



NATO TRAINING MISSION - AFGHANISTAN
COMBINED SECURITY TRANSITION COMMAND - AFGHANISTAN
KABUL, AFGHANISTAN
APO AE 09356

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SUBJECT: 180 Day Internal Review and Way Forward

1. Allow me to convey on behalf of the Afghan People and the International Community our sincerest thanks. You have done a truly incredible job in a very short period of time. Your tireless efforts over the last six months in working closely with our Afghan partners forged a comprehensive approach, underpinning what we collectively achieved. Each of you should be extremely proud of what you and our Afghan partners have accomplished—laying the foundation for an enduring legacy of security. Am proud to be serving with each of you and look forward to what we will accomplish as we work with our Afghan partners as one team.

2. Overview. In the first six months of NTM-A, we changed our approach to training and created a sense of urgency as we build a foundation for an enduring, professional ANSF. NATO and the Afghan security leadership made significant progress in reversing adverse trends in the growth and professionalization of the ANSF. However, we still have much to do. Building an enduring and self-sustaining force remains a distinct challenge and attainment of the growth objectives is not assured. While aggregate growth objectives appear on track, higher tempo operations combined with the onset of the traditional summer lull (Jul-Oct) in recruiting will significantly challenge our programs, both in regard to quantity and quality. The development of effective leaders and the persistent high attrition in specific components of the ANSF also pose major challenges. In looking forward, the probability of successful growth and development of the ANSF can be improved if our programs receive full Coalition and Afghan instructor manning, and if requirements of longer term ANSF growth and professionalization are carefully balanced against current operational demands in the field. To provide perspective, the review that follows will describe conditions at activation of NTM-A, detail the conditions at the time of writing this document, and explain in more detail our challenges and concerns as we move forward.

3. Conditions at Establishment of NTM-A. When NTM-A activated we faced several urgent challenges. First, some training facilities were on the verge of shutting down due to severe Coalition manning shortages. In November 2009, NTM-A/CSTC-A was manned at little more than 25%, and the trainer-to-trainee ratio for the Afghan National Army (ANA) was approximately 1:79, although the ratio was far worse (as low as 1:466) at some training locations. Second, the training focus was on quantity over quality; there were in fact few, if any, quality standards such that all trainees present on graduation day typically graduated, and the marksmanship pass rate hovered at 35%. Third, most Afghan National Police (ANP) were recruited and assigned, but seldom received any formal training. Fourth, ANSF pay lacked parity with comparable occupations, exerting a negative impact on recruiting and retention, and increased attrition. Finally, overall recruiting in the Fall of 2009 had dipped to near record lows.

4. Six Month Review. In the last six months and as International Security Assistance Force's strategic main effort, we have accomplished much to stabilize the Afghan training mission.

Recently consolidated metrics capture the change in performance of NTM-A/CSTC-A programs between November 2009, now, and where we project them to be in November 2010. Most of our indicators are focused on inputs; however, we will work with the fielded force to better capture and measure outputs and outcomes.

a. NTM-A/CSTC-A Manning. Our Coalition manning improved to 70% overall and the instructor-to-trainee ratio to 1:29, but both remain significant concerns. In order to increase the probability of success and increase the quality of training, additional personnel are required. The U.S. provided bridging solutions, but NATO partners must begin to follow through on their pledges by late summer to have an impact this year. Manning shortages have an overall negative impact on training operations, with institutional trainer shortages at police training centers and ANA branch schools being the most serious.

b. ANSF Quantity. Training facilities have been expanded and throughput increased such that ANSF is currently on path to meet the end strength objectives of 109K for ANP and 134K for ANA by 31 Oct 2010. However, component elements of the ANA and ANP are at risk to meet their end strength goals, such as ANCOP (Afghan National Civil Order Police), and ANA units that have a high operational tempo may experience rising attrition. The traditional summer lull for ANSF recruiting exacerbates quantity concerns.

(1) Recruiting Mitigation. Faced with low recruiting in late 2009, it was apparent we would not make growth objectives. We worked together with Afghan leadership to implement several initiatives to mitigate low recruiting, to include pay raises, tripling the number of recruiters, and standup of a Recruiting Command. In addition, we contracted for a major Afghan media recruiting campaign, authorized a further increase in recruiters, and set up sixteen mobile sub-recruiting stations to coincide with the start of the challenging summer months.

(2) Attrition Mitigation. Aggregate attrition has been decreasing for the ANA and ANP over the last six months, but there is no assurance that this trend will continue, especially in those ANA and ANCOP units engaged in high tempo operations. Despite its small size, ANCOP is of particular concern given its key role in counterinsurgency operations and its proportionately large share of the overall ANP growth program. While down from highs of November 2009, the ANCOP level of attrition remains unacceptable and unsustainable at an approximate annualized rate of 70% (as determined by most recent measures taken in April of this year). To mitigate the effects of high ANCOP attrition, recruiting has been ramped up. Additionally, we are working closely with the fielded force to reduce attrition through several initiatives.

c. ANSF Quality. Several NTM-A programs have been reoriented to place a greater emphasis on quality, and progress has been noted in some areas.

(1) Training Programs. We focused early on marksmanship, raising qualification rates in ANA from 35% to 65% by May, and expanded driver training. Up until March of this year, most AUP were recruited and assigned without formal training. This model—*Recruit-Assign-Intend to Train*—was replaced with a new model that makes training mandatory for all police recruits. We anticipate that this new model, described as *Recruit-Train-Assign*, will

improve quality. We have also instituted in the training base increasing numbers of specialized courses to develop quality skill sets necessary to support the fielded force.

(2) Literacy. At the stand-up of NTM-A, there existed minimal mitigation programs to improve the quality of the force, and these were voluntary. In the past six months we have significantly expanded and made mandatory across ANSF basic literacy programs. We see literacy programs as a major quality enhancement tool but also an incentive for recruiting and possibly retention.

(3) Leadership. ANA and ANP leader development courses have been developed, reorganized, and improved to support increased through-put requirements of the fielded force. Steps have also been taken to ensure higher quality and highly literate officers are distributed based on operational need, not cronyism or favoritism. To that end, the National Military Academy of Afghanistan (NMAA) instituted a transparent assignment lottery system that distributed graduates of the class of 2010 to all the fielded force, rather than predominantly in Kabul, which had been the case in the 2009 graduating class.

(4) Intelligence. While the initial cadre is relatively small, we have established the Personnel Security (PERSEC) vetting program for the Ministry of Defense (MoD) that will eventually expand to be ANSF-wide, to include the Ministry of Interior (MoI) in June of this year. With regard to improving the quality and capacity of ANSF intelligence programs, we assisted in the establishment of a network targeting and exploitation center, which will help the ANP combat insurgent and criminal networks, and thus complement recent new intelligence training programs that are already paying dividends.

(5) Sustainment. We have taken additional steps to improve the logistical and medical sustainment capacity of ANSF, examples of which include the standup of Regional Logistic Centers (RLC), a Medical Training Advisory Group (MTAG), and the establishment of educational and clinical standards for doctors. However, ANSF sustainment capacity remains a challenge due to the shortage of trained Afghan logistic personnel.

(6) Air Corps. Another early sign of increasing quality efforts was demonstrated in the expansion of the Air Corps, a highly technical community that must maintain high quality standards in both training and maintenance in order to safely operate. To that end, Afghan air capability was successfully expanded with the introduction of the first five of twenty planned C-27s, the first modern airframe in the Air Corps' inventory. The Air Corps established an Air School for education and training, in addition to increased capabilities in battlefield mobility, casualty evacuation, forward observer training, humanitarian support, and mission planning.

d. Ministerial Development. Ministerial development shows slow but steady incremental progress, an improvement when compared to the low level of systems maturity in early 2009. The MoD and MoI are moving towards Afghan-led ministerial operational capacity, but neither will be fully capable before 2012. A lack of quality leaders, middle-level staff, and efficient bureaucracy, however, pose challenges which we will mitigate through training and education programs, and experience gained by close partnering with CSTC-A advisors.

e. **Anti-Corruption Efforts.** Our anti-corruption philosophy is not limited to prosecution only, but also seeks to promote policies and cultures that engender transparent and accountable practices. Important components of this strategy include “Pay by Phone”, Electronic Funds Transfer, and MoI mobile anti-corruption teams which have successfully conducted several investigations. Additionally, the establishment of an ANSF biometrics program, the development of merit-based promotion policies, and the NMAA lottery are all contributing to an environment of transparency.

5. Looking Forward: Challenges and Concerns.

a. **Leader Development.** Leader Development remains our #1 priority and is essential to developing a professional ANSF. Leadership deficiencies within the ANSF—across the spectrum from insufficient numbers of junior officers and NCOs, gaps in the midgrade ranks, to corrupt senior officers—pose the greatest threat to our Afghan allies. Significant efforts have been made to improve leader development programs, to include adding new and overhauling existing ANA and ANP leader courses. However, critical shortages in officers and noncommissioned officers, as well as qualified logisticians, persist. There is a need to continue to invest energy and creativity into ANSF leader development, and we will continue to focus on junior officers and noncommissioned officer programs. With regard to midgrade officers, to the degree we can, we will continue to assist our Afghan allies in the field to encourage the selection of officers based on merit and not cronyism. To help address senior officer leadership deficiencies, our ministerial advisors and flag officers will work with our Afghan senior partners to develop policies, practices, and law that will encourage upward mobility and the selection of senior officers based on merit. Along these lines, we will support the passage of legislation or policy such as the pending Inherent Law and related retirement programs.

b. **Attrition Impacts on Quality and Quantity.** As we executed our accelerated growth plans, it became apparent that a complex interaction exists amongst recruiting, retention, and attrition. This interaction affects our efforts to meet quantitative goals while maintaining adequate quality. Even if the attainment of recruiting goals and expanded training capacity allow us to meet accelerated growth objectives, attrition must be brought down or quality will suffer. Therefore, one of our major challenges is to balance these various demands. A natural tension also exists between today’s operational requirements at one end of the spectrum, and alternative long-term programs focused on growth, quality, and supporting institutions at the other end. An excessively long training and education program deprives the field of required personnel. We are mindful of that concern and modified programs accordingly. For example, we expanded recruit ‘throughput’ by modifying the daily program for police basic training (e.g., lengthening the training day which allowed us to reduce the length of the program from eight to six weeks, and thereby increase throughput). The number of professional development courses for army NCOs has also been condensed, and the three year police academy is being converted, for the next few years, to a six month OCS-type program. On the other end of the spectrum, the deployment of a large percentage of the existing ANSF in near continuous operations, and the challenge of rotating combat veterans to staff training institutions or manning ETTs in a timely fashion, risk retarding long-term professionalization efforts. Implementation of an effective and consistent operational deployment cycle (rotation between train, employ, reset), applied to both

the ANA and ANP, could help reconcile the competing demands. Such a cycle, if consistently observed by Afghan rank and file, and augmented by a robust partnering program with Coalition forces, should contribute to increased retention, reduced attrition, and as secondary order effects, raise the quality of the force while meeting growth goals. Lastly, as will be discussed below, in order to maximize the probability of meeting both quantitative and qualitative objectives, training and instructor shortfalls must be filled when required.

c. Structure, size, and nature of the ANA/ANP. To build an appropriate security framework, and to produce the right balance and type of security forces, to include sustainment capabilities, NTM must remain adaptable. We must also closely monitor ethnic balance as we grow the ANSF. And, we will continue to assess the ultimate size of the ANSF and the ratio between army and police that best supports security requirements and the ability to transition the ANSF to a lead security responsibility.

d. Shortfalls in NTM-A/CSTC-A Manning. While NTM-A/CSTC-A has received a significant influx of U.S. personnel since November 2009, there remain unfilled requirements. We continue to actively engage with the Joint Staff, the Services, and SHAPE to bring in personnel with the appropriate skill sets to meet our quantitative goals in a timely manner while raising quality. If we should receive all confirmed NATO pledges, we will have approximately 750 additional personnel, bringing us to just over 80% fill for the first time.

e. Rule of Law. Internal security depends on the three pillars of judiciary, corrections, and policing. While we are directly responsible for supporting policing, other organizations are responsible for the development of corrections and the judiciary. The lagging progress of the judiciary is a serious concern, and if corrective measures are not taken soon to accelerate the development of the justice system, the professionalization of the Afghan police will be put at risk.

6. Conclusion. In our first six months we made significant gains as we changed our overall approach to training and created a sense of urgency in building the foundation for an enduring and professional ANSF. While aggregate growth objectives appear on track, the traditional summer recruiting lull will be a challenge. In addition, the greatest threats to building an Afghan quality force with adequate quantity are the lack of effective leaders and the persistent high attrition in specific components of the ANSF. Though not assured, we can increase our probability of success by fully resourcing NTM-A/CSTC-A and carefully balancing current operational needs against those of longer term growth and professionalization programs.



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