

# COIN

COMMON SENSE

## THE REALIST

AN INTERVIEW WITH DR. ASHRAF GHANI

### ➤ THE GEORGIA RHYTHM SECTION

THE GEORGIA NATIONAL GUARD'S  
AGRIBUSINESS DEVELOPMENT TEAM AT WORK

### ➤ INFLUENCING THE TALIBAN

HOW AFGHAN INFORMATION OPERATIONS  
EFFORTS ARE CONTRIBUTING TO THE FIGHT

### ➤ COUNTER-IED: AFGHAN STYLE

THE SUSTAINABLE SOLUTION FOR AFGHAN-LED  
EOD MAY BE LOW-TECH

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#### COUNTERINSURGENCY:

*"Those military, paramilitary, political, economic, psychological, and civic actions taken to defeat insurgency."*

- NATO Allied Joint Doctrine (2010)

## FROM THE CSM



CSM THOMAS CAPEL  
ISAF, COMMAND SERGEANT MAJOR



We are now progressing into Tranche III of the Transition process. Once this Tranche is complete, seventy-five percent of the Afghan population will fall under the direct protection of the Afghan military and police forces, and ISAF will have assumed a supporting role in these areas. To be clear, this is not at all an abandonment of our mission. Yes, we are transferring control of the battle space, and they are taking the lead in the fight; but all of our efforts—through our training programs and our partnered operations—has been in preparation for this, and we will continue to assist the Afghan security forces and provide them with the support they need to succeed.

Security Force Assistance (SFA) is the way we will support the Transition process. As the Afghan army and police take the lead for security operations, ISAF will continue to aid the ANSF through the utilization of SFA. Through SFA, we are bolstering the Afghan security forces as they assume complete control. This posture involves more than building their capacity to handle the security situations they will encounter out in the field or in population centers; part of SFA is ensuring that they are confident in the skills they have been taught, and that we continue to provide encouragement. Having observed the ANSF over seven years, I have never seen them as capable and ready as they are now.

The ANSF will continue to assume a greater responsibility. The end objective of Transition is a completely capable Afghan military and police force, supporting legitimate Afghan governance and the Afghan people. Even though they don't have all of the technological "toys" the Coalition is equipped with, the Afghan military and police will get the job done. Many fight for their family now, but they must learn to fight for their family, village, and country. For Afghanistan to prosper and develop, the Afghan people—military and civilian alike—must have the hope to invest in their communities.

Finally, do not expect transition to be an easy process, particularly at first. Ability will increase over time. As the saying goes, practice makes perfect. With your help and assistance, the ANSF's capabilities will improve and grow. Through the Transition process—supported by Security Force Assistance—the Afghans will assume the lead and take one more step towards a completely self-sustaining nation.

Hooah,

# COIN COMMON SENSE



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# FROM THE EDITORS

Welcome to the 2012 summer edition of the COIN Common Sense magazine! Building off of our last issue, we are continuing the theme of Security Force Assistance (SFA), and examining how this crucial way forward will foster ISAF's ability to provide continued assistance to the Afghan security forces and people.

In our third edition of the "Afghan Perspectives" section of this magazine, COIN Common Sense interviewed former Afghan Finance Minister, Ashraf Ghani, to glean his perspective. In the past, we have published articles from members of Afghan civil society and interviewed the Chief of Staff of the Afghan National Army Special Operations Command (ANASOC). It is our goal to increase the number of articles authored by Afghans that we publish in this magazine. As the Afghan security forces move to the fore on the battlefield, this magazine will reflect that shift in primacy in the articles we author, as we continue to provide relevant perspectives from the frontlines.

- The COIN Common Sense Staff

**COIN Common Sense** is a publication of the COMISAF Advisory & Assistance Team.

It is written by the troops, for the troops. We are looking for the perspectives of everyone playing a role in the current COIN campaign, specifically those from the front lines (E6 and below, Company Commanders) and from our Afghan partners. If you have a story you think we should consider, please send it to: [ISAF\\_CAAT@afghan.swa.army.mil](mailto:ISAF_CAAT@afghan.swa.army.mil)

#### Submission Guidelines:

- Articles to be no more than 800 words.
- Photos should be high-resolution (300dpi) and no smaller than 3x5.
- Please submit photo captions, identify photographers, and include a short bio of the author (Name, Rank, Unit, Nation)



CAAT HQ TEAM WITH COMISAF, GENERAL JOHN ALLEN, USMC - MAY 2012



# COUNTER-IED: AFGHAN STYLE

LOW-TECH, SUSTAINABLE SOLUTIONS COUNTERING THE IED THREAT.



While visiting several of the Coalition-delivered ANSF Counter-IED training courses in Afghanistan, it became apparent to the CAAT that Afghan methods are required to resolve Afghan issues. Mistakenly, Coalition Forces (CF) have pushed Western standards and technologies on Afghan-specific problems. After more than eleven years and countless military operations, CF are starting to pay attention to their Afghan counterparts. Analyzing techniques used by Afghan soldiers and police officers to reduce IEDs in Afghanistan may reveal previously unconsidered methods. Observing our Afghan counterparts and trying to understand why they operate the way they do allows for a greater appreciation for Afghan cultural norms. Understanding how Afghan soldiers currently reduce IEDs in the field may provide a glimpse into the future when CF are no longer responsible for the security of Afghanistan.

During Operation Ebtekar IV 14-19 April 2012, in Chimtal district, Balkh province, Afghanistan, ISAF EODMU3 CO3 Team 3-3-A partnered with members of the ANSF 4/3/209th RCC EOD team to eradicate insurgent forces and extend the sovereignty of the Afghan government. In order to provide Freedom of Movement (FoM) for the ANA main force during the operation, the ANSF EOD team was tasked to locate and neutralize enemy IEDs. Upon the successful discovery of a Command Wire IED, the 4/3/209th RCC EOD team, under the mentorship of ISAF EODMU3 CO3 Team 3-3-A, disposed of the IED main charge. Although the ANSF EOD team members were trained at the national-level EOD School, were fully manned, and were equipped with high-tech Western EOD tools, they elected to use an Afghan-style procedure to reduce the IED. The \$40k EOD-9 bomb-suit and the \$36k MMP-30 robot were not used. Instead, the ANSF EOD team used a crude pick to locate the command wire and a simple Blow in Place (BIP) technique to destroy the IED main charge. Anecdotal and direct reporting have both shown that the ANA and ANP are responding to IEDs regardless of the level of training received. Reports of ANSF soldiers firing weapons at IEDs or pouring diesel on the main charge in an effort to destroy IEDs are not uncommon. To recall the applicable words of T. E. Lawrence, “It is better to let them do it themselves im-

perfectly, than to do it yourself perfectly. It is their country, their way, and our time here is short.” With careful consideration the ANSF EOD solution may lie somewhere between a \$5 can of diesel and a \$36k robot.

Reports and statistics indicate that well over 70 percent of IED finds are accomplished with the human eye. Following the discovery of an IED or signs that indicate an IED may be present, Hand-Held Metal Detectors (HHMD) are often employed to confirm and isolate the Vulnerable Point (VP). Afghan soldiers are exceptionally adept at understanding their environment and recognizing what is right and what is out of place on the ground. Afghans possess a succinct cultural and environmental awareness

advantage over CF. Understanding what Afghans do well and allowing them to utilize those strengths to create unique Afghan solutions represents a durable concept for ANSF development. Technology based solutions are expensive, complex, and maintenance intensive. For sustainability’s sake, training and skills should take precedence over technological solutions in the development of ANSF capabilities.

While embedded in the Explosive Hazardous Reduction Course (EHRC) in RC(SW), the CAAT observed ISAF instructors utilizing practical (non-standard) training methods to teach ANSF students EOD techniques. Considering the low literacy levels in Afghanistan and that many ANSF soldiers do not own watches, ISAF instructors teach a non-traditional, innovative method of calculating time-fuse burn time. Utilizing time and math calculations to determine burn time for time-fuses is a Western method and not necessary or practical for Afghanistan. During the EHRC training, ANSF students use a standard length of time-fuse to get approximate burn times for firing systems. The technique of utilizing a standard length of time-fuse without calculating burn time is practical, efficient, and Afghan-sustainable. These non-traditional training methods are a product of increased cultural awareness and a better understanding of the operational environment.

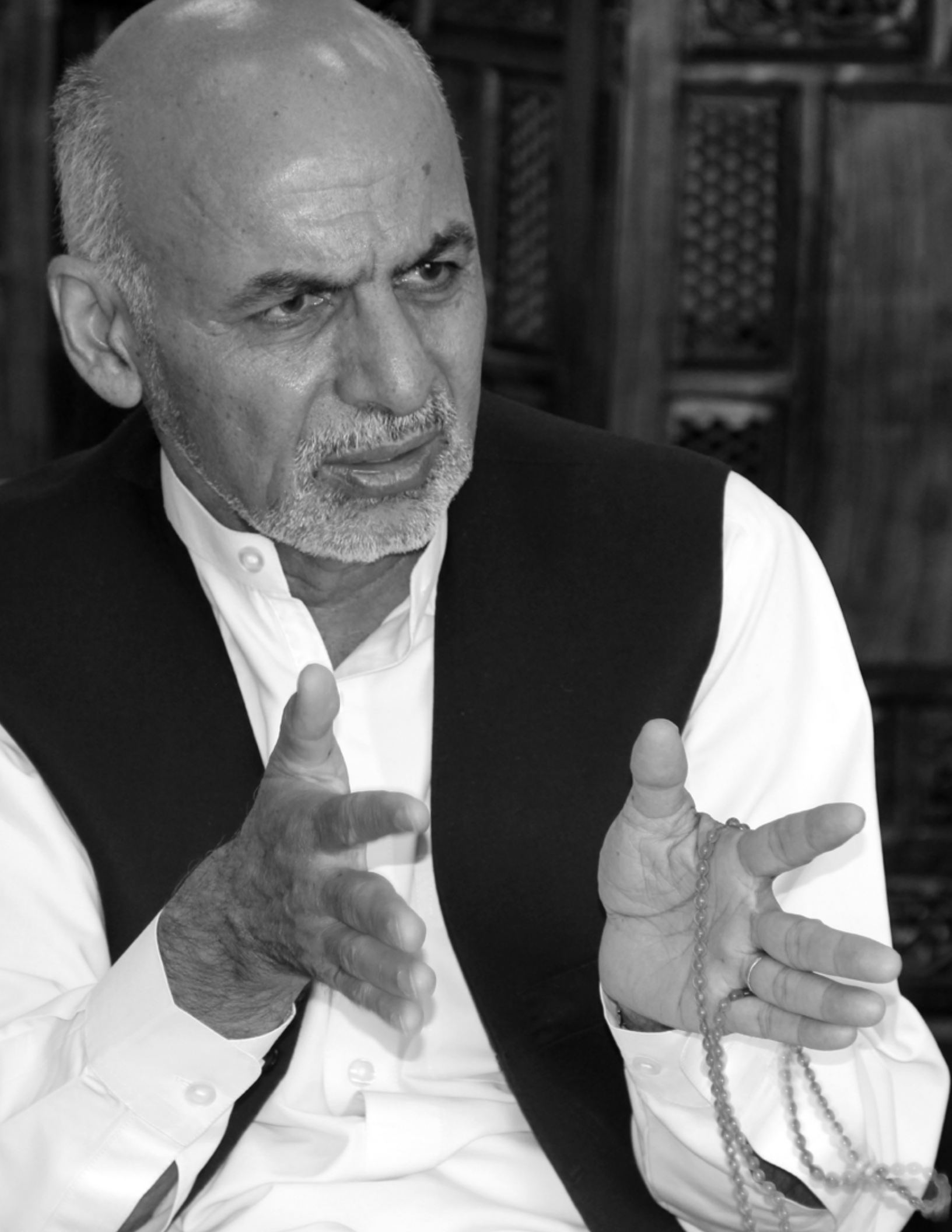
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# THE REALIST

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***COIN COMMON SENSE SITS DOWN  
WITH DR. ASHRAF GHANI***









*Dr. Ashraf Ghani is the former Minister of Finance (2002-2004) and a distinguished Afghan intellectual. He previously served as the Chancellor of the Kabul University, and currently works pro bono for the Afghan government. Dr. Ghani was a significant architect of the Transition process. COIN Common Sense sat down with Dr. Ghani in his Kabul offices to hear his thoughts on several important topics affecting Afghanistan.*

**COIN CS: What advice would you give to ISAF and the coalition mission in the remaining time they have here?**

**DR. GHANI:** First, chew what you can swallow. Be more focused. Don't have your fingers in everything. You are too scattered. ISAF, as an institution, has no historical memory, no chronology of events; everyone is recreating the wheel constantly. In some situations, command handovers happen in one day. How can you transfer your knowledge and explain what you have done for a year in just one day?

There are still issues that must be fixed with the ANSF. The main problem with the security forces today is that, organizationally, they are still very Soviet in nature, run by individuals who were trained under the Soviet central planning methods. The doctrine is NATO, but the organization is Soviet.

Second, part of ISAF's problem is the "beltway bandits." They are only interested in money.

**COIN CS: What are some of the efforts ISAF should focus on?**

**DR. GHANI:** Your efforts have to become serious. You are too afraid of institutions failing. Focusing on free

and fair elections is one of the most important efforts that NATO/ISAF and the international community can do now. Election reform is an area which the international community can positively influence. Currently, the efforts are too unfocused in this regard to make a difference. For example, UNDP has now spent about \$1 billion dollars on elections, and we do not have a single voter registration list.

ISAF can be effective, however, if it limits its focus to election security. The technical side still needs to be developed, so in technical aspects ISAF could really help. Elections are destabilized because of the patronage system.

**COIN CS: Regarding the election, what else do you think will be significant?**

**DR. GHANI:** The key objective is a politically acceptable election. A politically acceptable election is one where the sides agree peacefully. We could have a technically correct election that is politically disastrous because the losers are unwilling to accept the outcome and accept it as the will of Afghans. A politically acceptable election must also provide immunity to the incumbent president.

What needs to happen here is a national dialogue about a range of solutions. One way to do that would be to call a Jirga in the early part of next year, with the participation of about 1,000 Afghans to discuss the electoral process. For Afghanistan, 2014 is about national survival. National survival demands a national dialogue, as long as sides are meeting and dialoguing well, they have made progress—even if there is no other direct result.

**COIN CS: Do you think there is a possibility of an**



## “Afghan Spring” to take place, as a result or reaction to the elections?

**DR. GHANI:** There will be no Afghan Spring. Afghans don't have “Springs;” they have Winters of Fury. In 1890, Afghans knew the home of every collaborator (to the British). They went and burned those houses down, leaving the houses next to them perfectly intact. Dependent on the social conditions, the exact same thing could happen again.

The Afghanistan of today requires realism, not ideology. After thirty years of war, we will need accommodation. The robber barons need a pathway to the future. What is worse, the warlords or Taliban? Taliban kill the men just like warlords do. But while warlords rape women, where is an example of Taliban ever doing so? Consider the common perception of “justice” that comes with this.

**COIN CS:** What do you see as some of the continuing challenges that Afghanistan faces:

**“The Afghanistan of today requires realism, not ideology. After thirty years of war we will need accommodation.”**

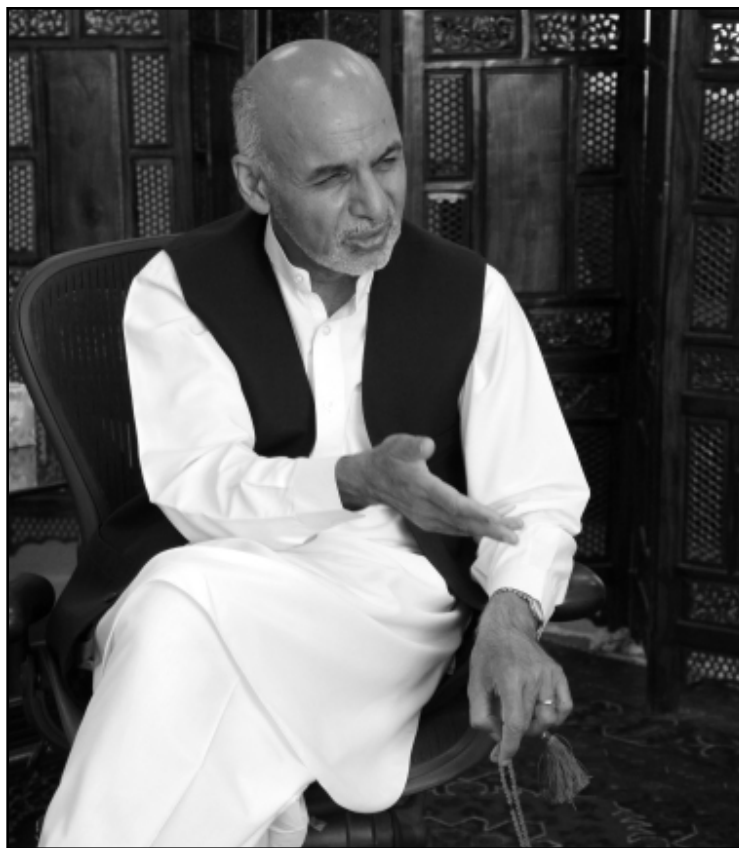
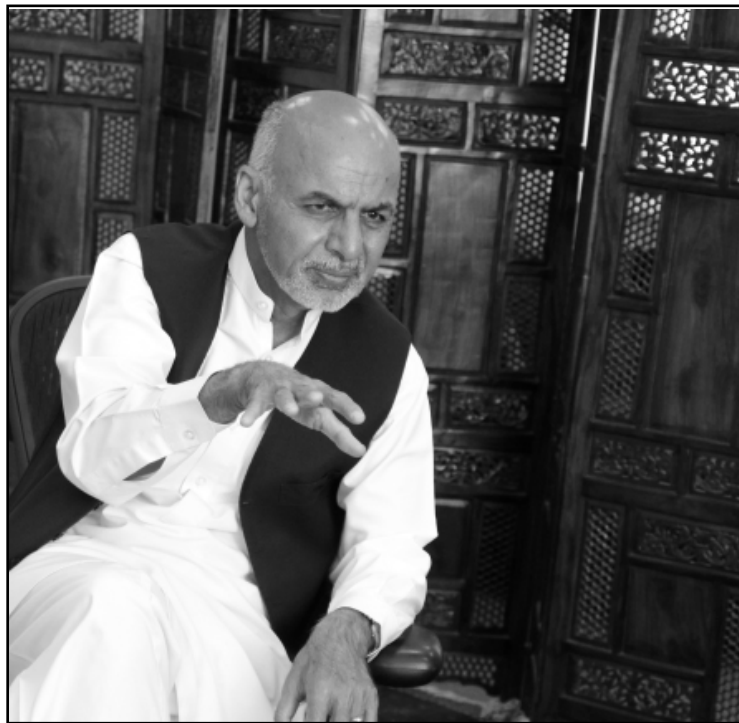
**DR. GHANI:** The issues residing at the provincial level are certainly a challenge, and at the district level, even more so. We have to connect villages to the economic structure of the nation. Villages have to be the unifying element of Afghanistan. In doing so, we cannot accept a security-driven focus—as opposed to economically-driven—that sets the stage for forty years of war. Security comes from stability—not the other way around.

There are five ways that districts in Afghanistan need to be categorized and dealt with accordingly: Urban, Orbital, transport, frontier, natural resources. Based on this categorization they would have different security challenges and needs.

One challenge in particular has been the usage, in some cases of CERP. The Commander's Emergency Response Program (CERP) created unprecedented autonomy for local government officials. In doing so, it separated them from the center of gravity. ISAF's modus operandi permitted local Afghan officials (and other support structures) to develop and focus predatory behavior towards contractors. When ISAF leaves they will direct the predatory tendencies they have developed towards other Afghans.

**COIN CS:** Are you frustrated with the current situation?

**DR. GHANI:** I'm not frustrated. That's not the right word. My goal is to talk the ‘language.’ I cannot be frustrated. I am not afraid either. I've lived over sixty years—that's a long life in Afghanistan. I have been to every one of the thirty-four provinces, meeting at least 2,500 people in every province. No one in the past 500 years has done that. There have been eight assassinations attempts on my life in the past several months. I did all of the above, instituted the National Solidarity Program, and as the Minister of Fi-



nance created a currency for the country in only two years. So why do they want to kill me? Because I calm people. I am the barometer, the moral conscious of the country. I have zero economic interest; I only step in to mediate things.

*Interview by Maximus Bossare, CAAT Governance & Development Advisor | Photos by Jack Pagano, CAAT Media Advisor*

# ENABLING AFGHANS TO TAKE THE LEAD



## OBSERVATIONS FROM THE FIELD

Given the future downsizing of NATO forces in Afghanistan, Afghan security forces' assumption of primary security operations responsibility is paramount to success. "Afghan-led" is the beginning of tactical level transition. Some of our forces wrestle with 'how' to place them at the forefront of the counterinsurgency effort. We 'partner' with them by sending a few of them on patrol with our forces while we actually drive the counterinsurgency fight. We 'enable' them by providing nearly every resource we have at our disposal. However, these types of efforts do little to truly place the Afghans at the forefront of the fight. "Afghan-led" is not a bumper sticker or IO message. "Afghan-led" is a critical aspect of our counterinsurgency operations that we must quickly grasp to enable ultimate mission success. It must happen along all lines of effort in a synchronized manner in order to set the conditions for enduring stability.

On 8 May 2012 leaders of the Arghandab District signed a formal, public agreement announcing that the Afghan security forces were assuming primary responsibility for all security in the district. While not an official transition, this step marked an important move towards transition that will place the Afghan Uniformed Police, Afghan Local Police, and the Afghan National Army at the forefront of security efforts while ISAF assumes a supporting role to combat remaining challenges. Overall, the construct agreed to garrison police into 11 different regions throughout the district stating, "the AUP has primacy on security, enforce the Rule of Law, and have the capacity to deal with local security threats." Furthermore, the AUP may be enabled by other ANSF forces, but the primary responsibility resides with the permanent AUP garrisoned in the Arghandab District.



Arghandab Police Commanders conduct their map rehearsal for a clearance operation.

Today, thanks to the efforts of numerous organizations over the past two years (ISAF, DOS, USAID, SOF, etc), Arghandab District in Khandahar Province is an example of our "Afghans in the lead" initiatives taking hold – sometimes in pleasantly unexpected ways. In May 2011, CTF 1-67 AR found itself confronted with the challenge of improving security while simultaneously enabling the Afghan

security forces to assume primary responsibility for security throughout the district. During our journey, we developed a comprehensive campaign plan that continued to improve security in the Arghandab District, placed the responsibility for security on the Afghans and, at the same time, enabled true governance to take hold at the district and local level. The following consists of the general methodology used by CTF 1-67 to "Enable the Afghans to Take the Lead."

## **"AFGHAN-LED" IS A NATURAL PART OF TRANSITION IN A COIN CAMPAIGN**

First and foremost, transition is a natural part of a realistic counterinsurgency campaign. Unless we intend to remain in Afghanistan indefinitely, we must transition the ANSF to the forefront. The ultimate question is how can ISAF withdraw forces from the area without additional Afghan security forces entering and still hope to maintain security in the region? Well, the answer resided in our Afghan partners all along.

*continued on page 17*



# AFGHAN IO EFFORTS

## THE AFGHAN NATIONAL ARMY INFLUENCES THE TALIBAN

Thinning is winning. Our Coalition Forces (CF) will be around for another decade, but our footprint will diminish as we transition to a security assistance role. As the Afghan surge force swells to over 350,000 troops, the coalition will refine its commitment and focus more on increasing the expertise of the enablers. One of those enablers is Information Operations (IO), or PSYOPs.

While it may not be recognizable at a glimpse, the Afghan IO program has been secretly growing over the past four years. Afghans understand the importance of influencing their opponents and must often be restrained to comply with NATO rules on the matter. Their innate understanding of influencing the enemy is on par with cutting off their enemies' heads and sending them back to the Taliban in baskets. In other words, they understand IO, but we are trying to steer them down the professional path of media and engagement techniques.

### THE COMMANDOS

Afghan Commando units are composed of the ANSF's finest soldiers. They are often paired with coalition Special Forces in operations intended to have a cowering affect on enemy commanders. The Commandos have trained in Information Dissemination Operations with coalition forces for several years. After graduating from the ANA IO course, a special skill identifier patch is pinned on their uniform. They are skilled at producing influence products and informative products for a designed result. They learn how to interface with tribal elders and extract enemy activity information from areas. Afghans respect the Commandos and often offer them information on INS cache sights and INS actions in the area. Much of this information is used to counter the enemy efforts in follow-up kinetic operations. The Commandos are also skilled in operating radio stations. They currently operate a number of radio stations in Afghanistan and enjoy a dedicated listenership. Their messages highlight the positive tenets of Village Stability Operations, reintegration, support of the Afghan Security Forces, etc. Much of the Commando IO program is classified to ensure the forces of darkness (INS) are left to



ponder what will happen to them next.

### REGULAR ARMY IO

In the fall of 2011, General Karimi, Afghan Chief of Staff for all ANA forces, signed Tashkil 1390, authorizing IO positions in the regular army. The coalition is currently training regular army officers and Non-Commissioned Officers to fill these roles. Over four years with the Commandos, we learned the importance of ensuring a healthy portion of the officer corps is trained in IO. It is pointless to train the soldiers in IO if upon graduation they return a commander or sergeant who

fails to recognize the potential of their skills. At present, some of the RCs have conducted several classes and have populated the regular Army ranks with recent IO graduates. Many more are needed though, and the training must be standardized. NTM-A is devising a plan to sustain this training and standardize the IO Program of Instruction in order to set favorable conditions for the future of Afghan IO. Meanwhile, the ANA regular soldiers are partnering with the coalition and learning IO techniques on the job.

### FIELD TRAINING: LEARNING IO ON THE JOB

It is no secret to any coalition member in theatre that the Afghan soldier understands more about the local tribes and population than ISAF can. Consequently, they require a little oversight from ISAF IO personnel to create messaging that resonates with the locals. The ANA are skilled at soliciting for their airwaves the voices of key communicators such as district governors and local tribe and police force members. Recent kill-or-capture mission successes have adversely affected the INS networks. These successes are amplified by coalition task forces and ANA partners via Radio in a Box (RIAB) broadcasts and host nation commercial radio outlets. Many of the coalition's tactical radio programs are operated by indigenous personnel. These radio operators can collect atmospherics from the local audience, which indicate the pulse in the community. Through these positions, they can also gather information on enemy ac-

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# LEADERSHIP & TRAINING

## KEYS TO PROVIDING SUCCESSFUL ASSISTANCE

It is generally accepted that the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) need to develop additional capabilities in the near future if they are to take the lead successfully. While some capability gaps can be bridged with the provision of additional equipment, ISAF should note that any Army or Police force relies more on its people than on its equipment. Rather than striving to man the equipment it has procured (often without reference to an Afghan), ISAF should strive to equip the man, who has a simple skill set.

The object of Security Force Assistance (SFA) is to work alongside and through the Afghans to allow them to develop as an Army and a Police force. They are not meant to replicate ISAF, but to gradually takeover from ISAF and conduct their own counterinsurgency operations. This article identifies two major areas hindering the ANSF's ability to mend its capability shortcomings: leadership and training.

ANSF leadership needs to actively address leadership and training capability gaps. This may require ISAF guidance. ANSF leaders can only develop if they are afforded the opportunity to truly command, make mistakes, and learn from these mistakes. ISAF must take one step back and allow the Afghans to command.

A command or staff requires leaders capable of identifying problems and devising solutions. Training at the Corps level and below can form these types of leaders. In most Coalition militaries, training is low level and involves a Soldier, Marine, or Airman conducting repetitive tasks until they become skilled in them. The ANA and ANP are no different. They are first and foremost people-based organizations. Low levels of literacy and education only reinforce the requirement to deliver simple skill-based solutions. The ANSF requires more time and space to conduct training. They cannot be expected to conduct continuous operations at our tempo.

ISAF cannot solve ANSF's issues in isolation. Before offering assistance, ISAF must understand what the current ANSF state is, where its leaders want it to go, and how they plan to get there. Currently, there are few formal feedback mechanisms between the deployed forces, their higher HQs, and the force generators in Kabul. At all levels, ISAF should dedicate the appropriate resources (staff effort and key advisors and trainers) to developing and enabling Afghan leadership. The centralized nature of ANSF makes the education of corps officers vital; they are the only element that can enact and deliver change.

To date, institutional capacity building has taken second place to the conduct of operations. Educating commanders takes time and can be frustrating, but it is crucial to establishing a sustainable leadership capacity. ISAF should strive to take ANSF leadership on all



battlefield circulations. Only when ANSF leaders can witness problems with their own eyes will they understand them. ISAF must lead by example, showing ANSF what command entails. How many commanders have shown their counterparts how to conduct simple equipment serviceability checks? Drinking chai, sharing experiences, chatting and joking is how to build the relationships and trust, which are the pre-requisite to offering any advice.

There are still major issues concerning equipping and sustaining the ANSF, but these shortfalls should not excuse a lack of ANSF development. The root of many equipment and sustainment issues lies outside the regional sphere of influence. The solutions reside in Kabul and cannot be fixed at the ground level. An enlightened and educated Afghan commander, however, can tackle these problems in due course.

SFA demands unified action. However, in ISAF's complex command structures, the multiple actors engaging across the commands often work to different ends. Too many individuals compete solely for their own organizations; collectively we are failing the Afghans. To address ANSF's capability gaps, ISAF must first address its own advisory structures' lack of coherence and lack of unity of effort. Every Afghan commander should have only one advisor. These advisors should possess the skills required to leverage support via their higher

command—which sits adjacent to the Afghan higher command. For example, Regional Commands should aim to more actively control the Regional Support Commands as a means of energizing the Region's links to the Afghan Ministries and leveraging NTM-A assistance. Many of the key capability gaps, such as C-IED and medical support, fall between various organizations. As such, there is no single owner to assist the Afghans.

The evolution to SFA, troop reductions, and HQ realignments all present an opportunity to review and reorganize the mechanisms required to advise and assist the ANSF through transition. In Gen. Allen's words, "SFA is the single most important change that ISAF will implement in more than ten years of the campaign—it reflects a fundamental milestone in the campaign and change in relationship with the ANSF." ISAF should take a holistic approach to ANSF development. All levels of staff and command have a role to play in developing the ANSF; this activity cannot be left to a single staff branch or advisor. The ANSF's

success is our success. Commanders must also recognize that the ANP are not the ANA, understand the different ways in which each organization performs its duties, and tailor assistance accordingly.

ISAF must develop the ANSF through SFA in order to work themselves out of a job. ISAF must ask tough questions. If not assisting the ANSF or talking to Afghans why should CF remain in the country? Developing and educating ANSF leadership will take time and effort; it is based on relationships and requires a nuanced understanding of all elements of the ANSF. Time is short, and the time for change is now while ISAF still has sufficient forces to mitigate some of the risks associated with handing over the battle space.

*LtCol Angus Henderson (UK) is the CAAT Southwest Team Leader. He has served in this capacity for the last fourteen months.*

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tivity (anonymous tips about insurgent actions in the area such as IED emplacement, coercive techniques, etc.).

Some ANA Brigades in theatre are advocating increased use of IO to support their maneuver operations against the Haqqani Network and the Taliban. Some are creating internal IO cells. These IO cells are often comprised of Religious Cultural Officers, Public Affairs Officers (PAOs), and IO officers. (Keep in mind that most of the PAO and IO officers do not have schooling in this discipline yet.) These officers, collocated with coalition forces, can team with their MISO or IO counterparts for enhanced on-the-job training. This results in a coordinated IO support plan to a kinetic ANA operation. These IO messages are usually aired on RIABs and commercial stations as well as disseminated via print means or passed along to the community leaders through key leader engagements.

The combined use of RIABs and commercial radio outlets to disseminate messages is crucial as we transition the heavy lifting to the ANSF. The Afghans understand the power of influence and information operations. It is their fight now, and they often only need a little oversight and technique advice to impact the targeted population—be it the INS or the host nation population. The ANSF is the most credible entity in Afghanistan according to most surveys in country. This is no accident: CF have been messaging the merits of the ANSF

since 2010. Reintegration success can also be attributed to the promotional efforts of both the CF and the Afghans. We must not let intensity of this partnership retrograde. Soon the ANSF IO community will be the exclusive bearers of the messaging torch.

*JP Morgan is the CAAT Senior IO Advisor.*



*continued from page 4*

Afghan soldiers work well with their hands, speak the local language, and understand the operational environment far better than CF. Allowing Afghans to utilize their strengths and developing Afghan-specific solutions to address Afghan-specific issues represents a more durable training model and is better suited for ANSF. Sharing chai with ANSF Commanders while listening to what they believe is an important first step towards understanding what ANSF will look like during Transition and post-2014.

*Carey Smith is a COIN advisor with CAAT Southwest. The observations drawn from this report are the result of an in-depth study on Afghan counter-IED efforts.*



The Georgia National Guard continues to work with the Afghans on Agricultural Development operations in support of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GIROA) primarily in Wardak and Logar Provinces. Their focus is primarily on capacity building and in the training of key organizations, business oriented persons, and GIROA in market identification and financial management. Although most of the AO is still agrarian based, some small areas are ready to transition specific crops to market based farming.

The GA Agribusiness Development Team (ADT) is concerned with providing a clear way forward regarding the transition of responsibility for agricultural development to the Afghan government. It aims to minimize the large-scale, high dollar projects in favor of micro-projects that afford the Afghan government the opportunity to take on the responsibilities of planning, budgeting, executing, and assessing.

### THE WOMEN'S INITIATIVE TRAINING TEAM

The Women's Initiative Training Team (WITT) is a small, but pertinent part of the GA ADT mission. Its purpose is to assist the women of Afghanistan in establishing sound agribusiness practices, from seed to market. When GA ADT II WITT took over from GA ADT I, it faced some challenges. The most important among these was building relationships with the Afghan women leaders. GA ADT entered local meetings with the goal of observing agricultural methods handed down for thousands of years and working with locals to come up with alternative methods to get the most out of their agriculture programs.

The WITT has worked with several district Directors of Women's Affairs (DOWA), female school principals, and contractors and agricultural specialists in order to determine the agriculture education and supply needs of the women of Afghanistan. Once those needs were identified, the WITT worked with Afghan women to come up with solutions and then provided the means to achieve these solutions, e.g., through agribusiness curricula, seeds for home gardens, greenhouses, and composting. Since the WITT approached them with greater cultural understanding and respect, the Afghan women have opened up and grown more accepting of additional, sometimes quite different, ways of growing, harvesting, and marketing their agricultural products.

### ANIMAL HUSBANDRY

In Afghanistan the major factor limiting animal rearing is nutrition. Because animals are not getting their daily nutrition requirements, they never reach their full potential. GA ADT has tasked two veterinarian technicians with teaching the local veterinarians, agriculture extension agents, and anyone in the community who has a tie into agriculture through animals. The vet training provided consists of basic animal care and husbandry. Training includes, but is not limited to; hoof care, prenatal care, parasite control, and benefits of the use of minerals. The veterinarian technicians' main goal is to enable the local vets and Ag extension agents to teach the material to the local farmers. Structuring classes in this manner allows the local villagers to see an Afghan face leading animal husbandry training sessions which results in a growing confidence with the area's private veterinarians and district Director of Agriculture and Livestock (DAIL) staff. All planned village training is presented to the DAIL for approval. Once approved, the DAIL's staff coordinates with the local

village leaders to schedule the training classes. GA ADT II's aims to continue building the capacity of the DAIL staff and get them into the communities to see the people they are charged with supporting.

### WATERSHED MANAGEMENT

GA ADT continues to improve watershed management. Water is a key source of instability; therefore, water projects are essential. These projects will provide training in the traditional methods of Karez/Canal cleaning, graze lands management, watershed management techniques, and tree nursery operations for women. Watershed projects will also provide hundreds of jobs in the districts in which they are located.

GA ADT has seven ongoing watershed projects among six districts in Logar and Wardak Provinces. Each of these projects requires the contractor to employ two teachers and two assistants from the local communities to work with the district level DAIL staff and provide them with at least two hours of daily training. The subject matter focuses on watershed and rangeland management, applicable environmental issues, and community awareness related training as needed in order to obtain community buy-in.

# THE GEORGIA RHYTHM SECTION

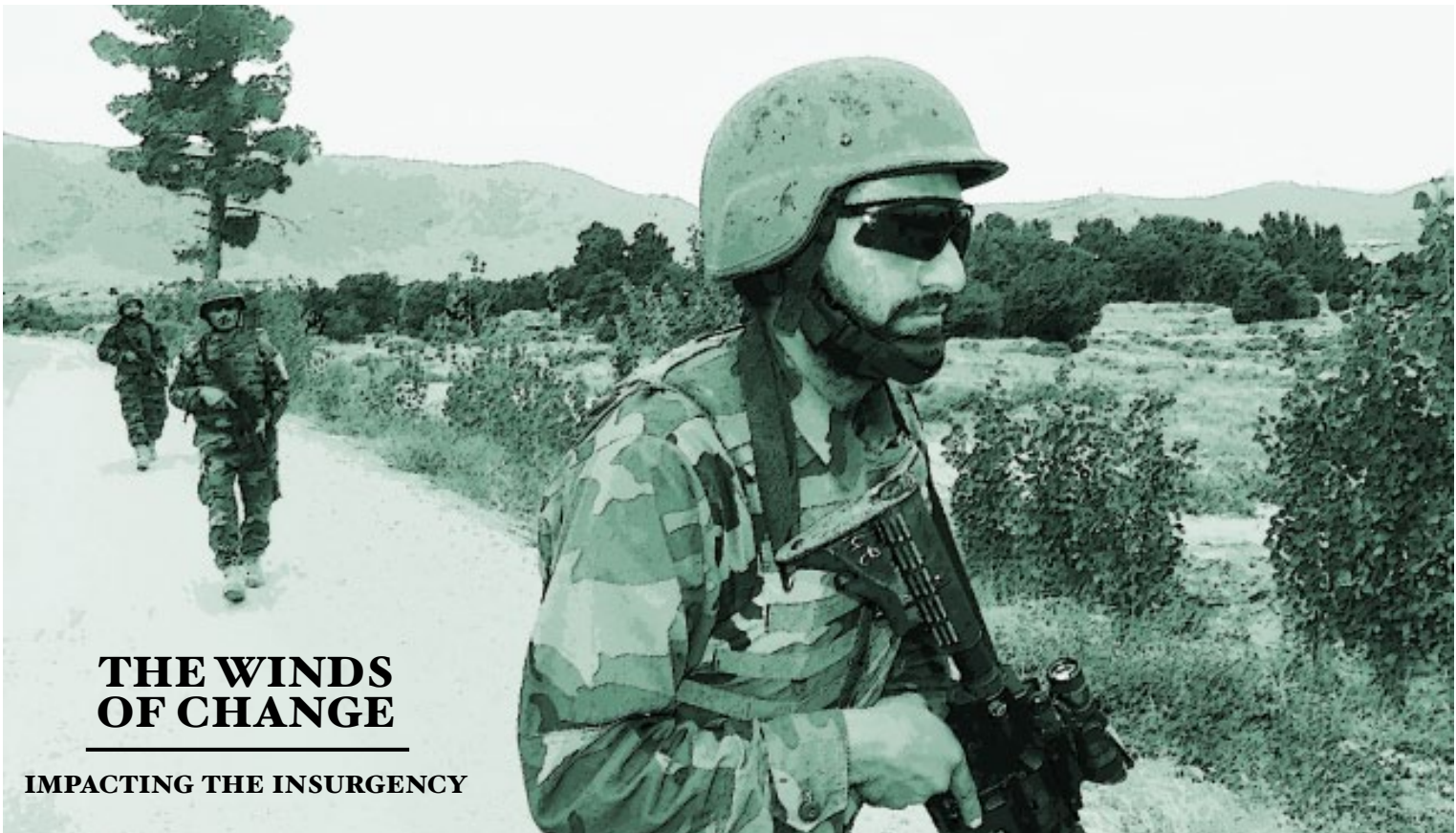
Each work day includes six hours of labor with two hours of training. One of the watershed projects requires its contractor to coordinate efforts with the Director of Education to ensure ten days of watershed management training is provided for the educational development of students at the Agricultural High School. Some of the watershed projects require their contractors to train and organize women's associations from villages within the project area to create tree nurseries. These tree nurseries have the capacity to provide over 30,000 tree seedlings annually either to replace seedlings that have died in existing projects or to supply future watershed projects.

Watersheds are designed to improve the available ground water and increase grazing lands for livestock. GA ADT is currently conducting QA/QC inspections to document and correct any issues contractors may run into. When GA ADT arrived in the area there were several security issues concerning the safety of the project workers. GA ADT is working successfully with the Afghan contractors and GIROA officials to work through these issues in order to realize the long term benefits of the watershed projects and to encourage GIROA officials to continue the effort to ensure these projects' sustainability.

GA ADT currently manages large multi-faceted projects. Our plan is to develop micro-watersheds and have GA ADT step into a supporting role while the DAIL staff takes lead responsibility for developing the project scope of work, managing bidding, conducting QA/QC, and managing contractor payments. The these watershed projects aim to place GIROA in the lead and have the districts reap the benefits. In the end, we support the needs of the Afghan people while GIROA takes ownership of the planning and development of projects for their people.

*CPT Michelle Grant is the S7 with the GA ADT II at FOB Shank in RC East.*





## THE WINDS OF CHANGE

### IMPACTING THE INSURGENCY

Conflict only ends in either the defeat of one side, or in some form of reconciliation. In this sense, reintegration is a natural part of armed conflict as indefinite fighting is simply unsustainable. Sooner or later a point is reached at which the conflicting parties feel they stand to gain more from negotiating with each other than from fighting. ISAF and GIROA are hoping the recent positive events in Chicago, the Security Partnership Agreement, and the increase in reintegration numbers will cause the insurgents to pause and note their current plight in this conflict.

#### INSURGENT PERCEPTIONS

Previously, the insurgent factions had the distinct advantage of knowing the withdrawal of Western forces from Afghanistan was imminent irrespective of the progress of reintegration. Consequently, they believed they only needed to wait ISAF out. The recent signing of the Security Partnership Agreement (SPA) on 2 May 2012 between President Karzai and President Obama likely ruined that perception. This partnership agreement essentially guarantees a robust United States assistance force for another decade. The SPA has made it clear to the Taliban that they cannot wait ISAF out and win on the battlefield. This should foster real reconciliation on terms favorable to GIROA. It also sends a message to Pakistan that its continued support of the insurgency is unwise.

Many intelligence reports depict the insurgents as weary from a decade of fighting with low morale due to frequent disruptions in their pay and concerns with larger ANSF and ALP presence in the field. Insurgent groups are largely disunified, and the overwhelming majority of Afghans do not want them back in power. It is possible that for many insurgents *raison d'être* will disappear with the departure of the preponderance of international forces in 2014. This is already partially evident; some insurgents are already indicating their disdain for fighting fellow Afghans in the ANA and ANP. Many of them signed up to fight the infidel – not their fellow countrymen. The Security Force Assistance initiative will continue to place ISAF in an augmentation and support roll with Afghan forces increasingly in the forefront.

A few other recent events are also having a positive psychological impact on the mindset of the insurgents. One event is the recent announcement by the loya jirga – an assembly of over 2000 Afghan notables that historically represents the highest expression of the Afghan people – that the people desire a long term association with the United States. The other event is the recent Chicago Conference where the 50 coalition countries came together to pledge their continued assistance and support to GIROA for the next decade. According to Gen Allen, “the voice of the people as expressed in the loya jirga was quite a blow to the Taliban.”

The ANSF’s evolution is another reason for the Taliban’s concern about the future. Currently, the composition of the security forces approaches 352,000 (195,000 ANA and 157,000 ANP). Given the number of additional Afghan security forces in the field, it is odd that the violence levels are still going down. This is a key indicator that the Taliban either lack the numbers or is losing the momentum and motivation to fight the ANSF.

#### REINTEGRATION AS AN ALTERNATIVE

Recently there has been progress with reintegration across the whole of Afghanistan. To many, it does not matter if the insurgents walk off the battlefield informally or enroll in the formal APRP process. Getting the fighter out of the fight is the desired end state. To date, GIROA has managed to enlist over 4,600 former insurgents – including some influential sub-commanders – into the formal reintegration program. The formal reintegration approach is preferred, but there is also the informal metric that speaks volumes. That metric is quiet and consists of formally highly kinetic districts that have recently de-escalated. According to the locals, the reduction of violence in key districts like Sangin in RC Southwest is most likely a result of rising informal reintegration. Regardless of the metric, it is imperative that we sustain the pressure on the insurgents as Afghanistan transitions over the coming months.

*JP Morgan is the CAAT Senior IO Advisor. Paula Hanasz is a member of Noetic Solutions.*

# TF 300

## THE JORDANIAN ROLE IN HELMAND



In the Helmand region of Afghanistan, the Jordanian Task Force is seen as a moderating force. Although a steadfast ally of the ISAF and United States in the war on terror, many of the Jordan Kingdom's other efforts to influence outcomes in the region exist just below the radar. In Afghanistan, for example, the Jordanians' main task is counterinsurgency. The troops offer assistance to fellow Muslims, and encourage rural Afghans not to embrace the Taliban. This is part of an effort to bring a moderate Islamic voice to remote regions of Afghanistan where the Taliban and insurgents, preaching radical fundamentalist ideology, are often the only voices. The Jordanian Armed Forces (JAF TF 300B) stand proud as a Muslim Nation alongside its Coalition Force partners, and continues to combat the insurgency and spread goodwill to the people of the nation of Afghanistan.

### FEMALE ENGAGEMENT TEAMS

JAF TF 300B believes women are a powerful yet ignored influence in the village who have the potential to make a great impact. JAF TF 300B's mission is to engage the local population, primarily women and children, to build relationships and establish contact in order to gain their trust and cultural respect. In Jordan, a man can come up and talk to any woman. In Afghanistan that is not how it works. Only the male head of the household or family members can talk to the women in that family. That is where we—the JAF TF 300B—come in. Our job is to get the women and children's side of the story and hear their concerns. Training and repetition is essential. Our Female Engagement Team (FET) recently finished a five-week Pashto language, culture awareness, and security awareness training which will help us engage Afghan women in their own language.

As part of the Jordanian Kingdom's humanitarian mission in Afghanistan, Jordanian FET are working to raise the awareness of Afghan women's rights and provide educational and health assistance.

TF 300B also routinely holds religious seminars and broadcasts radio programs focusing on the Amman Message, which seeks to clarify the true image of Islam.

RC(SW) is urgently trying to train a capable Afghan security force as part of an ISAF exit strategy. Our FET could provide culturally appropriate assistance in the war effort by performing body searches on other women and dealing with the women of the house during house-to-house searches. We believe women are the key to changing the mindset of Afghan villagers who might otherwise embrace the Taliban or al Qaeda.

### IMAMS

Two years ago, Jordan began sending imams into the villages of Afghanistan. Their mission is to preach moderate Islam to Afghan males. Recently, RC(SW) had the first full Key Leader Engagement (KLE) with members of the Helmand Ulema Council. The Key Leaders came to our camp and discussed with TF 300B commander Col. Ibrahim and his senior Imam Cap. Suleiman some issues concerning humanitarian assistance and Islamic instruction for the people of Helmand and the Afghan army in Camp Shorbak. They also asked us to offer lectures to the Mullahs in Shorbak to teach them how to administer Friday prayer.

Every Tuesday, our imam gives a speech through the local radio addressing many subjects important to the locals of Helmand, informing them of some Islamic basics. Initially, only a few people attended the lectures, but the numbers are increasing over time. They now have the courage to discuss many issues—Islam-related and other—that touch their daily life and affect their security, e.g., Taliban behavior toward the people of Afghanistan.

*COL Alharahsheh Ibrahim is the TF 300 B Commander.*



## **SFA IS THE WAY TO ACHIEVE MISSION SUCCESS**

**SFA IS THE WAY IN WHICH WE WILL ACHIEVE THE IRREVERSIBLE TRANSITION OF LEAD SECURITY RESPONSIBILITY TO THE AFGHANS. THE SOVEREIGN NATION OF AFGHANISTAN WILL OWN THE BATTLE SPACE AND ISAF WILL SUPPORT ANSF OPERATIONS IN ACCORDANCE WITH THEIR PLANS.**

## **ONE COMMAND AND ONE MISSION**

**SFA IS CONDUCTED FROM THE MINISTRIES DOWN TO THE SQUAD ON PATROL. DO NOT BUILD ALTERNATIVE CHAINS OF COMMAND OR AD HOC ORGANIZATIONS. USE SIMPLE AND UNAMBIGUOUS COMMAND AND CONTROL SYSTEMS THAT MIRROR THE AFGHAN'S CHAIN OF COMMAND AND THEN SUPPORT THEM AT EVERY LEVEL.**

## **SFA DOES NOT EQUAL SFA TEAMS**

**THE AFGHANS' SUCCESS IS OUR SUCCESS. ALL ELEMENTS OF THE FORCE DELIVER SFA. SFA IS THE WAY TO ACHIEVE SUCCESS (ENDS) AND SFA TEAMS ARE ONE OF THE MEANS; BUT THEY DO NOT REPRESENT THE ONLY MEANS.**



## REGARDLESS OF WHAT YOU CALL IT, THIS IS STILL A POPULATION CENTRIC COIN FIGHT

A counterinsurgency operation is simply a contest for the loyalty of the local population. The COIN fight in the Arghandab is no different. The primary challenge as ISAF downsized and we pushed Afghan security forces to the forefront was to maintain the popular approval of pro-GIRoA elements while continuing to campaign for the approval of anti-GIRoA elements. Two rules must be followed first and foremost as you push Afghans to the forefront to prepare for eventual transition.

**1.** Your primary focus must continue to be on understanding and settling the grievances of the local population. You must understand why non-supportive influencers continue to evade the Afghan government and do your utmost to address those grievances. Within the Arghandab, we studied the history of the area, mapped the human terrain, and heavily engaged local leaders in order to develop an insider understanding of the various problems local elders had with GIRoA. Past wrongdoings on the part of security and government officials, pushed the local populace away from the local government and Afghan security forces. Once we understood what the local populace truly believed, formulating strategies to address their grievances became fairly simple.

**2.** In the battle for the populace, as you place more responsibility on the Afghan Security Forces, the involvement of local government officials becomes paramount. In order to convince key influencers to support the government, you must introduce the population to the government. We were lucky in this respect; the District Governor (DG) understood the importance of engaging the population routinely and the District Chief of Police (DCoP) understood that the relationship between his police and the local citizens would determine the success or failure of the district's enduring security apparatus. Without the supportive and inclusive approach of our partners, all other transition efforts would have been at risk of failure.

### FOCUS ON LETTING THE BASICS DRIVE YOUR OPERATIONS

Once we understood the people and had the support of our Afghan partners, we focused on six basic tenants that drove all operations. Every village...every region of the Arghandab District faced different challenges that the Afghan leaders needed to overcome.

**a.** Foster a sustainable system of Government at the local level – Does one village have one malik? Does a malik represent multiple villages? If a village has a key influencer at the district level, does it even need a malik? There is no clear-cut solution when you get down to the local level. Develop a solution that makes the local citizens happy and then support their efforts

to connect with the district.

**b.** Enable the Afghans to settle local grievances. We settled no land disputes during our tour, no irrigation arguments, and no tribal differences. We didn't re-integrate a single Taliban. However, the Battalion constantly found itself setting the conditions to force a solution or bringing in key influencers as arbitrators to allow the Afghans to come to their own solutions. In a single year, the Battalion hosted over 600 shuras throughout the District at nearly every level and key location in the District.

**c.** Enable the population to protect itself. If the population has no internal problems it should be able to protect itself from INS influence. However, when those in our area couldn't protect themselves we supported the establishment of Afghan Local Police within the area. If the population united to the point that they elected local Afghans to protect their village and they were willing to send them through a training program, we supported them.

**d.** Where the population can't protect itself, enable the Afghan security forces: If the local population couldn't protect itself, remained divided, or continued to experience unrest due to Taliban influence, the Afghan security forces stepped up. Afghan police were pushed into nearly every region of the district. When the Afghan police could not man all required areas, the Afghan National Army filled in the gaps.

### EVEN AS YOU PUT AFGHANS IN THE LEAD, THE MOST IMPORTANT TASK REMAINS SECURITY OF THE POPULATION

Transitioning while insurgent activity continues is possible. In the Arghandab, ISAF and ANA forces were reduced by 50%. This troop reduction was only possible because the remaining forces relentlessly pursued the enemy throughout the district. Engagements between ANSF and the local populace created an informant network that denied the enemy a hiding place. In April 2012, one of the last long-standing insurgent leaders of the District was killed by a Special Forces operation. He died with four other insurgents in a tent, one kilometer away from the nearest house, on the very northern edge of the District, miles away from any significant population center. His choice of camp speaks volumes of the effect of the security operations. It was not the insurgents' turf any more; it was GIRoA's.

### AS YOU ASSUME AN AFGHAN LED POSTURE TO PREPARE FOR TRANSITION, CONTINUE TO IMPROVE SECURITY AND CONTINUE TO IMPROVE THE CAPACITY AND CAPABILITY OF THE SECURITY FORCE

In Arghandab District, the reduction of enemy activity allowed us to focus on improving the Afghan Security Forces. Once the fighting season concluded,

***"In the battle for the populace...the involvement of local government officials becomes paramount. In order to convince the key influencers to support the government, you must introduce the population to the government."***





our Battalion focused nearly all energy on training and enabling the Afghans. We learned valuable lessons for future units to incorporate. Senior leaders must realize that training ANSF takes time and resources, and should not be concerned about the lack of offensive operations conducted, particularly when the enemy situation does not call for more kinetic types of operations. The senior leaders should learn to focus on assisting leadership building, instituting a multi-echelon training mentality, helping Afghans solve their own problems, helping with system building, and fostering confidence.

**WHEN TRANSITION BEGINS AT THE TACTICAL LEVEL IT ONLY CREATES A “BUBBLE” OF SECURITY – THE ENTIRE PROCESS MUST BE SYNCHRONIZED AT ALL ECHELONS TO ENABLE TRUE SUCCESS**

I have heard many different leaders in RC(S) state, “If I were able to place my area on an island, we could fix this. There are too many external factors such as sanctuaries in Pakistan, problems with GIRoA, etc., that we constantly have to fight against as well.” The Arghandab is a great example of the challenge multiple Districts will face in the coming months that require the assistance of Afghan leaders at higher levels. Following are a few examples that continue to challenge the Arghandab leadership to this day:

1. ANA sustainment cannot keep pace with the mission demands of the force
2. AUP does not possess the daily consumable resources (primarily fuel) needed.
3. The District Government lacks an operating budget substantial enough to allow the Ministry Representatives to effectively deliver services to the population.
4. Key insurgent actors influencing Arghandab District reside in Pakistani sanctuaries

These are just small examples of challenges that confront the Afghans on a daily basis. These problems cannot be solved within the District. They must be solved at multiple echelons in a synchronized manner by Afghan leaders and with ISAF assistance where possible.

**DURING TRANSITION, DON'T STAGNATE**

If you truly understand COIN doctrine, then you should know that this is a decentralized solution with centralized effects. Putting Afghans in the lead is a critical step in a process that must occur at the local level in order to be truly successful. We need to apply local solutions at the lowest levels while enabling the overall government to create the popular support needed for long-term success. Any systems based approach or metric driven methodology that takes the population out of the equation is doomed to fail. As leaders, we need to be careful that our minds don't stagnate because we have 'been there, done that.'

If we are not working personally with the local citizens, then our primary focus should be getting the government to earn the locals' support. If the lower echelons can figure out the local and District level grievances and higher echelons can enable the overall system to work, GIRoA will succeed thanks to the popular support of its citizens. If either echelon fails, the ultimate collapse of security with the Arghandab District, as well as greater Afghanistan, is likely. The Afghans within the Arghandab District have assumed the lead in security and governance. Whether or not they succeed at this point will be determined primarily by the success of the Provincial and National level entities to garner the popular support (both externally and internally) that they require to be successful to synchronize the ultimate transition of both the District and Kandahar Province.

*LTC Michael Simmering and Major Leo Wyznski are part of the 1st Combined Arms Battalion, 67th Armor Regiment, 2nd Brigade, 4th Infantry Division stationed at Fort Carson, Colorado in November, 2009. The 1-67th deployed in support of Operation Enduring Freedom in May of 2011.*



# COIN

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