



For Immediate Release:
April 10, 2011

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Infrastructure Planning Conference highlights upcoming ANA facilities

Several members of the Afghanistan Engineer District South participated in the ISAF Regional Command Infrastructure Planning Conference at the 205th Corps, Afghan National Army, at Camp Hero on March 23.

Conference participants included the engineer staffs from an array of military partners and stakeholders, all of whom play a role in building ANSF infrastructure. Attending were representatives from the NATO Training Mission-Afghanistan/ Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan (NTM-A/CSTC-A), ISAF Joint Command (IJC), the 205th Hero Corps Coalition Advisory Team, U.S. Forces-Afghanistan, the Joint Program Integration Office and AED-South.

In his opening remarks, Australian Lt. Col. Guy A. M. Moten, military advisor from the Coalition Advisory Team, said the conference focuses on discussing projects to ensure the ANA has adequate facilities. The Coalition Advisory Team – with members from Australia, Canada, the United Kingdom and the United States – mentors the ANA at Camp Hero.

“The facilities must be suited to the ANA – to their way of doing business and their way of living,” Moten said. “Infrastructure planning needs ANA input, consultation and acceptance as well as (consideration of) their capability to support their activities now and into the future – 10 or 20 years from now. This is particularly relevant when ISAF or coalition support is likely to be limited in the future, and the ANA will be responsible to maintain their own facilities.”

Infrastructure planning conferences are held in each Region about every four months, according to Lt. Col. John Wranek from IJC Security Partnering, Combined Joint Engineer Branch. “These conferences provide us with the



Engineers from several agencies gathered for the ISAF Regional Command Infrastructure Planning Conference at the 205th Corps, Afghan National Army, at Camp Hero.

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opportunity to plan and review the final lay down of permanent infrastructure for the ANA and ANP (Afghan National Police) units.

“The planning conferences have different focuses depending on where they’re held,” Wranek said. “At this conference, we’re focused mainly on ANA facilities since this is the priority for Regional Command South.”

Moten said that the 205th Corps is one of the leading ANA units as far as its capabilities to accomplish its mission, with much of the infrastructure already in place to support its soldiers. However, more facilities are needed at this strategically important camp located near Kandahar.

AED-South, through the Kandahar Vicinity Resident Office, has been responsible for the expansion of Camp Hero over the last six months.

“I want USACE educated about the upcoming program for the 205th Corps,” said U.S. Navy Cmdr. Mark Edelson, NTM-A Engineer.

AED-South expects to award projects that total nearly \$2 billion in fiscal year 2011 and projects estimated at \$1.5 billion in fiscal 2012. The preponderance of this work is for Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF). In fiscal 2011, just over half the program value is for ANSF projects; in 2012, that percentage rises to two-thirds of the program value.

“For us, attending these conferences helps us encompass the end users’ needs,” said Joseph Moyer, ANSF program manager, AED-South.

“Knowing the planned facilities helps us prepare for work that’s coming,” said Paul Apodaca, resident engineer for AED-South’s Kandahar Vicinity Resident Office. “This knowledge allows us to integrate the proposed work with how we construct the on-going projects to make sure it all integrates as planned.”

Conference participants exchanged information and discussed potential issues at each location where ANA units will be fielded.

Since units are being fielded quickly, some must move into temporary facilities. “We can move infantry units into an area with tents and other temporary structures relatively quickly, but we have to do more detailed planning for the specialty battalions, like engineer units,” Edelson said.

Wranek said that at the national level, IJC and NTM-A works closely with the Afghan Ministries of Defense and Interior to align facility requirements with the needs of the ANA and the ANP. Concurrently, units like the Australian Coalition Advisory Team function as the liaison between the 205th Corps and Regional Command South for issues dealing with the ANA garrison.

“Living conditions affect the morale and health of soldiers,” Edelson said. “Brigade camps are important for the overall health of the fighting force, and we must continue to take steps to improve the living conditions as these soldiers are rapidly fielded.”