

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE BLOGGERS ROUNDTABLE WITH BRIGADIER GENERAL CARMELO BURGIO, COMMANDING GENERAL, COMBINED TRAINING ADVISORY GROUP - POLICE, COMBINED SECURITY TRANSITION COMMAND-AFGHANISTAN, NATO TRAINING MISSION-AFGHANISTAN VIA TELECONFERENCE FROM AFGHANISTAN SUBJECT: TRAINING OF THE AFGHAN NATIONAL POLICE TIME: 11:03 A.M. EDT DATE: TUESDAY, AUGUST 24, 2010

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PETTY OFFICER WILLIAM SELBY (Office of the Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs): And hello, I'd like to welcome you all to the Defense Bloggers Roundtable for Tuesday, August 24, 2010. My name is MC2 William Selby, with the Office of the Secretary of Defense Public Affairs, and I'll be moderating our call today.

A note to the bloggers on the line today. Please remember to clearly state your name and blog or organization in advance of your question, respect our guest's time and -- keeping questions succinct and to the point.

Today, our guest is Brigadier General Carmelo Burgio, commanding general, Combined Training Advisory Group - Police, Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan, NATO Training Mission-Afghanistan. Brigadier General Burgio will provide an update on the progress of the Afghan national police training and recent quality training initiatives, including a focus on leadership training.

Sir, with that, if you have an opening statement, you can go ahead with those now.

GEN. BURGIO: Yes. Good evening. I want to start, I think, at the beginning, the international community focus on the army. And seven, eight years ago, the situation of the army was not so good. After seven or eight years, we can say that the Afghan national army has a good capability to perform its job.

We started working with the police one year ago, and in one year, I think that we made good progress because, for example, we -- we were able to achieve the number of policemen that was our goal by the end of -- (audio break) -- and we were able also to set up some quality training because there were no training for the leaders and there were no training for some specific issues.

In this year, we were able to start NCOs and officer courses, and we are going to open the Afghan National Police Staff College. We developed the first seminar for police commanders in August, and by the end of September, we will start some courses for company commanders and staff officers at the battalion level. And by the end of December, we will start the first staff courses for the Afghan national police.

At the same time, we were able to develop some quality course, as I call, for example, driver training, ERB training, but also gender issues seminars. We were able to develop two cycles of seminars about gender issues -- domestic violence, sexual abuse, women integration in the police -- in April and in August. And we have a program to develop this program -- these courses -- also in December and in the next year.

We are also going to develop some courses about corruption, for example. So it means that we are not focusing on quantity because we strongly believe that quality affects quantity. If you want to achieve a big number of patrolmen, a big number of policemen, we have to pay them better, we have to train them better, we have to keep them better.

PETTY OFFICER SELBY: Roger that, sir. And we'll go on to our first question. And Anand, you are first on the line.

Q Hi, this is Anand from Registan. Could you please summarize how many ANP officers are being trained at any given point of time? Could you perhaps break it down by AUP, ANCOPS, ABP and MOI Ministry neighbors? Could you also possibly summarize how many ANP NCOs are being trained at any given point of time broken down by ANCOP, ABP, AUP and MOI Ministry neighbors? Thank you. GEN. BURGIO: Okay. Currently, we have seven officer courses. First of all, we an ANCOP OCS course in Mazar-e-Sharif with 150 cadets selected among the NCOs or NCOP. And they are trained in Mazar-e- Sharif.

Then we have also, more or less, 2,000 cadets in the academy. The Afghan National Police Academy is sponsored by the Germans, or Germany; I have to remember that, in 1935, Germany founded the Afghan Police Academy, so we have more or less 2,000 of -- cadets in training. And they belong to the police. At the end of the course, they will be divided in the different specialties between -- among AUP, ANCOP and ABP.

About the NCO. Okay, for the NCO, it's not so easy to provide numbers because we have many different courses in different training centers. But I have to point out that we are going to increase the number of NCOs for the Southern region, the RC-South and the RC-Southwest. The big challenge in this region is the small number of people with the appropriate cultural -- yes, cultural degrees to train these NCOs, so we are obliged to provide them with specific training with an additional literacy program. And we are going to start these courses by the end of September -- next September.

PETTY OFFICER SELBY: Thank you, sir. And Matthew, you are next on the line.

Q Yeah. What would the training consist of? Are we talking leadership training or are we talking about combat training? What's it going to consist of?

MR. : Petty Officer, we couldn't hear a word he said.

PETTY OFFICER SELBY: Okay. Does -- Matthew, if you could speak up. And I'm not sure if that's the -- if somebody doesn't have their phone on mute, but could everybody, if you're not asking a question, make sure that your phone is on mute. And Matt, you can go ahead with your question again.

Q Yeah. It's -- my question was, as far as the training goes, what's it going to consist of? Are we just talking about leadership training or are we talking about combat training and what else?

GEN. BURGIO: Okay. The training of the Afghan police is developed following guidance and suggestions we receive by the Afghans.

When I arrived -- when NTM-A has been set up or been activated, there were many stakeholders involved in the police training. And more or less, the philosophy was that every stakeholder trained what they liked to train.

NTM-A started a different approach, so we started to find out what the Afghans need to learn. And in this country, they are policemen, but they are also the so-called "peace target." We have to think that, for every Afghan national army soldier killed, we have three or four policemen killed. For this reason, we train them as policemen, but we provide also them some specific survival capability skills.

We don't like to talk about military skills because we don't want to militarize the police. We want to make a realistic approach to the training, so the training consists of the so-called "blue part," the police skills, and the "green part." The green part means that we train them how to shoot, how to react to an ambush, how to create a defensive perimeter, how to defend or how to attack a small position, how to defend a checkpoint, et cetera.

So the training is composed by two parts, the green part and the blue one. For this reason, we have police trainers and we have also army trainers. For example, in some training centers, we have policemen that belong to gendarmarie-type forces, like the Italian Carabinieri or the French gendarmes.

In this training unit, we have people that belong to the military branch of this gendarmarie unit and people that belong to the police branch. So they could provide the blue and the green training.

But another training, especially when the people belong to countries that are not familiar with the gendarmerie concept, we have combined training units. For example, we have a British training center in which we have UK civilian policemen and soldiers. We have the Marines

and the Marines have people that are a service, so they are policemen -- they could provide the police training.

In the Germans' training center, we have German soldiers for the green training and German civilian policemen for the blue training. This is our philosophy. PETTY OFFICER SELBY: Thank you, sir. And Andrew Lubin, you were next.

Q Thank you. Good afternoon, General. Andrew Lubin from Jane's Intelligence out of the U.K.

Sir, the other day on national -- on American national TV, President Karzai indicated very matter-of-factly that yes, he'd stopped the investigation -- the corruption investigation of one of his friends. How do you teach, or how do you preach anticorruption when it's so openly coming down from the top?

GEN. BURGIO: Okay. First of all, we are developing some specific program to train or to inform, because when we are talking about corruption, we cannot talk about training; we have to talk about sensibilization or knowledge, this firming us up for high-level leadership. But I think that when we talk -- think -- when we talk about corruption, maybe we have to change our approach, because we cannot talk about a corrupt police. We have to talk about a corrupt region, because if we go in this part of the world, in the other surrounding countries, we can find more or less the same situation.

And if we go in Afghanistan, we cannot talk that this policeman or this police is corrupted. Many other parts of the society are corrupted. I mean that if we want to solve the problem of corruption, it's not a problem of judges or policemen. I'm used to say that when there is a building with a criminal, this is a job for me as a policeman and for the judge. But when the building is plenty of criminal, this is not a job -- this is not a criminal problem. This is a social problem.

And I mean that to solve such a problem, we need all the actors for the society. So we need a policeman, we need a judge, but we need also the school, the religious power -- especially in this part of the world, the Islamic world -- we need the newspapers, we need the enterprises, we need the politician, we need the family. So only with a global, holistic approach we could solve the problem of corruption. Only.

On our side, NTM-A is working to -- to create obstacles to the corruption. For example, increasing the measure to prevent corruption in the distribution of the salary, et cetera. But I repeat, when we talk about corruption, we are talking -- this is a global problem. This is a national problem, that -- this is a regional problem. And to deal with this kind of problem, we need all the actors and we need, first of all, time.

When I talk about time, I mean that we need generations. To solve the corruption problem, we need generations. Each generation lasts 20, 25 years. To solve the corruption problem, we need two or three generations. It's like to deal with organized crime.

Q Will Europe give you the --

PETTY OFFICER SELBY: Thank you, sir.

Q -- you need?

PETTY OFFICER SELBY: Andrew, we'll come back around to that.

Geoff, we can go on to your question.

Q All right. Hi, General, this is Geoff Ziezulewicz with Stars and Stripes. I understand that you guys recently completed the Personnel Asset Inventory for all ANP countrywide. The biometric information taken is also the information, I understand, insurgents -- you receive from insurgents or register insurgents when they're caught. I'm wondering if the PAI revealed any ANP with the same biometric information as previously recorded insurgents? And kind of tied into that, how did the actual, you know, PAI headcount of ANP, how much did that differ from, you know, the kind of informal count you guys had been working for before then?

GEN. BURGIO: I think that we cannot accept former insurgents or former Taliban among the Afghan National Security Forces, obviously, because it means that they could be, for example, people infiltrating. So we cannot accept these guys inside our organization.

Q Yeah, but did they pop up at all in the biometric system once you had, you know, the entire ANP cataloged?

GEN. BURGIO: Yes, this is not really my part of the job, because I am responsible for the training. And the personnel -- (inaudible) -- has been developed by the other part of the police side of NTM-A. So I can talk about what is our policy. For example, some days ago, we discovered with our personnel investigation a Taliban in a training center. He was a Pakistan and with a forged document with a forged letter of recommendation, et cetera. So this is important to understand that we don't need -- we don't use only the technical support of biometrics, et cetera, but sometimes it's also important to use human -- (inaudible) -- and normal investigation. But I repeat, I am not responsible for the Personnel --

Q Well, who's responsible for that question, then, sir? Sir, who's responsible for that -- GEN. BURGIO: Yes, the other part of the police side, because NTM-A is divided in several branch.

Q Sure.

GEN. BURGIO: The police branch is composed -- is led by a Canadian two-star general. Today the new (recon ?) police -- that would be commander of police -- is General (Boera ?). And we have the training side, the CTAG-P -- and I am responsible for CTAG-P. And there is police development side, with Brigadier General Smith U.S. Army, and he is responsible for the reform, the reorganization, the support to the

minister of the interior. So this part of NTMA, the PD part, police development part, is responsible for this part. I am responsible for training, for the recruitment and for the Afghan National Police Training Command.

Q Where was the Pakistani Taliban found --

PETTY OFFICER SELBY: We got to -- Geoff, I'm sorry. We got -- we're going to move on to the next question. We've got to make it around to everybody.

Walter, you were next on the line.

Q Thank you. Walter Pincus from The Washington Post. General Caldwell yesterday was talking about the problem of recruitment, saying with the police that you have to recruit 19,000 more to make your goal. But to recruit 19,000, given the rates of separation, you're going to have to -- he said you'll have to recruit something like 50-some odd thousand people because the retention rate is so low.

So the question is -- or the attrition rate. The question is have you been able to figure out why the attrition rate is so high. Is it because of pay? President Karzai said the other day that the private security guards are paying multiple amounts of money for security guards than you're paying police. So are you finding policemen are leaving and going into security guards? Or what is -- what's the attrition rate beside the number of people that are killed?

GEN. BURGIO: Well, I perfectly agree with the speech of my commander because it perfectly focused on the main issue. I think that the decision now taken by President Karzai to put the private security company under the MOI should solve the big issue of the attrition. The attrition in the past was caused by, for example, the salary because when NTM-A has been activated, the salary of the policeman was lower than the salary of the army. Now there is parity.

Another big issue was the life conditions because working the police means to be deployed in a checkpoint for two or three months with no change -- living, sleeping, eating in the same place, and always also suffering more losses.

Another issue was the presence of the private security companies that -- or the private organizations who provide better salary. With this decision, I hope -- I think that we could slow down the attrition, and we could, I believe, at the same time could increase the retention. Currently, we have to train many policemen to achieve the goals that we have. But I have to point out that our goal for -- we had to achieve the 109K policemen by the end of October, and currently we have more than 110,000 policemen.

So we were able to achieve our first goal. And I repeat, we were able to achieve this goal focusing on quality -- quality of the training, quality of equipment, quality of the life condition, et cetera. Obviously, if we were able to slow down the attrition, as a result we

could increase and expand the period of training. And this is important because a longer training provides better skills. And I believe we could achieve faster our next goal that is, I think, 134K by the end of October 2011.

PETTY OFFICER SELBY: Roger that, sir. And Danielle, you were next on the line.

Q Great, hi, this is Danielle Ivory. I'm calling from Bloomberg Government. Could you please describe the specific measures being taken to protect new recruits to the ANP?

GEN. BURGIO: Can I ask you to repeat question.

MR. : We have to attract --

GEN. BURGIO: Okay. I think that the measure in the quality. Okay. On one hand, now the young guys understand that they could receive a good salary. Another good incentive is the mandatory literacy program, because when NTM-A have been activated, there were no literacy program. It -- there was -- there was a possibility to receive literacy training. Now, literacy is mandatory. Every day, they have their lesson. And when I go to visit the training center, I have the possibility to see these guys, and they are really proud, excited and happy to receive this important training, because in this country for more or less 30 years, it was civil war -- it was very difficult, going to the schools. Now, these guys understand that if they join the police or the army, they could receive this education.

So the other part of the -- of the message is the StratCom message. We are trying to explain to these guys that if they join the police, they will provide security to their country. They could provide security to their family and to their kids because a better Afghanistan needs policemen and soldier to fight the insurgents and to create condition for a peaceful future. Q I'm sorry. I think I didn't articulate my question.

I said to protect the new recruits because it's a dangerous job.

MR. : What measures have you been taking to protect new recruit.

GEN. BURGIO: Okay. I've got it. Okay, this is a big deal because in some provinces we know that insurgents are strong. So what we can do to protect our students -- we can protect our students inside our training center. Obviously, sometimes they are really worried about their families, especially in some provinces.

But, anyway, what we can do is to be present in this area and to fight the Taliban and the insurgents to prevent their actions. I remember, for example, when I arrived here 10 months ago more, or less two-thirds of the action were defensive actions. So ISAF was attacked --

ISAF personnel was attacked by -- they were attacked by Taliban or re-surgents.

Now, the percentage is completely different. Now, two-thirds of the actions are offensive actions. It means that we are pushing against the Taliban. And we can see the effort. This is an indirect protection of our students.

PETTY OFFICER SELBY: Okay. And I believe somebody else had joined us earlier in the call. Was there any -- okay. Well, then, I guess, let's see, I'll go back --

Q Yeah. Hello, I'm sorry.

PETTY OFFICER: Yes. Who is this?

Q It's Shaun Waterman from The Washington Times.

PETTY OFFICER SELBY: Okay. Go ahead, Shaun, with your question.

Q Can I ask whether there is any drug testing for the cadets? I mean, you know, we've seen newspaper reports of police officers who presumably have been through some kind of training course, you know, smoking hashish on the job and so forth.

Do you do any kind of drug testing or counseling? Or what measures are you taking to mitigate that?

GEN. BURGIO: Yes, yes. Absolutely. In the personal threat inventory, there are biometrics. There are the urinalysis, and there are -- there is also the -- there are also drug testers. At the beginning, it was a little bit hard to convince our Afghan counterpart that the best solution is (tolerant, legal ?). But we are trying to -- to achieve this kind of result.

And I want to point out that we don't think that we need only to check our personnel with drug test. We work also to check them in the training center. One week ago, for example, in -- (inaudible) -- we arrested six guys responsible for drug trafficking inside the training center. And they were discovered with investigation. So I want to focus on this part of the activity. We are not here only to train them, but we are here also to screen them and to check what they -- who they are inside the training center.

So, drug test, yes, we are providing drug test. And when we found people positive, we fired these people. But we are also -- we also believe that we have to control what's going on in the training center. And the results, like -- (inaudible) -- show that we have the capability to arrest people that put drugs -- carry drugs inside the training center. This is not the first time, okay?

Q Thank you. Could I also just follow up and ask for a response to a question about --

PETTY OFFICER SELBY: I apologize, but --

Q -- the Pakistani insurgent that you found?

PETTY OFFICER SELBY: Actually, we're going to go ahead and move on to -- I apologize, but we do not have the time right now to do follow-ups with everybody. If you do have follow-up questions, I'll be more than happy to forward them to --

Q Okay. I mean, I just think that a lot of people on the call might be interested to know what had happened to that guy, that Pakistani guy they found.

Q We all have -- you know, we all have follow-up questions.

PETTY OFFICER SELBY: Yeah. We -- yeah. Sorry about that; we don't have time for everybody's follow-up questions.

Q Okay.

PETTY OFFICER SELBY: With that, though, sir, thank you to everybody for your questions and for your comments. Sir, do you have a closing statement you'd like to make?

GEN. BURGIO: Yes. Only one thing. Okay. To solve this big, big, big issue, we need resources but we need time. We are going to receive other human resources, because we are going to receive Canadian policemen, Georgian policemen, and other Carabinieri from Italy, other gendarmes from France, et cetera.

What we need is time, because I always say to my -- to my superior, because -- I spent some year in Italy as a provincial commander in a particular areas in which organized crime is very strong. And I always say to my bosses, to my commander, we need time. We cannot solve this problem in one year. We cannot solve this problem in one month because the main challenge is the changing of the mindset. Changing the mindset means working for years. If the international community will be able to push in the same direction for years, we could achieve some results.

PETTY OFFICER SELBY: Thank you very much, sir. And once again, thank you to everybody for your questions. Today's program will be available online at the Bloggers Roundtable link on DoDlive.mil, where you'll be able to access a story based on today's call along with source documents such as the bios, the audio file and print transcript.

Again, thank you, sir, and our blogger and journalists who have participated today. This concludes today's event. Feel free to disconnect at this time.

END.