

Headquarters

International Security Assistance Force Kabul, Afghanistan



31 MAY 10

TO:

See Distribution

SUBJECT: ENGAGEMENT WITH AFGHAN FEMALES DIRECTIVE

REFERENCES:

- ISAF OPORD 2009- OP ERADE QAWI, dated 12 OCT 09.
- ISAF COMMANDER'S COUNTERINSURGENCY GUIDANCE. 25 AUG 09
- NATO BI-SC DIRECTIVE 40-1 "INTEGRATING UNSCR 1325 AND GENDER PERSPECTIVES IN THE NATO COMMAND STRUCTURE INCLUDING MFASURES FOR PROTECTION DURING ARMED CONFLICT".
- 1. **Purpose.** To provide guidance and intent for standardizing engagements with Afghan females by International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) units. This directive intends to enable ISAF units to conduct engagements with the Afghan female population in a culturally respectful manner in order to build confidence and support for the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GIRoA) and ISAF.
- 2. Scope. This directive applies to all ISAF subordinate commands and all forces operating under operational or tactical control of US Forces-Afghanistan (USFOR-A). Wherever this directive refers to ISAF Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) or Fragmentary Orders (FRAGO), USFOR-A forces will refer to comparable USFOR-A SOPs and FRAGOs where applicable; otherwise, they will follow ISAF guidance.

3. Commander's Intent:

- a. GIRoA faces two daunting tasks: protecting and gaining the support of the Afghan population and defeating the insurgency that challenges its sovereignty. ISAF's mission is to assist GIRoA in accomplishing these tasks. ISAF will engage with the local population to develop trust-based and enduring relationships as a method to assist GIRoA in overcoming these challenges.
- b. Afghan females account for nearly half of the Afghan population and their influence on Afghan society is considerable even when considering local social

norms. Therefore, it is important that we conduct engagements with Afghan females to support the battle space owners' priorities, including, but not limited to, comprehensive understanding of the operating environment, civil-military operations, medical capabilities visits, and educational programs. As previously stated, these engagements must be conducted in a culturally respectful manner.

c. Understanding that Troop Contributing Nations (TCNs) vary in the gender composition of their units and in their National laws and policies regarding the deployment of their female personnel, this directive is intended to allow flexibility in its application. However, my intent is that all units implement this directive and that TCNs resource, train and employ females for duty on engagement teams to the maximum extent practicable.

4. Guidance For Female Engagements

- a. **Composition:** Engagement teams, which should include female members of the appropriate rank, experience, and maturity, will be integrated into operational units for enhanced effectiveness and accomplishment of the battle space owners' priorities. Teams and patrols that include both male and female members have been shown to provide a good balance between security, capabilities to engage both the Afghan males and females, and serve as a force multiplier when allocating the limited number of female engagers. Battle space owners have the flexibility to tailor the composition of their engagement teams to suit missions and the operational environment, as necessary.
- b. **Training**: Engagement team members should be identified and trained, both individually and collectively prior to deployment. However, such staffing and training may not be feasible for many TCNs prior to deployment. If engagement team members are task organized and assigned once in theater, they still require adequate training in order to engage the Afghan population. In such cases, the COIN Training Center-Afghanistan and other in-theater resources can be utilized to accomplish required training, where available. The following areas have been identified as necessary in the training of engagement teams:
 - (1) Engagement techniques;
 - (2) Roles of male and female members in the local Afghan society;
 - (3) Cultural sensitivities of males and females in the local Afghan society;
 - (4) Basic local Dari or Pashtu language phrases and oral communication at the national equivalents to the U.S. Defense Language Institute O+ level (comprehend memorized phrases, ask questions, or make statements using rehearsed sentences to satisfy immediate needs);

- (5) Information collection, reporting requirements, and associated systems;
- (6) Tactical patrolling, movements, and basic defensive skills.
- c. Planning and Engaging: The involvement of females on engagement teams must be included from the outset of the planning process and must be in support of the battle space owners' priorities. Early identification of the information required or other objectives to be achieved will enable better overall mission planning by the engagement teams and other associated forces. When planning for engagements, identify opportunities to engage with Afghan females during interactions with key leaders and village elders. When invited to conduct engagements with Afghan females, develop trust-based, enduring, and dynamic information-sharing relationships that assist GIRoA and the battle space owner in addressing the sources of instability in the area.
- d. **Cultural Sensitivities:** Engagement teams must defer to local customs and traditions, particularly the respect for the traditional roles of men and women in Afghan society. Deference to the male role in Afghan society requires support and partnership between the male and female members of the engagement teams. Only engagements which are supported by the local community should be pursued.
- e. Community Involvement and Partnering: Community involvement in the engagement process should be obtained so that engagements with Afghan females provide support to local security, governance, development, and the overall needs of the community. Once invited into an engagement with Afghan females, teams should enter with female Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) partners where possible. Recent positive developments in the recruitment, training, and employment of women in the ANSF provide growing opportunities to partner while engaging with Afghan females. Where practicable, female ANSF members that speak English should be recruited and utilized to mitigate the critical shortage of female translators.
- f. Information versus Intelligence: Engagement teams should not be tasked to directly gather intelligence for deliberate offensive operations. However, engagement teams, Stability Operations Information Centers, and the intelligence community are encouraged to share local Afghan priorities, sources of instability, and other information to comprehensively understand the operating environment.
- g. **Reporting:** Upon completion of each engagement, teams must share their information with each other to ensure common understanding. Teams are required to report their information into the Combined Information Data Network Exchange (CIDNE) system for collection, storage, and dissemination.

- h. **Continuous Improvement:** Commanders will continuously monitor and assess the implementation and operation of engagement teams in accordance with this directive. Where observations, lessons, or best practices (OLBP) are identified in the field, those will be fed into the ISAF Lessons Learned process so that others forces across Afghanistan and in TCNs may benefit. The chain of command, members of CJ37, the COIN Training Center-Afghanistan, and the COIN Advisory and Assistance Team are to assist in the training of engagement teams, the identification of needs, and the rapid dissemination of these OLBPs throughout ISAF.
- 5. **Conclusion:** Engagement teams offer an additional opportunity to assist GIRoA in protecting and earning the support of the Afghan population. By utilizing our female troops in accordance with this directive, we have an opportunity to greatly expand the portion of the population with which we engage. I expect leaders at all levels to employ this critical mission-enabler as another means of effective counterinsurgency.

STANLEY A. MCCHRYSTAL

General - U.S. Army

Commander,

International Security Assistance Force/ United States Forces - Afghanistan

DISTRIBUTION:

External -

Action:

COM IJC COM ISAF SOFC FACC CJSOTFCOM TF-714 CSTC-A NTM-A

Information:

SACEUR COM JFCB

CG USCENTCOM

Internal -

Action: List A, B, J