



COL Kevin Wilson

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Over the past nine months I have witnessed the transformation of the Kandahar Program Office into the Afghanistan Engineer District – South. It has been rewarding to watch the transformation and I realize there are a lot of folks who work very hard every day to make it a success.

So what's on the horizon for us? We have a number of road projects in the development phase, everything from small low water crossings, to bridge rehabs; to larger projects like the Kandahar City by-pass road and the Panjuway bridge on the west side of Kandahar. The real big project looming on the horizon is the Laman to Qaysar Highway 1 road project. It is the upgrade of the final 213 km leg of the national ring road in RC-West, and considered the Signature Road project for all of Afghanistan by both GIRoA and ISAF. Completion of this road opens economic opportunities to the industrial region of Herat as well as agricultural markets for produce grown in the Helmand and Argandab valleys. The Asian Development Bank is the sponsor of the project and we have worked with them since November when they approached about executing the project. An investment of this magnitude in an area as challenging as this from both a physical as well as security standpoint is not something you rush into. We continue to work with the senior levels of the Asian Development Bank as they weigh the risk versus the benefits of the project.

On the power side working with RC-South, the Regional [interagency] Platform- South and USAID we are developing a strategy to upgrade the electrical distribution in Kandahar City, the electrical transmission lines and substations from Kajaki Dam as well as some day upgrading Kajaki Dam itself. This is about partnering with different agencies and leveraging the strengths each other strengths in order to make a difference in the lives of the Afghan people.

AES has a very bright future in Afghanistan. And we have a lot to offer the coalition COIN strategy that will ultimately set Afghanistan on a course for prosperity which will ultimately drive to a more secure nation. It is something we can all be proud and excited about making a difference.

Inshalla.