

# NEWS FROM THE FRONT



1 AUG 2017

## Ministerial Advisors

Combined Security Transition Command  
Afghanistan (CSTC-A)

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# Executive Summary

Subject: End-of-Tour Key Leader Interview with Major General (MG) Richard Kaiser, Commanding General (CG) for the Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan (CSTC-A).

## 1. Purpose and scope.

This paper summarizes the key points from an interview with MG Kaiser during the interview. The interview, conducted at the conclusion of his tour, contained a few focus areas that capture best practices and lessons learned during his twelve months as Commanding General (CG). Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan (CSTC-A) has the largest role within Resolute Support's (RS) mission to conduct security sector assistance. For the Resolute Support (RS) Mission in Afghanistan, that means conducting Train, Advise, and Assist (TAA) engagements at the ministerial level known as Defense Institution Building (DIB). There are eight Essential Functions (EF) (call out box on page 2) that conduct DIB, and CSTC-A has four of them in their hierarchy. CSTC-A also is responsible for procurement that uses U.S. funds, and they also have the gender advisors under their purview as well.

The interview questions focused on three topics: Training for advisors, interagency cooperation, and best practices/lessons learned during his tenure.

## 2. Insights.

Training for advisors: No formal training package exists for military and civilian (U.S.) personnel deploying to be ministerial advisors. The caveat here is for those civilians (senior DoD civilians employees) within the Ministry of Defense Advisor (MoDA) program. The MoDA training course is identified as a great training course to fill this gap, yet it is acknowledged as being very intensive and, at seven weeks in length, perhaps not the most efficient or economical solution. With that being said, there are several lessons that could help fill this training gap along with lessons on how to leverage a cultural advisor, how to properly advise a principal, and so on. There is also an education gap as well, one that proper pre-deployment training could help close. Advisors, especially ones at the ministerial level, must be educated on the country they are going to: history, politics, economics, culture, and so forth. Training can help educate the advisor, but it is ultimately up to the advisor to take an academic approach and self-educate as well.

Another training gap that was identified is the lack of knowledge about the Embassy Country Team and Other Government Organizations (OGO). Advising at the ministerial level is not done in a vacuum, nor is it done alone. The Embassy and OGOs can assist the advisors in their role, and there are certain areas where the embassy itself has been tasked either having the authoritative lead in an EF effort or a complimentary one.

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Finally, there is still a need to have in-theater advisor training—one that is conducted at the advisor’s duty location. This final phase of their official training would be a focused on how to be an effective advisor. The advisor would learn about the mission itself, the nuances of the Headquarters (HQ) structure, the area-specific threats, key-players, and the ministries.

Interagency Cooperation: Two main points here: (1) a lack of awareness from the military and civilians and (2) under-staffing at the embassy itself. The first point ties in with pre-deployment training. It is essential for service members and/or civilians serving within the RS mission to know how an embassy operates (Who are the members of the country team, what departments are within the embassy), and what their responsibilities are. There are multiple cases where an EF focus area overlaps or compliments an embassy department. If an advisor within an EF is unaware that an embassy department focused on the same issues, the advisor runs several risks to include reduced effectiveness, duplication of efforts, or in the worst case, undoing or impairing efforts already accomplished. The second point is one that resides outside of Department of Defense control. The Department of State has many positions within the embassy departments that are vacant due to shortages and funding. Some of these positions lie within departments that are the authoritative lead on advising efforts, such as legal and economics.

Military – Civilian Collaboration: Several takeaways were identified throughout the interview. The first one deals with the interagency cooperation. The RS HQ initiated monthly Military/Civilian (MILCIV) coordination. This meeting is a monthly occurrence that has the RS CG and other key military members meeting face-to-face with the Ambassador and key members of his team. This, of course, creates synergy and amplifies the advising effort as a whole. These meetings differ from month to month and focus on the hot/important topics.

The subsequent set of best practices address successes he experienced in his role as a ministerial advisor. Transcending all three of the vignettes, he recommends that advisors not be afraid to make bold decisions. The Afghans (military and civilian senior leaders) react, and act, very well to bold decisions. He emphasized that advisors can no longer take the luxury of “nibbling at the edges” of a problem or an issue. These best practices stem from a ministerial advisory effort to provide the service (Army, Air Force, Police, or MOD) with a system of record; enhancements to the current system of record; or, if needed, taking responsibilities away from them. These best practices are detailed in the vignettes found in the appendix.

### 3. Summary.

Preparation of service members and civilians to serve as advisors:

- A training package that consists of lessons already taught in the MODA program: Proper use of a cultural advisor (interpreter/translator); cultural and country awareness; proper advisory techniques.
- The advisor, themselves, must take an active approach to educate themselves on the country they are going to. No training program can cover everything. The advisor needs to read and understand as much as they can.
- Training is needed on how to work through and with United States Embassies and OGOs.
- The training is completed in two phases: Pre-deployment training which prepares an advisor to be a ministerial advisor in the general sense; and professionalization training once they arrive at their duty location.

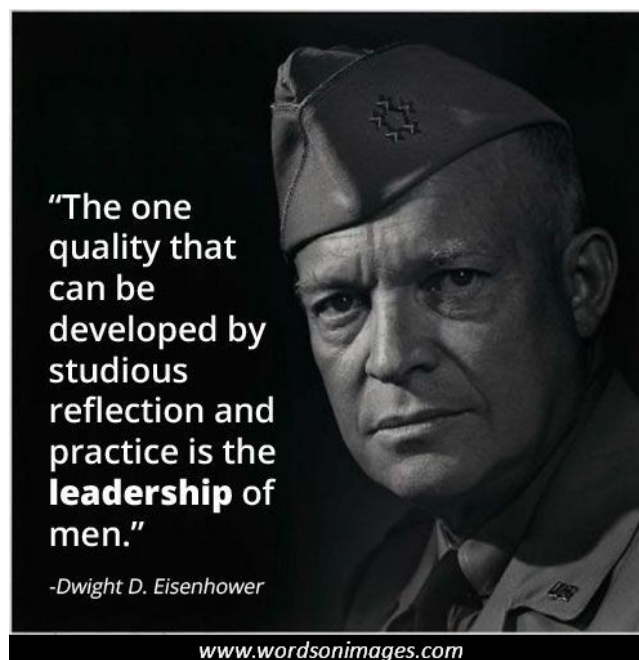
Interagency cooperation and coordination:

- Training advisors and staff members on what the Embassy and OGOs are, what they do, and how they nest within the military HQ and the host nation government will foster a more efficient and effective relationship.
- Embassy staffing shortages are harming (or at least, slowing) ministerial advising efforts.

Military – civilian coordination:

- Having a monthly MILCIV meeting enhances interagency cooperation, creates synergy, and creates efficiencies.
- Advisors cannot be afraid to make bold decisions when and where they have to. There was always push-back in the short run, yet the decisions always resulted in positive effects in the long run: Efficiencies, cutting down on corruption, and saving taxpayer dollars.

A final point of emphasis by MG Kaiser was that leadership counts. All of the best practices, lessons learned, and so forth; it is implied that there are good, non-corrupt leaders in place to manage and lead the formations. This applies from the ministerial leaders down to the team and squad level.



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# **An Interview Summary with MG Richard Kaiser**

## **Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan (CSTC-A)**

Security cooperation activities are at the heart of our efforts to provide a stabilizing presence in forward theaters. These build relationships that serve mutual security interests. They also develop partner military capabilities for self-defense and support to multinational operations. Through such activities, we coordinate with other U.S. agencies and mission partners to build cultural awareness and affirm relationships that increase regional stability.

2015 National Military Strategy

### **Background**

On Dec. 31, 2014, the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) mission ended. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) led the Resolute Support (RS) Mission, the natural evolution of ISAF, began Jan. 1, 2015.

This transition is more than a change of the mission name. It is the realization of thirteen years of effort, culminating in an Afghan National Defense and Security Forces (ANDSF) and Afghan Security Institution (ASI) organization and structure that is taking on the challenge of supporting and defending its own nation.

With the transition of NATO support from a combat role to a train, advise, and assist mission, the number and type of participating forces will change. ISAF numbers have significantly decreased as NATO allies and partners contributing to the new mission consolidated their efforts and physical presence into strategic locations and bases identified and detailed in the NATO Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) and RS plan. But even with a reduced presence, we, the U.S. and NATO forces are still here and supporting our Afghan allies.

### **How does CSTC-A support Defense Institution Building in Afghanistan?**

As described by MG Kaiser, the Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan (CSTC-A) define's Defense Institution Building (DIB) as advising at the ministerial level. 'Simply put, this is a core function/mission of CSTC-A multifaceted mission.

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He noted that CSTC-A executes the mission to Train, Advise, and Assist (TAA) at the ministerial level. It is at this point, the command focuses on four of the eight Essential Functions (EF):

- EF 1: Multi-year Budgeting and Execution of Programs
- EF 2: Transparency, Accountability, and Oversight (prevent corruption)
- EF 3: Civilian Governance of the ASI (ANDSF as servants of the people)
- EF 5: Sustainment (supply and maintenance)

Resolute Support focuses training, advising and assisting ASI/ANDSF development, focusing on eight key areas, called "Essential Functions," or EFs. They are:

EF 1: Multi-year Budgeting and Execution of Programs

EF 2: Transparency, Accountability, and Oversight (prevent corruption)

EF 3: Civilian Governance of the ASI (ANDSF as servants of the people)

EF 4: Force Generation (recruit, train, and equip the force)

EF 5: Sustainment (supply and maintenance)

EF 6: Strategy and Policy Planning, Resourcing, and Execution (plan, resource campaigns)

EF 7: Intelligence

EF 8: Strategic Communication these eight areas provide the framework and guidelines that will enable Afghanistan and its security forces to sustain their efforts

### Resolute Support/Essential Functions

In addition to that, CSTC-A has very clear 'U.S. - only' responsibilities such as the capabilities directorate which manages the 'tashkil' (organizational manning chart) for the Afghan National Army (ANA) and the Afghan National Police (ANP). There is also a special security office which handles the procurement of equipment. One last item is that the CSTC-A works (primarily by default) is gender identification/recognition. There are portions of the tashkil that are coded "P3", meaning females only for that position. As the tashkil changes, so do the number of female positions. We are lobbying for more women in leadership positions and gaining recognition of their abilities.

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## How does CSTC-A affect Defense Institution Building?

MG Kaiser reflected that the command does this on a daily basis mostly through the EFs and the command group. Also noting, that the U.S. military has no proper training for advising at the ministerial level except for the Minister of Defense Advisor Course (MoDA) course, which is however, only for civilians. The general further commented:

‘What you will find is that the majority of our EF directors are military or civilians who have not gone through the MoDA course. This became a gap which we had to be addressed. The EF directors have one-on-one contact with the ministerial-level staff on a very frequent basis (at least 2-4 times per week). This contact applies to the four EF functions were previously listed (1, 2, 3, and 5). Through that effort, the CSTC-A assists in DIB by teaching and coaching; showing them (Afghans) how to function.’

As an example, one recommendation was to examine: EF1 Multi-year Budgeting and Execution of Programs - ‘We support the ANA and ANP on the development of and properly executed that budget. In this circumstance, that is accomplished with the assistance of the National Procurement Commission which by the way, the Afghan President personally leads.’ CSTC-A is there to provide support and assistance as the Afghans work through their own contracting process - ‘That’s the main focus of what we do here.’

The general further elaborated:

‘Even though it is said that we are just here to work with the Ministry of Defense (MoD) and the Ministry of Interior (MoI) that is not a true statement. The CSTC-A has to reach out and touch other ministries to be effective. Specifically, we work with not only the National Security Advisor, Minister Atmar; the Minister of Finance, Minister Hakimi, but we also have to work with Attorney General Hamidi. And quite often, I (the Commander) must reach out and work with other ministries such as the Ministry of Mines and Petroleum for example simply because of the substantial amount of fuel that U.S. brings into the country. So, this Headquarters’, CSTC-A, really touches most of the critical ministries in Afghanistan. There are some other ministries that the CSTC-A have little dealings with such as the Ministry of Education and, the CSTC-A has worked with the Ministry of Health and also the Afghan equivalent of the Food and Drug Administration. And why you may ask would we work with them? The reason is that the U.S. purchases all of the pharmaceuticals that we use to help the Afghans regain/rebuild their capacity within their ministerial levels. So these are the ministries that the CSTC-A interacts with on a routine basis.

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The former commander, when reflecting on the question of ‘How we, the CSTC-A affect DIB?’ he noted, ‘We execute these efforts on a daily basis-across a very wide spectrum.’

**How can the U.S. military harness the strengths and resources of U.S. Government civilian agencies/ non-governmental organizations (NGO)/other governmental organizations (OGO) (U.S. Embassy, Kabul) in a concerted and coherent way?**

### **Training & Education**

There is a requirement to go back to the basics, training. We currently lack a coherent training strategy for individuals operating at the command level, or with the EF directors, if by chance they don't fall under the Ministry of Defense Advisors (MoDA) ([www.dsca.mil/programsw/ministry-defense](http://www.dsca.mil/programsw/ministry-defense) advisors) program which is designed to forge long-term relationships that strengthen a partner nation's defense ministry. The program matches senior Department of Defense (DOD) civilians with their foreign counterparts for one to two years. We are not increasing their awareness of what OGA are out there; what their roles are; and how we can work together. For example, if you aren't familiar with International Narcotics and Law (INL), you wouldn't know that it is a subset that works under the U.S. Embassy to assist with narcotics and law enforcement. As you can see, this example ties directly into our efforts with EF3. So if you were the EF3 (Civilian Governance of the ASI (ANDSF as servants of the people)) Director, you wouldn't know to work with the U.S. Embassy and the INL Director.

**Insight: Developing an awareness and a robust understanding of how other governmental agencies function is essential and allows for better a better collaboration relationship between organizations.**

Education/training becomes the first factor, in other words, it becomes a critical NUMBER ONE. Another prime example is United States Agency for International Development (USAID) ([www.usaid.gov](http://www.usaid.gov)). How many people for instance don't realize, through a lack of education/training that this agency actually helps with economic development? So, how can we work together in our efforts? For example, from our previous coalition experience (not from any education/training), there are existing programs that we can successfully work together on. The commander has the responsibility/duty to meet quite often with Mr. Herbie Smith, the director of USAID here in Afghanistan. Through mutual cooperation, we have ensured that our engineer cell has been linked with theirs so we can harness what they are doing and complement them with the projects that we are also working on.

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### **United States Agency for International Development**

The United States Agency for International Development is the United States (USAID) Government Agency which is primarily responsible for administering civilian foreign aid. President John F. Kennedy created USAID from its predecessor agencies in 1961 by executive order. USAID's programs are authorized by Congress in the Foreign Assistance Act, which Congress supplements through directions in annual funding appropriation acts and other legislation. Although it is technically an independent agency, USAID operates subject to the foreign policy guidance of the President, Secretary of State, and the National Security Council. USAID operates in Africa, Asia, Latin America, the Middle East and Eastern Europe.

### **Effective coordination**

The other item worth mentioning is that this coordination starts at the top and rightfully so! In order to be an effective commander, there has to be good communication and coordination between the commanding general (CG) and his/her staff who are coordinating/leading the military effort, and the Ambassador and his/her embassy staff. This command has been very fortunate under the leadership of General Nicholson (MG Kaiser is referring to GEN John W. Nicholson, commander of U.S. Forces Afghanistan and the Resolute Support Mission since March 2016.) I obviously can't speak for past commanders since I wasn't here, but I suspect it was good. But we have a very good relationship between this headquarters and the U.S. Embassy. That in itself, makes things so much easier. A best practice that General Nicholson started about three months ago was to have a monthly Civilian/Military (CIVMIL) meeting. The U.S. Ambassador will come over here with his key directors which include USAID, INL, and other important NGOs/OGOs like the economic advisor (who we work with closely under EF1), the deputy chief of mission etc., once a month to meet with all the key military leaders. We provide as does the Embassy updates on the current situation. Typically, the meetings will have a focus topic area, i.e. counter-corruption, green zone expansion efforts now after the 31 May attack, and so on. So, a best practice is to get the leadership of the embassy and its subordinate organizations together with the military regularly. These meetings has been very effective! In other words, (1) train the people better, (2) have good working relationships, and (3) collaboration on at least a monthly basis.

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**What are the significant impediments to effective military/interagency operations between U.S. forces and the U.S. Embassy? What corrective measures have been implemented to counter them?**

Currently, a lack of embassy manning is a huge challenge for us. They are understaffed, because of a lack of funding and the lack of an ability to hire people.

For example, take a look at the INL, you literally have one guy over there. So when he goes on leave (and he is on leave right now) you are left with a dilemma. How do you coordinate with an empty office when you have issues that need rectified? Many of the things that CSTC-A are required to do, we have to coordinate with the ministers (the attorney general, the minister of finance, etc.); the embassy has the lead, it's their lane. But we do work with and interact with them, so in theory, we should be working by, with, and through the embassy to make the changes that need to occur, unfortunately, that is not the case. It's not the embassy's fault, they just don't have the capacity (manpower). In reality for example, I often meet with the minister of finance, then I collaborate with the embassy and tell them what has occurred. When, in theory, it should be me, the CG, working with the embassy and telling them that I need their help and asking them to talk with the minister of finance. It is no different INL. Look at EF3, we need to work with the attorney general, the INL is the lead for the U.S. to work with the Afghan justice system and yet, we are involved because we work with the anti-corruption justice center. We also have a vested interest in following the gross violation of human rights. Bottom line is we are required to talk with and work with the attorney general. The correct venue is through the embassy and through the INL, but as previously mentioned, the Embassy doesn't have the capacity. So then, what do we do? My EF3 director and I meet routinely with the attorney general so we are up to date with each other.

This then is a real gap that can/will cause fractures along the lines of communications. It can cause gaps in our shared knowledge on requirements and it causes a lack of synchronization when it isn't done well.

*Insight: Effective coordination and communication are critical for the development and lasting relations between the coalition headquarters and the host nation government agencies.*

**What are some of best practices that have been implemented to increase accountability (ammunition, personnel, and fuel)?**

When a unit performs a mission such as CSTC-A does, the command should provide some system of record for accountability. A best practice would then be to have and use

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a record for accountability system. For example, in EF5 which is sustainment, the system of record is CORE (also the name of the company), an Inventory Management System (IMS). IMS is just that, a system of record, a very simple system, which is another key point.

Last year we forced the Afghans to use this system to properly account for ammunition. Before the Afghans used the system, every day was became an ammunition fiasco. Amounts of ammunition for their D-30 (122mm towed howitzer), 'I need more of this; I need more of that.' To make matters worse, no one really had any idea of where the ammunition really was. So, by forcing the Afghans to use CORE-IMS, and putting every DODIC in the system, we showed the minister that he could now see at the brigade (BDE) and Corps level who actually has what type, amount of ammo and who doesn't. So we could then show him that, if he needed, he could make decisions to cross-level and to re-allocate if he needed to. This has created efficiencies—huge efficiencies. Now look at this year. We are well into the fighting season and we haven't had one single ammunition emergency! Nobody has called to complain about a lack of this type or that type. What a complete difference than last year.

The other management system currently in place is the Afghan Human Resource Inventory Management System (AHRIMS). We have all heard about the 'ghost soldiers', those individuals who are nonexistent but who get paid and then, those wages get harvested from the bank accounts.

These ghosts were a problem for many years, we recognized it, and to combat these phantoms, we are brought in a new system called the Afghan Personnel and Pay System (APPS).

In order to get APPS on line and become the system of record, our goal for this year, it was critical that the information was drawn from three other systems: (1) AHRIMS, (2) Biometric Enrollment Data, and (3) a valid Afghan ID card. So we required the Afghans to use all three systems.

The instructions were that I (CSTC-A) would only disperse the funds to those people who were accurately enrolled in all three systems. As a result of this requirement, since January 2017, we have withheld over \$32,000,000. The reason being, Soldiers the Afghans claimed to have on hand weren't in the system and therefore could not be proven, thus no funding. This move has forced the Afghans to finally perform proper management/accounting using the three systems. The Afghan National Army (ANA) started accounting for about 128,000 Soldiers (all properly enrolled), now, that number is around 151,000. That's the good news. The Afghans are now properly adding more Soldiers to their roles and accounting for them correctly. So why is this so important? The proper management/accounting of personnel becomes a best practice, a ground-

line of truth. So when we are done counting which I believe will be around September, the Afghans will know exactly what the size of their fighting force is. They may realize that they will have to do more recruiting because the force is smaller than they thought. And, of course, this will save the U.S. taxpayer's money.

Those are the two key accountability best practices. Another best practice that occurred primarily as a result of getting accountability in hand was the reduction in the corruption that so prevalent surrounding these two areas.

The end result was a success, it saved taxpayer money and reduced corruption! Don't forget, these are important: (1) having an accountability system of record, and (2) requiring the Afghans to use it. We made huge strides in the accountability of ammunition and personnel. This year, we'll sustain that success, we won't abandon it. We intend to account for pharmaceuticals in a similar manner. As you can imagine, this is another area that ripe for corruption. We are requiring the Afghans to put all of their medicines into CORE-IMS for full accountability.

### **Pre-deployment training for the ministerial advisors coming to RS HQ**

Proper training is probably the most important aspect that must be addressed during pre-deployment training. We can't throw away Ministry of Defense Advisors (MoDA) program training loosely, understandably, it's an intense seven-week program. It is essential training for anyone who is being deployed into a ministerial advisor position. An individual who is coming here to be an advisor better understand Afghanistan and her culture. Bottom line, it doesn't matter what country you are going to be an advisor (at any level), you have to understand that country. For example, we just had an advisor (who has been here almost a year) here at CSTC-A that was going to a meeting with me to meet with the first deputy to the Afghan ministry of interior. This advisor wanted to recommend building positions on the west side of the Durand Line.

The problem was that the advisor had never heard of the Durand Line and therefore, didn't realize that by putting positions on the west side of the Durand Line, by Afghan standards, would imply that they (the Afghans) had accepted the existence of Durand Line which of course they don't. That is just one example of how important it is for new advisors to be aware of the history and culture of the country they are going to.

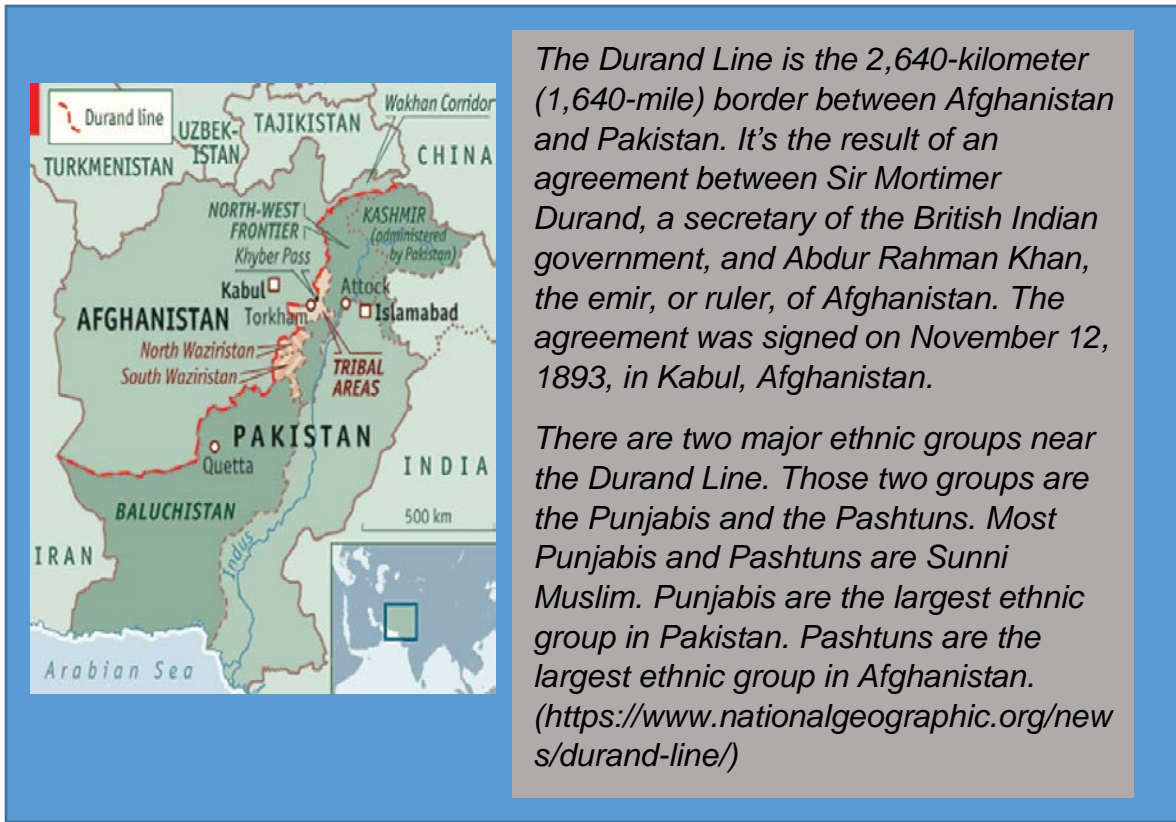


Figure 1-1<sup>1</sup>

Its simple politics, you have to know the country! So when an advisor or anyone is coming to Afghanistan they need to have 'Afghan 101' prior to deploying. Also, if someone is deploying to be an advisor, part of the pre-deployment training requirement must include training on how to be an advisor. You could be the best at what you do but unless you have the requisite knowledge/understanding/culture awareness, you won't be effective and you will fail, guaranteed.

Advisor training basically consists of a few components: (1) how to be a good advisor (how do you act and carry yourself; you don't just demand and impose); (2) how to leverage a cultural advisor (translator/interpreter).

For instance, I have advisors here using words like intransigence and recalcitrance. Would you please translate those words into Dari for me? You can't! So the training would include how to translate/communicate your message/thought/idea in the most

<sup>1</sup> From: "Durand Line," <http://www.economist.com/images/20060722/CAS962.gif> (accessed Mar 31, 2009).

basic terms so that a translator can understand and they can convey it and can get it right. Try to translate the word Ombudsman into Dari, can't be done, no word exists for it. Yet we could just use the word helper instead to help you through a system for example.

Finally, look at where we are right now. There is a big push for Guardian Angel training. Everybody needs to understand the Afghan environment, this is important. Perhaps not in other theaters, but here, you need to be aware of how to handle yourself if you come under hostile fire. We have lost two individuals from the CSTC-A (one civilian and one trooper) that were out performing an ammunition inspection.

NATO's International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) will increase intelligence and counterintelligence efforts aimed at stopping attacks before they occur, establish forensic teams that will analyze attacks, improve the vetting process for Afghan security forces, and require that a NATO service member, dubbed a "guardian angel," observe any gathering of NATO and Afghan troops. The guardian angel will "watch people's backs and hopefully identify people that would be involved in those attacks,"

We all never would have expected that, but when an incident investigation was performed, the investigators found a lack of guardian angel training, and measures that weren't implemented correctly. A couple other recent events tie back to guardian angel measures not being carried out the way they should have been done. This all ties back to training, training that should have been accomplished before one arrives in country. There are some training topics, some important ones that should be done when you arrive. We have recently instituted that training which is called In-theater Key Leader Training (IKLT). IKLT training is an understanding of the CSTC-A Resolute Support (RS) mission and more specifically, how the Essential Functions (EF) are linked to the RS mission.

There is also instruction on the functioning of the Afghan Ministry of Defense (MOD), what it is, what do they do and how they do it. The functioning of the Ministry of the Interior (MOI) is also taught. We also tie in the National Security Advisor and how is that office linked to the ministries and their interactions. The feedback on this training we have gotten so far has been tremendous! What I tell all the students when I brief my portion, is that when you (the advisor) are out making visits at the ministerial level or anywhere else and you see a problem, and you understand how the whole system functions, you can tell them that EF8 could take care of it and tell them we need to get our STRATCOM advisor over here. In other words, if you don't understand Afghanistan,

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the way their government works, how the CSTC-A can assist and you can't advise because you don't know, what good are you? This is key to success!



Figure 1-2

President Ghani met with Gen. Salvatore Farina, the commander of NATO's Allied Joint Force Command in the presidential palace. <sup>2</sup>

Another key part of this puzzle is the understanding of the current events of the country like the Afghan 4-year development plan. What is it, how does it affect the Afghan people, and what do we need to understand and how it will affect our decisions.

That's IKLT in a nut shell, last year at this time, it wasn't even a thought. So I wouldn't have mentioned it. But now I do because it is critical to the success of the mission. Everyone needs to know what it is and why we are doing it, and where we are going. And most importantly, how they fit in! To me, that is professionalization that is best done in theater and best done early upon arrival. Both General Nicholson and I agree that it is better to pay the price up front and have a top-notch advisor for the rest of the year, than to play catch up with him/her for six months into their deployment and wasting time.

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.kabultribune.com/index.php/2017/02/23/4-year-security-plan-discussed-during-ghanis-meeting-with-top-nato-officials/>

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Figure 1-3

General John W. Nicholson, Commander Resolute Support Mission (RSM) and U.S. Forces in Afghanistan, called on Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Qamar Javed Bajwa

### **Lessons learned passed on to the new commander**

Although the CSTC-A appreciates the international support, six month deployments for advisors are detrimental to the overall mission. It not necessarily these advisors aren't good people, as a matter of fact, some have been successful to the point that they were able to extend out to a year. The issue is the six month deployment isn't nearly long enough.

My replacement and I have a very big Hand Over Take Over (HOTO) since our mission is very unique. In my capacity as commanding general, the position is about leadership, providing direction and guidance to get the team where it needs to go.

Here in Afghanistan, you have to take BOLD steps. Many previous leaders wrenched their hands for years about the ghost Soldiers, saying that it is so difficult, so difficult to get proper accountability. So I just came up with a bold decision that stated 'I am just not going to pay you if you are not properly accounted for.' We had folks that told us that we can't do this. But you know what, it really has had a positive step. Be bold!

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The anti-corruption justice center, for example is the Afghan President's vision. There were people in the community (to include the U.S. embassy and the U.S. community) saying that it can't be done and shouldn't be done. The support base for it wasn't present. But we said let's be bold and push forward. We ended up finding our advocate in the United Kingdom. Their embassy took a big role in the leadership on countering corruption. It a whole new picture now and the new U.S. team is on board. Yes, it was a bold step but it has had a very positive effect.

Another bold step was with fuel accountability. For years, there has been allegations of corruption with the Afghan fuel accountability. So we stepped in and said 'we are going to take it away from you.' What a difference that has made. Last year at this time, the call was 'We are out of fuel!' Every day it was a fuel fiasco. Bottom line; we control the fuel, the vendors are being paid for what they deliver and they now delivering it on time with high-quality fuel. Now, nobody is complaining about fuel. What a difference!

### **Final Thoughts**

Remember, leadership counts! This current president [Afghan] has taken bold steps to reform his country through leadership. All the efforts we are attempting will be for naught unless there are good leaders in leadership positions not only within the ministries but at all levels of government. As with any government, that is not always the case. Unless you have leaders in place that are willing to do what is right for the country, none of these or any initiatives will have any lasting benefit. You can see what I talking about no more clearly than when you look at the ANA corps commanders. Many would say that the president took a step too late, and it wasn't until after the massacre at Camp Shaheen in Mazar-E-Sharif, before he decided to finally take action and remove those individuals that had to go. Now you can see the difference. Comments are coming from the field like 'hey, we are fighting and we are now killing more than we are losing.' Now we can see commanders that are being proactive and offensively oriented versus just hanging out on checkpoints.

Leadership matters, whether you are at the ministerial, corps, and clearly at the lower levels. This is a huge message, if we are going to be advising at these levels, we have to have a way to influence that leadership; whether it is the removal of a certain individual or the identification of someone who should be put in that position for many reasons. That is huge, the President of Afghanistan gets it and he is leading the best that he can considering all of the different political strands, tribal issues and all of the other things that he has to deal with.

*“My advice is to not be afraid to be bold and take strong steps! The Afghans respond well to bold steps and strong messages. Just to nibble on the edges will never get you anywhere here.”*



*MG Richard Kaiser  
Commanding General  
Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan (CSTC-A)*

Figure 1-4

# APPENDIX

## Vignettes

### Ministry Collaboration Vignette

This vignette addresses a recent opportunity for interaction between CSTC-A and the host nation government. The scenario portrays methods that can be implemented to resolve concerns.

Issue: The host nation has lost control of fuel issuance/usage

Trigger/background: The daily occurrences of “fuel crises” reached a point when CSTC-A had no choice but to take back control of fuel management. It was suspected for a while that certain ANA/ANP personnel were taking fuel for their personal/family use, and/or selling it to make money for themselves. The lack of fuel affected mission readiness and operations to a degree that a bold decision had to be made. Also, the vendors weren’t getting paid properly by the ANA/ANP—if they were getting paid at all.

Proposed Recommendation: Take away their authority and regain control.

Solution: CSTC-A took back control of managing the supply of fuel for the Afghan National Defense Forces (ANDSF). The ministerial advisors made a bold decision and assumed the risk that the decision might have incurred. The advisors realized that this is not the long-term solution, and itself is a failure. However, to eliminate corruption, this is a short-term best practice that has worked very well. The long-term intent, of course, is to continue advising efforts so that they regain the trust and authority to manage their own fuel.

Results: After initial push-back, the fuel amounts and the fuel quality were brought back in check. The vendors were getting paid accurately and they were getting paid like they should. After an initial adjustment period, the complaints about fuel stopped as well.

### **Ammunition Resupply Vignette**

Issue: Sustainment issue with classes of supply—in this case, ammunition

Trigger/background: The accounting for, and overall management, of ammunition was very poor to say the least. Just about every day, there were units suffering a crisis with ammunition: No ammunition, wrong ammunition. There was most likely corruption involved. No one really knew where the ammunition was or how much was out there. And, with that, there is the security threat with ammunition getting into the hands of the terrorist organizations.

Proposed Recommendation: Give them a system of record, a simple one called CORE-IMS (inventory management system), and force them to use it.

Solution: The advisors ensured the Afghans loaded in every DODIC into the system and took the time to show the ministerial leaders how to read it and how they can use it for making decisions, like cross-leveling, re-allocation, and so forth.

Results: This solution is a huge success that is mostly due to advisory efforts. Yes, the system of record enables the Afghans to track classes of supply, but it is the insistence of the advisors—showing their principals how to interpret it and how to use it as a strategic tool for decision making—that truly makes this vignette a success story. Also, the best practice involves making sure the system of record is simple and user-friendly.

*\*\*The CORE-IMS system of record has been very effective. CSTC-A will next advise the Afghans to make use of this system to track their pharmaceuticals—a class of supply which has the propensity for corruption as well. \*\**

Issue: Extremely poor accountability of personnel

Trigger/background: The ANDSF was not able to accurately account for the number of personnel that they were reporting on their current system, AHRIMS (Afghan Human Resource Inventory Management System). With AHRIMS, the different ANA and ANP commands would report the number of personnel within their organizations and CSTC-A would distribute funds based on what was reported. There were reports of “ghost Soldiers” and corruption with the system in place. So, CSTC-A advisors made a bold decision to enhance AHRIMS; in essence, gathering data streams from three other sources that would account for actual personnel.

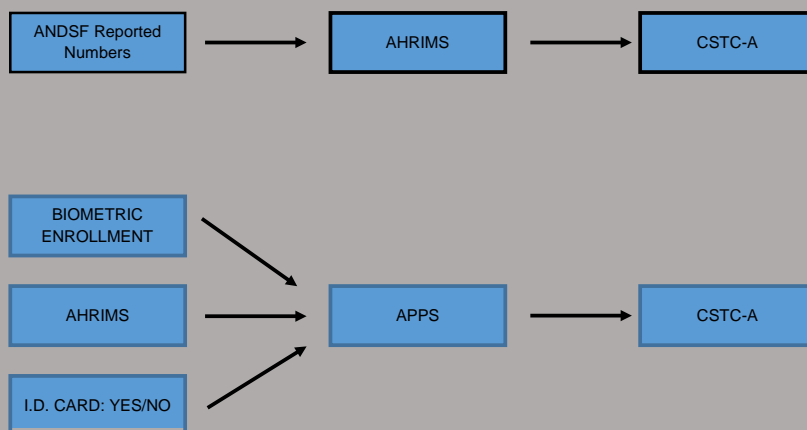
CSTC-A made it so an additional system would enhance the current method. The new system, APPS (Afghan Personnel and Pay System) would get fed data from AHRIMS, Biometric enrollment data, and from valid I.D. cards. So, with the new system, only properly-reported, biometrically-enrolled personnel with valid ID cards would be in APPS. CSTC-A would, then, only disperse funds for those personnel in APPS.

Proposed Recommendation: Enhance their current system of record.

Solution: The addition of APPS to enhance the other current systems would eliminate the ghost Soldiers and give the senior leadership a more accurate account of what their formations actually look like.

Results: Of course, there was the initial shock to the Afghan formations: Both in the reduced amounts of funds and the mad rush to get everyone biometrically enrolled. But, along with the other two vignettes listed here, it has been a success—a huge success. CSTC-A has saved over \$32 Million dollars in disbursements from Jan 2017 – July 2017 alone. And, the MOD and MOI leadership now have an accurate picture of what their formations look like, and they can recruit more accurately.

Legacy System:



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