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HEADQUARTERS
International Security Assistance Force/
United States Forces-Afghanistan
Kabul, Afghanistan
APO AE 09356



TO: See Distribution

SUBJECT: AFGHAN HANDS PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION DIRECTIVE

DATE: 2 October 2011

REFERENCES: A. Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Instruction (CJCSI) 1630.01, Afghanistan/Pakistan Hands (APH) Program (3 September 2010).
B. COMISAF Counterinsurgency (COIN) Guidance (1 August 2010).

1. **Purpose.** To provide guidance and intent for the appropriate assignment and employment of Afghanistan Hands in positions that are consistent with the spirit and intent of their training in support of ISAF operations. This directive applies to all Afghan Hands operating in theatre and to commanders and staff officers at all levels who supervise in-theatre billets filled by Afghan Hands.

2. **Definitions.**

a. **Afghanistan Hands (Afghan Hands):** A cadre of military and civilian personnel who receive regional language, culture, and COIN training for deployment to key billets in Afghanistan. The AH program was established in ISAF to create greater continuity, focus, and persistent engagement on Afghanistan.

b. **The Joint Staff Pakistan Afghanistan Coordination Cell (PACC):** The Joint Staff directorate that provides the guidance and oversight to the Afghanistan/Pakistan Hands Program (APH). APH is a US program designed to develop a cadre of military and civilian experts, who speak the local language, are culturally attuned, and focus on regional issues for an extended duration.

c. **The PACC Afghanistan/Pakistan Management Element (PACC AME):** The organization residing at the PACC that is responsible for managing the APH program. The PACC AME coordinates the assignment of Afghan Hands for training, in-theatre billets, and out-of-theatre billets.

d. **Afghan Hands Management Element-Forward.** The in-theatre AME-Forward resides under the USFOR-A Deputy Commander-Support. The AME-Forward is responsible for executing the Afghan Hands program in Afghanistan in accordance with priorities established by the ISAF Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations (DCOS OPS) and this program directive.

3. **Commander's Intent.**

a. **Mission and Expectations.** The mission of the Afghan Hands program is to support key campaign objectives by involving the Afghan Hands across all the lines of operation to leverage their expertise in connecting with the Afghan people, GIRoA and ANSF leadership. Additionally, the program aims to develop a cadre of personnel who understand the complexities of Afghanistan, how the country and society work, and who are then able to put this understanding to use in the course of dealing with the issues and challenges associated

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with Afghanistan. Afghan Hands have four key tasks to perform in this COIN environment, where the human terrain is the decisive terrain:

(1) Effectively execute their Commander's mission in support of the ISAF campaign objectives.

(2) Establish and nurture long-lasting positive relationships within the Afghan population and the Afghan government to demonstrate the coalition's resolve to help build a more peaceful, prosperous, and stable Afghan nation.

(3) Empower GIRoA entities on the local and national levels while building capacity and capability.

(4) Improve multi-cultural and multi-functional teams (GIRoA, ISAF/NATO, USG, NGOs) by breaking through barriers to effective communications and by developing trust through collaboration and the sharing of best practices and lessons learned.

(5) Develop subject matter expertise on the culture, people and government of Afghanistan.

b. **Training.** Afghan Hands will complete combat skills, cultural, and language training before deployment; and upon arrival in theatre will complete specific COIN, cultural, and language refresher training. Throughout their time in the program, whether in theatre or out, Afghan Hands must continually work to maintain their language proficiency and to learning about the people, culture, and governance of Afghanistan.

c. **Assignments.** Given our training investment in Afghan Hands and the enormous potential they possess to be force multipliers in this COIN environment, we must ensure they are assigned to the right positions to be effective in building productive relationships.

(1) Because of the continual change in the operating environment, commanders must respond with innovative and individualized schemes of employment for their Afghan Hands in order to meet the intent of the program. Commanders must assign their Hands in positions that address strategic mission priorities. The most effective and productive Afghan Hands will be in assignments that enable them to interact daily with the Afghan government and people. By speaking, eating, living, and learning side by side with Afghans, whether with Afghan National Security Forces, GIRoA, or economic development implementing partners, our Afghan Hands will build the trust necessary to create enduring partnerships.

(2) To ensure the assigned billets do not remain static, the ISAF CJ-35 and AME – Forward will co-chair a quarterly review of the placement and distribution of Afghan Hands to ensure they support ISAF Campaign Plan priorities as well as the Afghan Hands program objectives. The output of this meeting will be a prioritized distribution plan to the ISAF Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations (DCOS OPS) for approval. The ISAF DCOS OPS has complete authority to move Afghan Hands out of positions that do not align with the Campaign Plan, are not congruent with the program's intent, or are less important than higher priority unfilled positions.

(3) Afghan Hands personnel are to be placed in key positions where they will engage directly with Afghan officials and with the Afghan population. Their assignments must support ISAF Campaign plan objectives as well as enable their development as subject matter experts on the people, culture, religion, economics, politics and government of Afghanistan. Upon completion of in-theatre deployment, Afghan Hands will be assigned to key out-of-theatre billets where their in-country experience will be applied to their work on regional issues of Afghanistan.

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4. **Mission Approval.** The Afghan Hands Program Force Protection & Risk Management Standard Operating Procedures will serve as guidance for command specific Afghan Hand mission approval processes. Execution of the Afghan Hand mission requires regular interface with the Afghan people, GIRoA, and ANSF. Commanders can not implement a zero-risk security posture that prohibits the necessary interface for achieving campaign objectives and developing the Afghan Hand as an Afghanistan subject matter expert. In all cases, I expect commanders to make a final determination on the cost versus benefits of any operation, and to direct appropriate measures to ensure personal security while meeting command and Afghan Hand Program objectives.

5. **Reporting.** Afghan Hands will provide monthly operational reports to their chains of command and to the AME, to include perceived personal risk and threat assessments of travelled areas. This reporting will capitalize on the powerful network of Afghan Hands to share information, best practices, and lessons learned. SharePoint and other databases available in theatre will be leveraged to support this fusion of information. We will develop a non-static, living organization throughout ISAF and supporting commands that is flexible enough to react to an ever-changing environment and enemy. Reporting and disseminating valuable information through the Afghan Hands is the final phase in an operational cycle that will allow them to be a vital contributor to the success of our overall COIN campaign.

6. Direct questions concerning Afghan Hands Program to the Director of the AME - Forward at 318-449-4727 or email afghan_hands@afghan.swa.army.mil.



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