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Afghan and U.S. partners celebrate completion of airfield at Tarin Kowt

KANDAHAR Airfield, Afghanistan – A ribbon-cutting ceremony to celebrate the completion of an airfield project at Multinational Base Tarin Kowt truly demonstrates the international commitment to this valley in the Uruzgan province.

The new 7,300-foot runway and associated facilities at Tarin Kowt will provide significant benefits for both the military and civilian communities well into the future.

“This project represents a partnership between the coalition forces and the people of the Uruzgan province,” said Col. James Creighton, commander, ISAF Combined Team Uruzgan (CTU). “It is a symbol of the security that is now present here that will allow the civilian leadership to focus on economic and political growth.”

“On behalf of Australia, this project invests in the future of Uruzgan and will lead to good things in the future,” said Paul Foley, the Australian ambassador. “I look forward to coming back in 20 years with my grandchildren, flying in a civilian jet, and telling them we were here when this started.”

More than 175 Afghan and U.S. civilian and military members gathered for the ribbon cutting. Speakers included Mohammad Omer Shirzad, the Uruzgan provincial governor; Mehdi Saeedi, the deputy minister of transportation; Col. Anthony C. Funkhouser, commander, Afghanistan Engineer District South; and Munci Doganci, vice president of Kandahar Constructors.

Also attending were Uruzgan community leaders, Afghan National Army soldiers, Afghan National Police officers, and members of the Uruzgan provincial reconstruction team, Task Force Attack, AED-South and CTU. CTU is the multinational brigade-level headquarters responsible for mentoring Afghan National Security Forces in the Uruzgan province. It consists of personnel from the United States, Australia, New Zealand, Singapore and Slovakia.

Funkhouser also noted the value of the airfield project for the coalition and its partners. “The project is important for airfield operations now, and it will provide civil aviation for this region of Afghanistan,” he said. To the Afghans, he said, “it is a concrete form that will provide a strong foundation for your security, development and commerce.”

Funkhouser also thanked Creighton for supporting the project while the old landing strip was still in operation. To Kandahar Constructors, Funkhouser said, “You’ve provided quality that will last this region for years.”

AED-South was responsible for the nearly \$30 million project, which consisted of a paved runway, a rotary wing helicopter apron and taxiways, an airlift apron for fixed wing parking, and a cargo handling area.

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Afghan and U.S. officials participate in the ribbon-cutting ceremony at Multinational Base Tarin Kowt on April 14.



The new runway at Tarin Kowt.