



**HEADQUARTERS**  
United States Forces-Afghanistan  
Kabul, Afghanistan  
APO AE 09356

TO: See Distribution

SUBJECT: AFGHANISTAN-PAKISTAN HANDS PROGRAM  
IMPLEMENTATION DIRECTIVE

DATE: 4 October 2010

REFERENCES: A. Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Instruction (CJCSI) 1630.01, Afghanistan/Pakistan Hands (APH) Program (3 Sep 2010).  
B. COMISAF/CDR USFOR-A Counterinsurgency (COIN) Guidance (1 August 2010).

1. **Purpose.** To provide guidance and intent for the appropriate assignment and employment of personnel in the Afghanistan/Pakistan Hands program in positions that are consistent with the spirit and intent of their training in support of COIN operations. This directive applies to all Afghan Hands operating in theater and to commanders at all levels who supervise in-theater billets filled by Afghan Hands personnel.

2. **Definitions.**

a. **Afghanistan Hands (Afghan Hands):** A cadre of military and civilian personnel who receive regional language, culture, and COIN training for deployment to key billets in Afghanistan. Afghan Hands are placed in key positions where they will engage directly with Afghan officials and with the Afghan population. Upon completion of in-theater deployment, Afghan Hands will be assigned to key out-of-theater billets where their in-country experience will be applied to their work on regional issues of Afghanistan.

b. **The Joint Staff Pakistan Afghanistan Coordination Cell (PACC):** The Joint Staff directorate that provides the guidance and oversight to the APH program.

c. **Afghanistan/Pakistan Management Element (AME):** The organization residing at the PACC that is responsible for managing the APH program. The AME coordinates the assignment of Afghan Hands for training, in-theater billets, and out-of-theater billets. In the Afghanistan theater of operations, the in-theater AME resides under the USFOR-A Deputy Commander for Support. The in-theater AME is responsible for executing the Afghan Hands program in accordance with governing references, and for ensuring all Afghan Hands are in key billets and being employed in ways that are consistent with the intent of the program. The in-theater AME has complete authority to move Afghan Hands out of positions that are not congruent with the program's intent.

3. **Commander's Intent.**

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a. **Mission and Expectations.** The mission of Afghan Hands is to build enduring relationships and positive partnerships with the people and Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GIRoA). Afghan Hands have three key tasks to perform in this COIN environment, where the human terrain is the decisive terrain:

(1) to establish and nurture long-lasting positive relationships within the Afghan population and the Afghan government in order to demonstrate resolve to helping build a more peaceful, prosperous, and stable Afghan nation;

(2) to empower GIRoA entities on local and national levels while building capacity and capability; and

(3) to improve multi-cultural and multi-functional teams (GIRoA, ISAF/NATO, USG, NGOs) by breaking through barriers to effective communications and by developing trust through collaboration and the sharing of best practices and lessons learned.

b. **Training and Sponsorship.** Afghan Hands will complete approximately five months of combat skills, cultural, and language training before deployment. Upon arrival in theater, they will complete specific COIN, cultural, and language refresher training, followed by a four-week immersion program in an area outside their ultimate duty assignment. Throughout their time in the program, whether in theater or out, Afghan Hands must devote time every day to maintaining their language proficiency and to continually learning more about the people, culture, and governance of Afghanistan. Those who sponsor incoming Afghan Hands should contact them at least 90 days prior to their arrival in theater in order to help develop their understanding of the mission and situation as early as possible. Effective sponsors will enhance the reception and orientation of Afghan Hands by understanding the strategic importance of the program's mission.

c. **Assignment and Immersion.** Given our training investment in Afghan Hands and the enormous potential they possess to be force multipliers in this COIN environment, we must ensure they are assigned to the right positions to be effective in building productive relationships. Because we are still in the early stages of developing this program, some manning documents may not yet be reflective of the critical positions in which we need to place Afghan Hands; commanders and their staffs must respond to this discrepancy with innovative and individualized schemes of employment for their Afghan Hands that meet the intent of the program. The most effective and productive Afghan Hands will be in assignments that enable them to live among the Afghan people. By speaking, eating, living, and learning side by side with Afghans, whether with Afghan National Security Forces, GIRoA, or economic development implementing partners, our Afghan Hands will build the trust necessary to create enduring partnerships.

d. **Mission Approval.** The Afghan Hands Mission Approval Process serves as a tool to help define and mitigate risk and will be issued as a separate directive. Individual commanders maintain approval authority for all Afghan Hand missions;

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however the level of mission approval required depends on the specific risk assessment. Afghan Hands will not authorize their own missions, and are responsible for gaining mission approval prior to executing any operation outside host organization standard operating procedures, or outside local force protection and movement control policies.

e. **Risk Assessment.** After obtaining mission approval and before executing any non-standard movements, Afghan Hands will conduct a personal risk assessment given local threat conditions. The mission of our Afghan Hands may require them to wear civilian attire, to maintain relaxed grooming standards, to travel in non-tactical civilian vehicles, and to interact with people and leaders outside of secure installations if authorized by appropriate authority. In some cases, they may even live in houses outside secure military installations. Afghan Hands require more freedom of movement than other personnel and should, through their commands, develop creative measures to further enhance their movements and engagement with the local populace. Nonetheless, Afghan Hands and commanders at all levels must continually assess the security environment, make informed risk assessments, and take appropriate precautions to mitigate risk as much as possible before conducting any operations. In all cases, I expect commanders to make a final determination on the costs versus benefits of any operation and to direct appropriate measures to ensure personal security when local threat conditions are elevated.

g. **Reporting.** Afghan Hands will provide monthly operational reports to their chains of command and to the AME, to include perceived personal risk and threat assessments of travelled areas. Through this reporting, we will capitalize on the powerful network of Afghan Hands to share information, best practices, and lessons learned. SharePoint and other databases available in theater will be leveraged to support this fusion of information. We have an opportunity here to develop an element throughout our forces that is flexible enough to react to an ever-changing environment and enemy. Reporting and disseminating valuable information through the Afghan Hands is the final phase in an operational cycle that will allow them to be a vital contributor to the success of our overall COIN campaign.

4. Please direct questions concerning Afghan Hands assignments or Afghan Hands reception, training, and immersion to the Director of the AME at USFOR-A at 318-237-1760 or email [afghan\\_hands@afghan.swa.army.mil](mailto:afghan_hands@afghan.swa.army.mil).



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