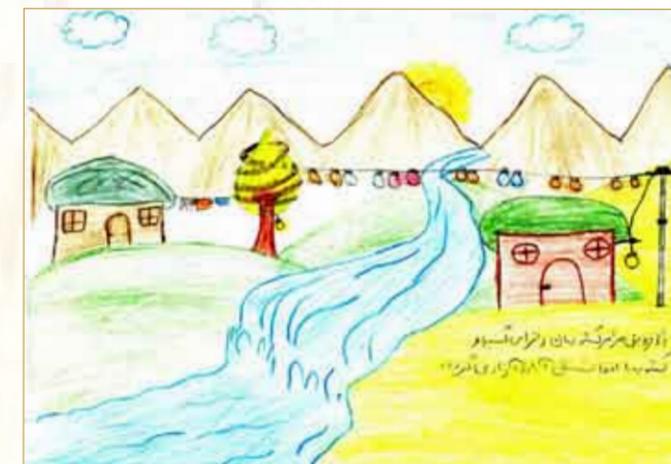
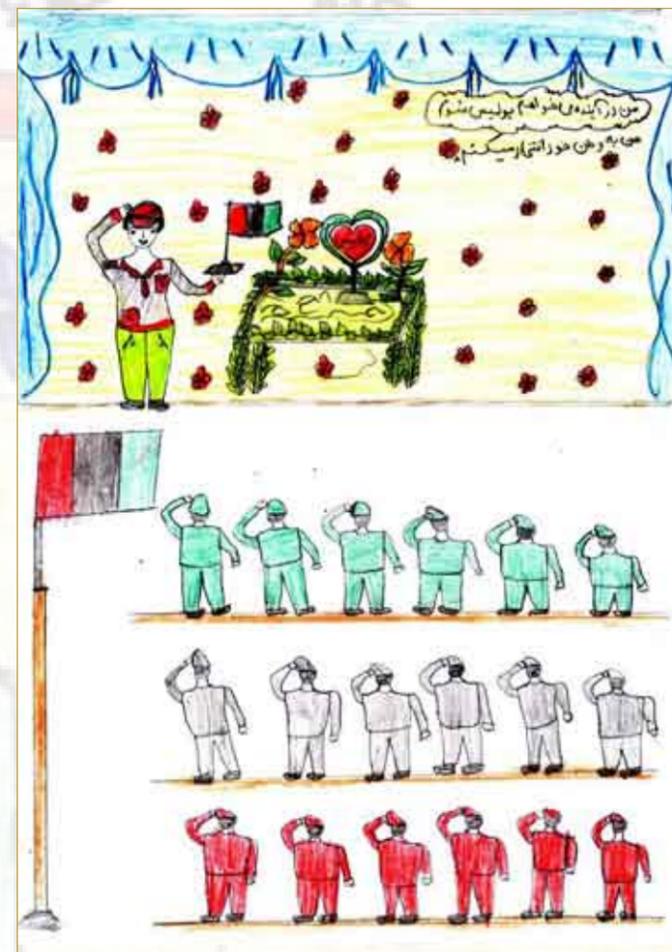
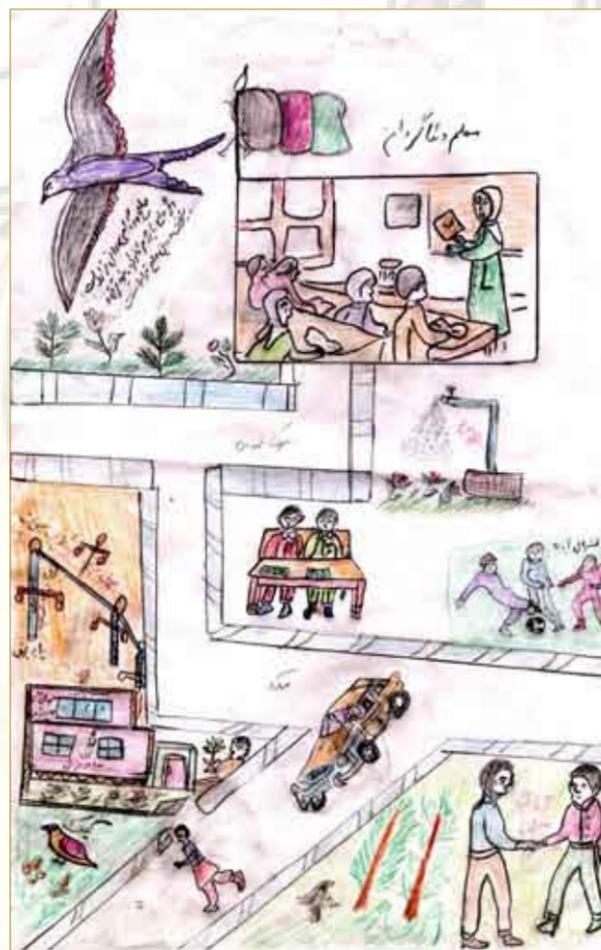
held for children

were collected and the toughest part of the project began: classifying and sorting out the 1400 drawings received. Almost all of the drawings portrayed a peaceful future with nice houses, green trees and flowers. Most of the children imagined themselves as doctors or teachers. Certainly some of the girls wanted to become famous singers, just as some boys wanted to become soldiers, who guard the peace. Some children's drawings reflected their present environment with donkeys and ducks, but

some of them imagined it as a mixture of a modern airport and a railways station. As a returning motive lots of children drew wells reminding the PRT of the long-lasting effects of water shortage.

After picking the best twenty five drawings for each of the schools, the prizes, which contained an ISAF schoolbag, toys and schoolequipment such as pens, pencils, pencilboxes, booklets were ceremonially handed over to the winners.

The project had several benefits. First of all children could feel to be involved in the peace-making process in the province. Secondly the PRT directly gained knowledge on how Afghani children see their and their country's future. Thirdly these drawings have been used for preparing wall-posters and leaflets, by which means the PRT intended to show the adult population of the province how their children wish to live. Thus people were addressed by their own children and not by the PRT, which is one of the most authentic and trustworthy way of communicating messages of peace and development.



February 4th,
US Gen. Dan McNeill,
assumed command of
International Security Force X
in the presence of President
Hamid Karzai.
Upon taking command,
Gen. McNeill praised the
efforts of President Karzai
and Gen. David Richards
and reaffirmed ISAF's
commitment to facilitate the
reconstruction of Afghanistan.





Story and photos by: Capt Andrea Nagy PIO PRT PeK

On a bright January morning girls of all ages and classes gather in the courtyard of Madan Girls High school. Excited chatting starts as the military vehicles approached the school and shy smiles appear when the first soldiers get out of the cars.

While the Psychological Operations members begin to install a big television screen and loudspeakers to show the movie on the Provincial Reconstruction Team and Hungary, the mission commander, who organized this new project is already taken to the teacher's office by the school director for a cup of tea and a brief welcome.

At the end of last year Mrs. Malolai, director of the high school turned to the Hungarian PRT of Baghlan Province with a special and very innovative request. She asked the PRT to give English conversational classes to the pupils. She said her students were very eager to learn English, but they didn't have any possibility to practice their knowledge with someone who speaks it fluently and whose native language is neither Dari, nor Pashun.

Although currently there is holiday season in schools, students and also teachers are willing to come to the school to improve their English. The soldiers are not professional teachers, but they enjoy speaking with the students about Afghanistan and Hungary, the PRT and the ISAF. They read SADA-E AZADI, the official newspaper of ISAF and try to find out together what are the common points in the two nations' traditions and culture. For those, who don't speak English at all, they teach numbers,

colours and basic sentences, in return they are taught the same things in Dari.

Although this unique initiative is not a classical reconstruction project, it serves long-term goals. On the one hand, it improves languages abilities of Afghan children and also encourages them to study. Ensuring and facilitating the education of children is a basic and essential part in the development strategy not only of Baghlan Province and Afghanistan, but of all the developing countries. Passing over knowledge and information plays an important role in shaping the worldview of the new generation.

On the other hand, this project ensures a platform for direct communication with Afghan children and teachers, and so it is a genuine possibility to raise the acceptance of the ISAF and PRT among the population. An average Afghan family has 8-12 members and approximately 50-150 students take part in these classes. If these children going home to their families shares their experience and talk warmly about the soldiers, it can contribute to the number of supporters with 600-1500 people and this means only those, who were engaged directly. All of this has almost no or very low cost.

The Afghans are very friendly people, who have extensive family connections. Moreover, many of them are illiterate and do not possess any television or other kind of multimedia equipment. For them, human relations, human interactions are extremely important not only because of the poor infrastructural conditions, but also because of deeply

Passing on knowledge continued from page 14

rooted cultural traditions. The most effective and sometimes the only means to reach these people is direct interpersonal communication with them or through community leaders, stakeholders, family members or friends. According to the experience of the PRT's intelligence section, direct interaction with children - while supporting schools by different means - has contributed significantly to the improvement of security in the province.

Another and non-negligible aspect of this project is, that it concentrates on the education of women. The group of soldiers teaching the girls always include women, since communication with women and the recovery of female rights are still sensitive issues in the Afghan society. The international trends and strategies concerning development recently seem to shift in two directions. One is to facilitate children education, the other is to support and educate women. Although the ISAF, the United Nations and other international and national organizations pay particular attention to improve the situation of Afghan women, literacy rate for women was only 5 percent in 2002 (not later data). Nevertheless, there have been significant developments in women's situation. 27 percent of the National Assembly is represented by women and they are visible in almost all of the public sectors.

According to the soldiers participating in the project, girls are very interested in taking part in the classes. 'Classes are very popular among the students. The news, that we had arrived at the school spread immediately and as a chain reaction within a short time the classroom is filled with girls. At the end of the classes they keep asking what was the next time we come again.' - says Master Sergeant László Vígh, deputy of mission team 2.

The project, which has been going on for two months now, seems to become a success story. Both parties harvest the benefits of direct communication: the students while practicing English learn about the ISAF and the PRT and at the same time what they see is that instead of the strict-faced soldiers carrying helmets and rifles, there are friendly, smiling people, who care about their life and their future.

Political Parties gathered for first time in PRT Maimana

Thursday the 25th of January 2007 was an historic day in Faryab as all the three most important political parties, Jumbesh, Azadi and Jamiat, gathered around the same table to discuss the current state as well as the future of the province. This was the first tripartite talks seen in Faryab.

All representatives of the local political parties expressed their appreciation for the opportunity to gather and meet together.

According to Mr. Abdul Jalil Awer, the Deputy party leader of Jumbesh in Faryab, "the time now is suitable for discussing the problems. Political parties will have different ideas, but one should sit together and try to find common solutions. Discussion and exchange of ideas in itself is positive".

All the parties assured that they do not have military units any more and that they do not support the use of weapons. They also said that violence and violent demonstrations must be avoided. Mr. Mohammad Husain, the Azadi Party leader in Faryab said that "it was not a lie that in the past there had been used weapons and not politics. Now we are trying to resolve the issues with politics, not with war".

"The goal is not to unify parties, but to have a unity of ideas to move development and it is beneficial to discuss", Dr. Said Ahmad Sadat, the Party leader of Jamiat in Faryab added.

The initiative for a joint meeting came from the Norwegian-led PRT (Provincial Reconstruction Team), the only actor in Faryab to provide neutral ground for discussions like these and to free parties from the local power games.

The media of Faryab was also invited to the scene after the closed door discussions chaired by the Commander of PRT Maimana, Lt. Col. Arne Opperud.

"The meeting was a success. The party representatives were organised and calm in their speeches and behaviour. It was true political dialogue with peaceful means", Lt. Col. Opperud said.

Local journalists were very happy, too. "As a resident of Faryab it is great to see the parties together, and that everybody could express their views on the needs of the province. Expressing different thoughts and views brings freedom of speech and democracy", the journalists told at the press conference.

The atmosphere was friendly and a lot of smiling and hugs were seen after the meeting. The presence of the local press let also the parties chat informally and find some touches between the key persons.

"The presence of the media clearly worked as a carrot for the parties. The PRT will organise same type of meetings later this year", Lt. Col. Opperud stated. The theme of this first meeting was security. In the future, other topics i.e. development and education will be discussed, too.

Maimana



Worker in the bicycle repair shop

The ministry of rehabilitation and rural development along with ISAF HQ Information Operations made a visit to Maimana PRT in Faryab Province in the northwest region of Afghanistan in order to view micro-finance projects and the Maimana hospitals recent new building projects. They also met the director of women's affairs in Maimana Madame Sharifa to discuss the opening of a new crisis center for women. International and Afghan correspondents came along on the trip and had the opportunity to live and eat amongst the soldiers from the PRT.

The PRT is Norwegian led, with Latvian and Finish troops as well. In total there are approximately 126 soldiers at the Maimana PRT. None of the projects would be possible with constant diligence toward security and stability the PRT provides for these projects from beginning to end. Several of these projects have been funded by the Norwegian government

New mosque under construction



Members of the Norwegian PRT preparing to take the group out on foot patrol

through the local non-governmental organizations on the PRT's recommendation.

The visit began with a foot patrol coordinated by the PRT soldiers who provided security. The soldiers escorted the reporters and the ministry representatives through the heart of the city on foot. The all-day venture allowed the guests to visit several of the projects they had come to see.

The MRRD representatives wanted to focus on meeting with micro-finance recipients. The Micro-finance projects are backed by the MRRD and enable individuals to take a business load through the Bangladesh Bank and various other finance companies. The loans range from one – eight hundred dollars. They are meant to finance a small business or to enhance one that is already established. More than 98 percent of the 2002 recipients in Maimana have already paid their loans in full and have grown their small



Workers creating carpets at the Women's Affairs Center

businesses.

The first micro-finance recipient visited owned a carpet weaving business. They had several rugs under construction when the team arrived. The visitors were able to see the actual carpet weaving process and were very impressed. The second micro-finance recipient owned a bicycle repair shop. He was able to open his business only because he was given a loan.

The group of visitors also had an opportunity to tour the new projects well under way at the Maimana hospital. These projects included a women's dorm that was constructed to give the women a place to stay when their husbands are in the hospital, a drug rehabilitation center for local residents, a new laundry facility and new equipment for several different areas of the hospital.

In addition to the projects, soldiers from the PRT who are nurses and doctors in the camp's

role two hospital, offer their expertise and experience daily to the Afghan hospital workers. Representatives from the PRT work closely with the Afghan medical staff to train in the areas of trauma, anaesthetics and sterilization practices.

Next the group visited the Meimana women's center where they met Madame Sharifa, the director of the center. In coordination with the PRT and local NGO money, she had established a special crisis center for both abused women and women who were soon to face the Afghan court system. Without the center, these women would have no where to find shelter. It is one of a growing number of crisis center's across the country.

The group ended the trip with a visit to the local Afghan National Army training camp where they viewed some recently finished facilities and some that are still under construction. One of which was a new mosque.



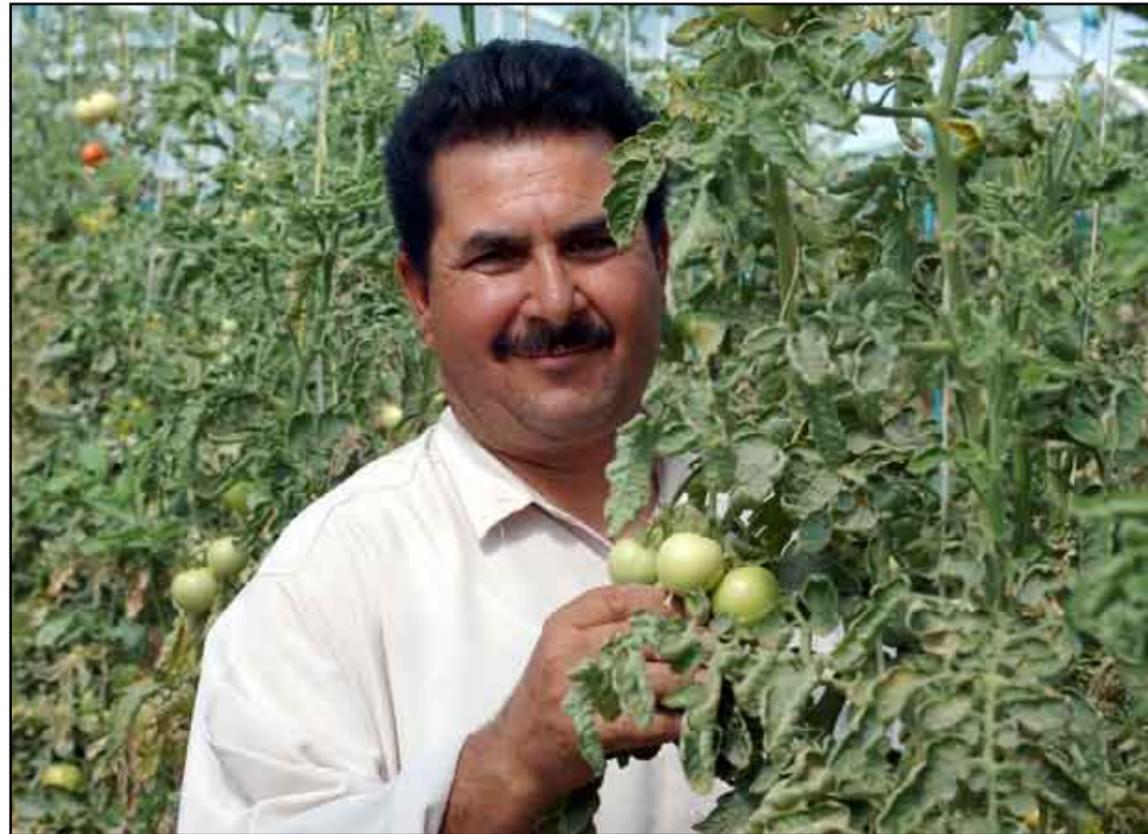
Recently constructed Maimana Public Hospital

Farah PRT receives funding for cold frame and seed vegetable production project

Story and photo by:
Gina Gillespie FMT PRT Farah

Agricultural improvement is one of the top priorities for the Provincial Reconstruction

“The farmers that we trained will train others, allowing the project to increase year by year. The farmers talk to everyone they meet about the new growing techniques,” says Abdul Qader, the Promotion Director at the Farah Department of Agriculture.



Team in Farah. They’ve recently received funding for a Cold Frame and Seed Vegetable Production Project.”

A similar proposal ten times as large was awaiting funding, but was in danger of missing the planting season. “We scaled down the size of the project to a funding level that could easily be approved. It gives us the ability to test the concept to see if it is worthwhile,” says Maj. John Andrews, head of the Civil Affairs Team at PRT Farah.

One hundred and fifty farmers from two districts, Push-t Rod and Farah Center, will take part in the project, and have already received training in cold frame growing techniques from the Department of Agriculture.

The main goals of the project are:

1. To introduce cold frame growing techniques to the farmers
2. To introduce vegetable seeds of improved varieties
3. Subsidize farmers by providing produce for early markets using cold frame growing techniques
4. Provide incentives to abandon poppy production
5. Increase vegetable production 25 to 30 per cent for participating farmers

The contract includes funding to purchase plastic for cold frames, as well as watermelon, cucumber and eggplant seeds.

Farah city chief of police holds Shura for locals, soldiers

Story and photo by: Gina Gillespie FMT PRT Farah

200 of Farah’s most influential people gathered recently to discuss the future of their province.

Soldiers from PRT Farah, government officials, Mullahs, and tribal elders from every district in the province met at the police station in Farah City for a village Shura and luncheon hosted by General Saed Aga, Chief of Police for Farah City.

The two main issues discussed were security and economic development. Speeches were made by General Aga, the department of Rural Rehabilitation and Development, Mullah Rahanni, the Commander of PRT Farah, and the Minister of Education.

“All the time you say you support the government, but when you leave here you don’t do anything,” said Mullah Rahanni in his speech. “If you say you work for the government you must support the government. We need results. After this meeting the things we promise must be followed up.”

The speakers stressed that good security was essential before economic development could begin to grow. The gathering reached a consensus that the village elders needed to use their influence to stop the youth in their villages from assisting enemy forces or getting involved in crime.

Many meeting participants believe that the most productive part of the gathering was the give and take between government officials and tribal elders.

“It was a positive sign that if some of the tribal elders had a complaint, they were vociferous in speaking out to the government,” says Lieutenant-Colonel Scott Simmons from the Center for Army Lessons Learned. “To me that was refreshing, realizing there was a sense of democracy at least on this local level where they weren’t afraid to complain to the local government.”

Provincial Governor Abdol Samad Stankzai strongly encourages government officials to get out to the districts to visit their constituents.



PRT Farah Commander Michael Horan supports him in this endeavour. “You could tell this was a very good event,” says Cdr Horan, speaking of the Shura Council. “It’s not giving bikes away, it’s getting the government out to the people.”

For Commander Horan, the gathering demonstrated the tremendous support shown to General Aga from the tribal elders throughout the province.

“He was definitely under fire this summer when a lot of crime and security activities were a little bit higher. Things have gotten better for various reasons and he is the recipient for a lot of the adulation that has happened,” he says.

Positive fallout from the meeting was immediately evident. Within days of the gathering, the Minister of Education visited the Push-e Rod district to meet with the villagers face-to-face. Although the meeting was confrontational, the end result was an agreement to re-open two girls’ schools, allowing 270 girls to start re-attending school on a regular basis.

The GOA, ISAF, and the US Command in Bagram are encouraging a set schedule for regular gatherings. This would allow the leaders to get ahead of any issues waiting for them downstream.

“Whether it’s monthly, quarterly or semi-annually, we are going to try and get these leaders out,” says Cdr. Horan.

OPERATION OQAB 2-4

Story and photo by:
Gina Gillespie FMT PRT Farah

Multinational forces hit the road at zero-dark-thirty, heading to Khaks-e Safid district of Farah Province in support of OPERATION OQAB 2-4.

The mission was Afghan National Army and Afghan National Police led, supported by ISAF forces from Provincial Reconstruction Team Farah and Regional Command West in Herat.

Participants included a Civil Affairs Team, Police Support Team, ANA, ANP and medical support. Activities included Key Leader Engagement, village assessments, house-to-house searches conducted by blended teams of ANA and ANP officers, and setting up several police checkpoints.

House-to-house searches turned up 35 kilograms of opium, four weapons and some ammunition.

Maj. Danl Connelly heads the Farah Police Support Team, and was encouraged at the amount of cooperation and sharing of resources shown by the ANA and ANP. "I saw a lot of cooperation with the ANA and ANP working together," he says. "This is the first time that I have been working with them where they actually blended the teams as they did in Khost and Giga."

PRT Farah Commander Michael Horan and ANA

Colonel Abdul Jabar talked with the village elders, and tried to impress upon them the importance of engaging government officials in the district affairs.

"I encourage you to see all the Ministerial Directors, the Director of Education, the Director of Agriculture, Director of Rural Rehabilitation and Development," he said. "It is very important that you engage those gentlemen in Farah and invite them to come to your village." He also stressed the importance of guaranteeing security



in the area in order to attract people willing to construct roads, wells, schools and clinics. "There is only one thing more powerful than Col. Jabar's ANA, and that is the assurance and guarantee of the village elders that they will provide safety," said Cdr Horan.

Col. Jabar invited the villagers to join the ANA, reminding them it was a national security force representing all of Afghanistan. "We come as your representatives," he said. "We come to learn how we are able to help you. We come to learn your problems and pass them to the concerned authorities." He too, encouraged the villagers to come to Farah City and visit the Governor and police compounds to voice their concerns. Standing at his side, Mir Amza, a 14-year-old village boy from Khost, drank in his message. "I am very happy that our ANA and ANP are here today. They represent our government, and our people. I want to join the ANA. I want to defend my land," he said.

The Civil Affairs team assessed the district for future Humanitarian Assistance and possible building projects. As with many districts, they found a lack of electricity and a shortage of schools and wells.

But the area did have a traveling physician who visits 20 days of the month, and contract teachers who held classes in the mosque due to a shortage of classroom space in the school.

American soldiers complete three unfinished projects

Story and photo by:
Gina Gillespie FMT PRT Farah

American soldiers from Provincial Reconstruction Team Farah recently stepped in to complete three unfinished projects in Chegcheran, Ghor Province.

On 31 May 2005, ISAF forces took control of the former US Forces establishment at Chegcheran, and American soldiers were replaced with Lithuanian and Danish forces. Three CERP (Commander's Emergency Reconstruction Program) projects were left hanging in limbo; a new dining facility, pharmacy and shower for the hospital; a new dormitory at the Chegcheran School; and Lal Wa Sargangal Girls' School.

The Americans decided that they commissioned these projects, and they needed to complete them," says MSgt James Robinson, a member

of the Civil Affairs team at PRT Farah. So MSgt Robinson and Maj. Jeffery Risher, also a CA team member, traveled to Chegcheran to continue the work begun by their fellow Americans.

The completion of the three projects had been delayed for a variety of reasons, including a dramatic increase in the price of concrete during 2005, the remote location and poor roads in the area and the lack of a skilled work force in Chegcheran and the province of Ghor in general.

MSgt Robinson and Maj. Risher were unable to visit the girls' school at Lal Wa Sargangal due to its remote location and inclement weather. They were able to visit the hospital and Chegcheran School dormitory, and found minor, mostly esthetic deficiencies to the buildings. Since the projects weren't yet ready to be turned over, they made a partial progress payment to the local contractor, Ansari Rehabilitation Association, to allow him to fix the deficiencies, and continue with the work at Lal Wa Sargangal.



"We don't leave American work unfinished," said Major Risher. "Somebody had to go up there and it might as well be us because we're the closest PRT." They were helped

"It's all about the Afghan people seeing that their government is trying to do the right thing," said MSgt Robinson.

in their mission by James Irish, the USAID representative at Chegcheran, and Major Filippo Mazio from the Italian Army in Herat.

The provincial governor was particularly interested in the completion of the Chegcheran School dormitory, since the children who would normally stay in the dormitory had set up temporary residence in the governor's own

home.

But beyond finishing the buildings started by fellow Americans, the projects were aligned with the goals of PRT Farah, winning hearts and minds. "In doing so, if we can also help support the Government of Afghanistan, then we should do that," says MSgt Robinson. "It seemed fitting for us to complete these projects. Hopefully long term they will see that their government is trying to assist them as best they can. It's all about the Afghan people seeing that their government is trying to do the right thing."

NATO-ISAF forces work with ANP to intercept enemy supplies

Story and photos by:
U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Brian Raley

The Afghan National Police together with NATO-ISAF forces established a temporary vehicle check point near the village of Tahktah Pol to prevent the trafficking of insurgent supplies and weapons on 12 Feb.

While there, ISAF forces also toured a local village and ANP center to assess their needs and determine how they can best help Afghans in the area.

ANP, Canadian and U.S. Soldiers established a



Williams said. "They conducted their searches in an orderly manner while showing great respect, they seemed to be very well led and organized during the operation, and they worked very well along side Coalition Soldiers."

While others were checking vehicles, Williams toured the local ANP center and visited the village of Tahktah Pol to assess how ISAF forces can help the area. He discussed with local elders how to maintain security for them and ISAF supplies traveling on Highway 4. Soldiers also distributed military aid to children and residents of the village.

Elders expressed the need for help in the development of their irrigation system, which supports their main livelihood of agriculture.

Williams explained that the village and the surrounding area seems to be relatively secure and friendly to ISAF forces, but needs attention. Both ISAF and the Afghan government have

focused on areas further west and north of Tahktah Pol for several months due to increased insurgent activity. While, the region has not seen a heavy ISAF influence in recent months, the village and ANP center has not been forgotten.

"For the ANP training center we will continue to conduct operations with those officers to both further mentor and work with them as a team. In the near future we will try to meet their material needs and requests," Williams said. "In Tahktah Pol we plan on focusing on projects which will assist the community and also employ fighting age males. We want to develop a relationship with them to help us keep them secure and to assess what requirements they need to better their health, agriculture and general quality of life."



vehicle check point on Highway 4 between Kandahar and Spin Buldak in Southern Afghanistan. For three hours the team thoroughly checked vehicles traveling the highway, which resulted in no seized insurgent weapons or materials. Each vehicle cleared was given military aid in the form of food and other necessities.

Though nothing was found, the checkpoint demonstrated to Afghans that ISAF forces support local police and will work together to rid the region of insurgency and continue to provide security.

ISAF forces often work together with the ANP to conduct such operations, but U.S. Army Col. R. Stephen Williams, 207th Infantry Brigade commander, was particularly impressed with these ANP officers and their level of professionalism.

"This was one of the best ANP stations I've worked with. They are very well trained and it seems obvious that they have been mentored by Coalition forces,"

Kandahar Provincial Reconstruction Team Conducts Mine Awareness Training for Kandahar Children



The Kandahar Provincial Reconstruction Team, based here, conducted mine and unexploded ordnance awareness training for children employed by a recycling company and for street children living in Kandahar today.

Following the training session and a snack, the children also received rubber boots, socks, gloves, coloring materials, backpacks and stuffed toys.

One child also received medical attention for an infection on his foot.

"It's great to see the children and to help out any way we can," said Air Force Maj. Tammy Tremblay. "The engineers who delivered the training and are handing things out are having a great time, as well."

"The aim of this little training session is to teach the kids three simple steps to follow if they find a mine or unexploded ordnance: don't touch it; stay away from it and tell an adult, a policeman or an ISAF soldier," said

Master Cpl. Brendan Hynes.

Many of the children who attended the mine and unexploded ordnance awareness training previously received medical attention during a medical outreach patrol conducted by the Kandahar Provincial Reconstruction Team at the Kandahar City fire brigade's compound Jan. 7.

The PRT consists of Canadian Forces members, a civilian police contingent led by the RCMP, representatives of the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade and the Canadian International Development Agency.

The PRT conducts coordinated interdepartmental operations to promote good governance and assist the Government of Afghanistan to extend its authority in the province of Kandahar, to facilitate the development of a stable, secure and self-sustaining environment for the Afghan people.



Kabul city