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ANA ADIO

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Abstract

This paper describes the complex process of training the Afghan National Army (ANA) in the ways of Psychological Operations during OEF 08. This paper includes the process used by the SFC Rod Quinn, the MTT NCOIC, and others on the MTT used to develop a formalized POI and standard classes that were to be taught to all ANA AIDO students. The paper also includes how the process was hindered by the Afghans lack of knowledge in the Tactical use of PSYOP.

ANA AIDO

One of the main functions of Psychological Operations is to do Face-to-Face communication in foreign countries. This is one of the best ways to put the maneuver commander's message out and at the same time develop passive intelligence. Anytime you are working with a country's military side by side and dealing with its local populace, it is advantageous to put a local face (the local military) to what you are trying to accomplish. This helps with the "Hearts and Minds" philosophy that PSYOP is best known for and takes away the "occupation" mindset of the locals.

Since 2004, there has been some type of training the Afghan National Army (ANA) in the ways of Psychological Operations by the PSYOP teams on the ground. This training was always done hit and miss, team to team without any formal POI. Each PSYOP team worked with the local ANA (if the US PSYOP team wanted to) and taught them PSYOP. The PSYOP team was left to its own devices to come up with lesson plans and classes. For obvious reasons this was not an ideal situation and was not working very well. Many soldiers in both armies were left confused and disenchanted. It was determined that during the 315th Tactical PSYOP Company's OEF 08 rotation, a formalized POI and Class structure would be developed. Additionally it was determined that a Mobile Training Team (MTT) would be assembled and that only this team would do the training of the ANA in Afghan Information Dissemination Operations (AIDO).

The first thing the MTT NCOIC did was assemble a small instructor cadre and begin researching if there was any formal training POI being done by other PSYOP soldiers in other countries. When it was determined that there was nothing being done in Iraq, the Philippines or anywhere else, the MTT went about designing the course. One of

the first things decided upon was the name; Afghan Information Dissemination Operations. Even though Information Operations has nothing to do with Psychological Operations, it was determined to use this title for language translation purposes.

Since many of the ANA did not speak English, an interpreter who could read, write and speak both Dari and Pashtu was needed to assist in the teaching of all classes. This was because the Afghan Soldiers all came from different parts of the country and some spoke the different dialects any many did not speak English.

It was decided to make the course a 30 day program broken down into three phases. Phase One teaches the basic introductory skills of Information Dissemination Operation (IDO) to include: types of product, media interaction, mounted and dismounted dissemination. ANA Soldiers practiced using the product and role played potential contact with the media to identify and correct potential deficiencies. Phase One concluded with a six hour FTX that will put the ANA Soldier in a functional situation for them to utilize the lessons taught.

Phase Two begins with a quick review of Phase One lessons (this is in place in case there is a gap between phase one and phase two). The primary emphasis of this phase is Face-to-Face communication. Using Talking Points, the ANA Soldier demonstrated a basic level of familiarity and felt comfortable speaking to locals, key leaders, and media in varying situations. Role playing is again used as a vital teaching tool. Phase Two continues with the introduction of the Man-Pack (a loudspeaker system us by US PSYOP Soldiers). Since the Man-Pack is not an available piece of equipment in the Afghan Army, the ANA Soldiers were taught how to employ a handheld PA

device. This phase concluded with an FTX requiring the ANA Soldier to deploy each system and broadcast a message.

Phase Three incorporated all aspects of IDO and included mission planning and developing battle drills unique to ANA AIDO Soldiers. At the conclusion of this phase the ANA Soldier was presented with different scenarios and was required to respond within a reasonable amount of time with the appropriate IDO product (all product will have been pre-approved by the CJPOTF).

The 37F MOSQ re-class POI and classes were used as the foundation for the AIDO program. Only certain classes were selected to be used for this course since not all classes taught to US Soldiers were going to be needed for the Afghan Soldiers. Once the classes were determined, all power point presentations had to be re done in English (for the instructors), Dari and Pashtu. Any pictures of American Soldiers had to be replaced with Afghan Soldiers and the program was sanitized to be strictly Afghan in nature.

Once everything was together, ANA soldiers had to be selected for the class. Soldiers were selected who were above average in intelligence. They had to be able to read and write. Soldiers were picked from throughout the 205th ANA Corps. Picking the soldiers was easier than getting them. Their command was reluctant to let them go as they were some of the Corps best soldiers. Finally we were given 23 soldiers to start with. Not all were the ones selected. Numerous problems arose from that first class. The ANA soldiers were still tasked to do jobs with the Corps and some were even sent on missions in the middle of the class. Even with all these distractions and interruptions, we were still able to graduate 15 ANA soldiers from the course. These soldiers were sent back to their units where they were put back into their old jobs. This presented a major

problem as the ANA soldiers were trained, but were not put into an “AIDO” position back at their unit. All their training was wasted. The problem came from the structure of the Afghan Army. While the Corps Commanders were General rank, sometimes they did not have control over all of their assets. Some battalions acted as independent units and did as they wished. Another problem that came to light was that the soldiers were having their certificates stolen by other soldiers so they could say they had been trained. A solution to this problem was to have each soldier’s picture place on the certificate so there would be doubt as to who was an AIDO graduate. This seemed to stop the certificate theft.

Similar problems existed within the 207th and 209th Corps. Currently the ANA is not designed to integrated AIDO units. The companies, battalions, brigades where the trained soldiers were stationed did use them sporadically, but not always in a manner they were trained for.

After much discussion it was decided to reverse course and have the MTT train an ADIO team at the company level. An ANA Company consists of around 40 soldiers. This is not the optimal way to train soldiers as only 3-4 soldiers were being trained instead of a normal class of around 40.

Even though a small number of soldiers were being trained, the company commanders were also being trained in tactical AIDO so they knew how to deploy the team and the benefits of have an AIDO team within their company. One way the AIDO team was given credibility was anytime an ANA soldier wanted a product or novelty item, they had to go through their company’s AIDO team. The US PSYOP teams would not give these items to the regular ANA soldier. Many ANA soldiers would want the

novelty items (backpacks, soccer balls, afghan flags, etc) so they could take them home. This was allowed as they too were Afghanistan nationals. By doing this, it became known to fellow ANA soldiers and the local populace that only the Afghan AIOD soldiers had the items people wanted.

While this program was successful, there is still more to do to improve the program. These changes need to come from both the bottom up and the top down.