



**COMISAF ADVISORY AND ASSISTANCE TEAM**

**CAAT SPECIAL REPORT**

# **VOICE OF ARGHANDAB RADIO: THOUGHTS ON THE FUTURE OF A RIAB**

**08 JUNE 2012**

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(NIU) The Radio in a Box (RIAB) has been an invaluable tool for ISAF to disseminate its themes and messages to the Afghan population. Radio reaches the widest audience of any media type and is second only to face-to-face in efficacy. As ISAF continues to transition capabilities to GIRoA, there has been an ongoing discussion by ISAF on the final disposition with RIABs post-2014.

(NIU) The Voice of Arghandab (VOA) radio is a RIAB that operates on FM 101.5 out of the Arghandab District Center. USAID initially funded the salaries of the four Afghan employees while the US Army provided the equipment. In October 2011, the AID funding ended and the military stepped in and funded a contract to pay for the Afghan staff. The staff consists of a manager, an editor, and two journalists. VOA is the only radio station operating in the Arghandab district. Other radio stations from Kandahar can be heard in the Arghandab area, but the VOA signal is much clearer. According to the staff, the local people prefer VOA as the programming is more locally focused.

(NIU) Programming consists of a mixture of news, entertainment, Islamic shows, and live call-in shows. Islamic shows also include the ANA Religious and Cultural Affairs Mullah who conducts a call-in show once a week. The station conducts three live, call-in shows a day with a total of twenty-five a week. Callers typically call with requests for songs. There have been threats called in, but these are generally rare (two to three over the past year). The Radio Literacy program is also popular and the DJs get numerous phone-in requests for the books that support the program. The journalists conduct interviews with the District Governor, the Deputy Chief of Police, the Saranwal (prosecutor), and other GIRoA officials, and air them periodically. The Saranwal is apparently quite extroverted and requires significant editing while the District Chief of Police (DCoP) is an introvert and generally dislikes conducting radio interviews. The journalists from the station go out and cover the District Governor outreach efforts. Local listeners are fully aware that VOA is funded by ISAF.

(NIU) Given the robustness of the operation and their market share in the Arghandab area, it would make sense that VOA be a target for transition. The question is a transition to what? All the radio stations in Kandahar are funded or heavily subsidized by governmental entities (GIRoA, US, EC, etc.), non-governmental organizations, or private businessmen. Although some stations do sell advertising, it is not a primary source of revenue. For example, the most popular radio station in Kandahar, with 21 percent market share, Wranga, is funded by a businessman Haji Pashah Kakar who runs a soap factory. Monthly costs to run the station are estimated to be \$2,000 USD of which approximately \$800 USD a month comes from advertising.<sup>i</sup> Killid Radio (11 percent share), which is part of The Killid Group (TKG), is a public media initiative run by the Afghan NGO Development and Humanitarian Services for Afghanistan (DHSA). The TKG's mission as a public media project of DHSA is to promote civic media, free speech, and open discourse in Afghanistan and to strengthen the press as an independent source of information for the Afghan people.<sup>ii</sup> They have other radio stations in Kabul, Mazar-e-Sharif, Herat, Nangarhar and Khost. Kandahar Radio & Television Afghanistan (RTA) has a 15 percent market share and has the largest reach of any radio station in Kandahar, about a

radius of 100km. It is fully supported by the Ministry of Information and Culture, but supplements itself with advertising revenue.

(NIU) These are three examples that could be used as models for courses of action for the VOA RIAB, and perhaps other RIABs as well. A new commercial radio station would require a licensing fee of up to \$3,000 USD as well as another \$3,000 USD in annual taxes to the Afghanistan Investment Support Agency. This represents a significant barrier to entry and sustainability for more rural outlets. In conclusion, the VOA station is a robust, mature capability that should be examined more closely as a case study for transition, as ISAF quickly approaches post-2014

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Voice of Arghandab Radio Programming schedule start from 7:00AM, Up to 12:00PM							
Time	Saturday	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
7:00:AM 7:45 AM	Holy Koran	Holy Koran	Holy Koran	Holy Koran	Holy Koran	Holy Koran	Holy Koran
7:45 AM 8:00 AM	Songs	Songs	Songs	Songs	Songs	Songs	Songs
8:00 AM 8:15 AM	News	News	News	News	News	News	Hadiths
8:15 AM 9:00 AM	Songs	Songs	Songs	Songs	Songs	Songs	Hadiths
9:00 AM 9:30 AM	literacy program	literacy program	literacy program	literacy program	literacy program	literacy program	literacy program
9:30 AM 10:30 AM	Soghat/live program	Soghat/live program	Soghat/live program	Soghat/live program	Soghat/live program	Soghat/live program	Songs
10:30 AM 11:00 AM	Songs	Songs	Songs	Songs	Songs	Songs	Songs
11:00PM 12:00PM	Tafye aw zamzamyelive program	Tafye aw zamzamyelive program	Tafye aw zamzamyelive program	Tafye aw zamzamyelive program	Tafye aw zamzamyelive program	Tafye aw zamzamyelive program	Hadiths
12:00 PM 1:00 PM	Agricuture drama	Agricuture drama	repeation of Da arghand da sindsafaprogram	Agricuture drama	Agricuture drama	Agricuture drama	Agricuture drama
1:00 PM 2:00 PM	Kandahar singer	Kandahar singer	repeation of Da arghand da sindsafaprogram	Kandahar singer	Kandahar singer	Kandahar singer	Kandahar singer
2:00 PM 3:00 PM	Constitution drama	Constitution drama	Constitution drama	Constitution drama	Azmoyana live program	Constitution drama	constitution drama
3:00 PM 4:00 PM	Sandaroomail/live programs	Sandaroomail/live programs	Sandaroomail/live programs	sandaroomail/live programs	sandaroomail/live programs	Sandaroomail/live programs	Songs
4:00 PM 4:30 PM	health program	health program	rangarangamoseqiprogram	health program	health program	health program	health program
4:30 PM 5:00 PM	songs	songs	rangarangamoseqiprogram	songs	songs	songs	songs
5:00 PM 6:00 PM	Hadiths	Hadiths	Hadiths	Hadiths	Hadiths	Hadiths	Hadiths
6:00 PM 6:30 PM	repeation of literacy program	repeation of literacy program	repeation of literacy program	repeation of literacy program	repeation of literacy program	repeation of literacy program	repeation of literacy program
6:30 PM 7:30 PM	repeation of rangarangamoseqiprogram	Old songs	Old songs	Old songs	Old songs	Old songs	Old songs
7:30:0 PM 8:00 PM	Nawel	Nawel	Nawel	Nawel	Nawel	Songs	Songs
8:00 PM 8:15 PM	News	News	News	News	News	News	Songs
8:15 PM 10 :00 PM	Da arghand da sindsafalive program	Songs and special messages of DG	Songs and special messages of DG	repeation of Da arghand da sindsafaprogram	Special reportage	Songs and special messages of DG	Songs and special messages of DG
10:00 PM 11:00 PM	Da arghand da sindsafalive program	Kandahar star singer	Kandahar star singer	repeation of Da arghand da sindsafaprogram	Kandahar star singer	Kandahar star singer	Kandahar star singer
11:00 PM 12:00 PM	Different songs	Different songs	Different songs	Different songs	Different songs	Different songs	Different songs

(NIU) Programming Schedule

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**John Walsh, Col, USMC  
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<sup>i</sup> Afghan Media in 2010, Priority District: Kandahar City (Kandahar), Altai Consulting, October 13, 2010, p 9.

<sup>ii</sup> DHSa Website, [http://dhsa.af/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=35&itemid=43](http://dhsa.af/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=35&itemid=43)