

Testimony
of
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Hearing on Afghan National Security Forces Training Contracts

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WRITTEN TESTIMONY OF RICHARD C. NICKERSON

Good Morning, Co-Chairmen Thibault and Congressman Shays, and members of the Commission. My name is Richard Nickerson. I am the Program Manager of the MPRI contract for the Afghan National Security Sector (ANSS) Development and Fielding Program in Afghanistan. I am pleased to have this opportunity to talk about this contract and the ways in which MPRI is contributing to the strategic goals of the U.S. Government and, in particular, to the objectives of the NATO Military Training Mission – Afghanistan (NMT-A) / Combined Security Transition Command – Afghanistan (CSTC-A). (For brevity purposes, I will refer to this multi-national organization as “CSTC-A” throughout my testimony.)

The Commission has asked us to address four specific aspects of the ANSS contract:

- Lessons learned by MPRI in supporting ANSF training efforts
- The role of MPRI in supporting the training of the ANSF, including any contractor and sub-contractor involvement in the construction of training facilities in Afghanistan
- Benefits and limitations of MPRI in the training and mentoring of ANSF
- Integration of MPRI’s training efforts with those of the military trainers

MPRI is proud of our role in this program and appreciates this opportunity to respond to the Commission’s questions and to elaborate on what we believe has been a very positive and productive contribution to the success of CSTC-A’s overall task to train the ANSF. As we begin, there are two caveats of which the Commission should be aware - caveats that are driven by the ongoing competitive contracting process and that will to some extent shape or limit our answers to your questions.

- The ANSS contract, for which we are the prime contractor, is in the process of being re-competed. MPRI has submitted a proposal for this effort and, thus, cannot divulge any competition-sensitive information. The Government anticipates a contract award in January 2010.
- MPRI is also competing for other contracts that involve competition-sensitive information.

Background

MPRI’s support to the US military for the training of the ANSF began in October 2002 with the dispatch of an assessment team to Kabul at the behest of the US Central Command (CENTCOM) and the Joint Staff. This team was tasked to develop an Action Plan for the rapid development of the Ministry of Defense, the General Staff, and the Afghan National Army – the core of Afghan security in the immediate post-Taliban period. Following the development and promulgation of the Action Plan, MPRI was further tasked to begin implementation of the Plan on a time-urgent basis. Over the

ensuing years, the program evolved through both emerging requirements and sequential contract vehicles. The ANSS contract was awarded to MPRI in 2005 and will expire with the award of the recompleted contract.

The Contract

In accordance with the basic Statement of Work, MPRI is tasked to “provide dedicated, in-depth mentoring, training, subject matter expertise, and programmatic support to CSTC-A staff and the Afghan MOD.” As such, we assist CSTC-A in accomplishing its mission to train and prepare the Afghan security sector and the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) to assume responsibility for the security of Afghanistan and the protection of the Afghan people. As outlined in the terms of the contract and at the direction of CSTC-A, MPRI fulfills the following major functions:

- **Ministry of Defense and General Staff.** Working under the guidance of CSTC-A, MPRI provides “trainers, mentors and system developers to the Afghan MOD and GS to assist in the design, organizational structure, functional assignments and individual capacity to execute the duties and responsibilities for every position within both institutions.” We train both Afghan civilian and military personnel. Additionally, along with CSTC-A, we participate in the development of MOD policies, regulations and implementing instructions for key core systems including:

- Executive office management
- Parliamentary affairs
- Strategic defense planning
- Disaster response and relief
- Personnel management
- Office of the National Security Council
- Intelligence
- Operational planning
- Doctrine development
- Readiness reporting
- Training management
- Mentoring for the 1st Deputy MOD
- Logistics
- Acquisition
- Command and control
- Force management
- Budget development
- Military justice
- Public affairs
- Inspector general
- Installation management
- Medical and health care
- Non-commissioned corps

As the Afghans continue to gain professional proficiency and capacity, our support evolves from trainers and system developers to individual and organizational mentors. As mentors, we assist in refining management systems and in the execution of the myriad daily duties required to maintain an effective defense organization.

- **Afghan National Army.** MPRI provides training support to CSTC-A’s Task Force Phoenix in each of the five Afghan National Army Corps, the Capital Division and selected brigades. At the direction of – and in conjunction with – CSTC-A and Regional Support Teams, we teach a wide range of tactical military skills across the spectrum of military operations. We also assist in the crafting of Afghan military doctrine and training publications in support of the Afghan National Army Training Command. We not only

train in Kabul but also have been tasked to provide mentors and Mobile Training Teams at each Afghan Corps.

- Ministry of Interior. Following the capacity building model that has proven successful in the MOD, MPRI was directed to mount a parallel effort in the Ministry of the Interior. Under the direction of CSTC-A, we provide mentors dedicated to developing core systems essential to the operation of the MOI, including:

- Personnel
- Police intelligence
- Readiness reporting
- Operational planning
- Logistics
- Strategic planning
- Parliamentary affairs
- Communications/Info Tech
- Force management
- Doctrine development
- Programming
- Budget development
- Installation management
- Public affairs
- Executive office management
- Acquisition/procurement.

As with the MOD, MPRI personnel are assisting in refining the systems, supporting the Afghans in their development of policies and implementing regulations, and mentoring senior Ministry of Interior officials, both civilian and uniformed.

- Specialty Training. Under the terms of the contract, CSTC-A has assigned MPRI to provide support to a number of high priority efforts including:

- Senior Leader Seminars: These are seminars on critical operations and management topics. The seminars are geared to MOD, MOI, ANA and Afghan National Police (ANP) senior leaders at the Minister, Deputy Minister, and senior General Officer level. This venue enables the senior leaders from all security sector institutions to develop common management systems, strategies and operational perspectives.
- Detainee Guard Force: MPRI was tasked by CSTC-A to form and train the Afghan guard force currently securing the military side of the *Pol-i-Charki* Prison, the Afghan National Detention Facility. We continue to monitor the performance of the guard force and mentor each guard shift.
- Special Unit Mentoring: We provide trainers and mentors for:
 - The Air Corps
 - The Intelligence School
 - The Communications Support Element,
 - The Operational Coordination Centers
 - The Kabul Military Training Center Garrison Staff
 - The Consolidated Fielding Center
 - The National Police Coordination Center
 - The National Military Command Center

- The Remote Basic Warrior Training Sites
- The Counter-Insurgency Center/School
- The Regional Military Training Centers
- The Kabul and regional Military Hospitals.
- The End User Monitoring program
- The Forward Support Depot
- Unit Validation Teams
- Advanced Combat Training

Discussion Topics

As requested by the Commission, MPRI is pleased to provide our perspectives on the following topics.

1. Lessons learned by contractors supporting ANSF training efforts. Within the context of MPRI's current contract, MPRI suggests the following "lessons learned" with respect to contractor support to ANSF training efforts.
 - The ANSS program benefits from Security Sector compatibility. In our work in Afghanistan – and in other countries - MPRI has learned that it is essential that there be compatible operational and management systems between the Ministries; common training methodologies; integrated, dual-use systems; combined command and control organizations, and perhaps most importantly, active communications. In this context, and at the direction of CSTC-A, MPRI has worked to develop coordination and compatibility between the various Afghan national security institutions and to encourage interpersonal and professional ties among the Afghans.
 - Experienced, competent and credible trainers are crucial. Afghanistan's lack of critical national security sector institutions in the post-Taliban era underscores the importance of qualified trainers. The urgency, complexity and scale of CSTC-A's training mission require trainers with substantial training experience, who understand training doctrine, are current in training methodologies, and can hit the ground running. This program does not lend itself to inexperienced contractor personnel, nor is this the place for on-the-job-training.
 - Cultural Awareness must shape training programs. Cultural awareness is critical for program success, and contractors must adjust and adapt the training programs, workloads and schedules to conform to cultural mandates and sensitivities. Perhaps the best known example of this is the impact of high illiteracy rates within the ANSF. This reality requires that contractors adopt an imaginative and creative design of programs of instruction (POIs), training materials and teaching methodologies.
 - Afghan Partners must be treated with Dignity and Respect. The Afghans are proud and courageous people who can absorb training and knowledge at a

blistering pace. MPRI has learned that treating the Afghans as partners and colleagues – rather than as supplicants and clients - generates a positive learning environment and magnifies the value of the training they receive. This sort of respect is axiomatic in any training program, but it is particularly vital in Afghanistan.

- Training Systems should empower the ANSF. CSTC-A's training focuses upon empowering the ANSF to be fully capable of defending Afghanistan's territory and protecting the Afghan people. In this context, contractors must focus on both near-term training tasks and on the development of sustainable Afghan training systems.
- **Ethics and Quality Matter.** As part of the overall CSTC-A team, contractors must demonstrate ethical behavior, integrity and high quality. Contractors are seen as representing the United States. As such, they serve as examples for the Afghans they mentor and train.

2. Role of MPRI in supporting the training of the ANSF, including any contractor and sub-contractor involvement in the construction of training facilities in Afghanistan. As detailed in the description of the contract outlined above, MPRI's role in supporting the training of the ANSS includes:

- Capacity building in the MOD and NSC
- Capacity building in the MOI (DynCorp also performs work in the MOI under a separate contract with the Department of State)
- Training selected elements of the ANA
- Specialty training

Neither MPRI nor its sub-contractors has any role in the construction of training facilities in Afghanistan.

3. Benefits and Limitations of Contractors in the training and mentoring of ANSF. MPRI believes that there are significant benefits that accrue to the Government as a result of using contractors in training and mentoring the ANSF. The benefits include:

- Continuity and Durability. The staying power of the private sector affords stability to CSTC-A's overall program. Many of MPRI's personnel have been in Afghanistan for years – some since the fall of the Taliban. By contrast, military forces must routinely rotate into and out of the theater, based on national tours of service length and the demands of individual career management. The private sector provides continuity which increases the efficiency and effectiveness of training and readiness.
- Long-term Relationship Building. Because of their staying power, contractors have a unique opportunity to build long-term professional relationships

throughout the Afghan national security sector and within the ANSF. By building relationships with their Afghan counterparts, mentors and trainers earn the Afghans' trust and respect. This significantly increases the willingness of the Afghan senior leaders and officers to accept and implement the concepts being presented, many of which require the Afghans to move beyond past management and training methodologies.

- Agility and Responsiveness. In the context of contractual limits, contractors have the ability to adapt quickly to changing USG needs and can rapidly replace, augment, reduce or refocus the trainers and mentors as needed. Contractors can also quickly undertake new or modified missions, and can provide immediate support to training “surges” until military personnel and units can be deployed to assume those responsibilities.
- Augmenting Scarce Skill Sets. In a similar vein, contractors can provide scarce skill sets which frees up active duty military for other priority responsibilities and missions. In Afghanistan, these scarce skill sets include:
 - Planning, Programming and Budgeting
 - Institutional Capacity Building
 - National Security System development and training
 - Strategic Planning
 - Administration

Along with the benefits that accrue to the U.S. Government by using contractors in the ANSS, there are limitations as well. These include:

- Roles and Missions. Needless to say, contractors cannot execute inherently governmental functions. The use of contractors, however, frees up government personnel to perform these functions.
 - Security. Contractors can operate in combat zones only with security support.
 - Contracting Processes. Contractors are bound by the terms and conditions of their contracts. Changes in contractor focus, emphasis, numbers and missions cannot be executed until the proper contracting tools are in place.
4. Integration of contractor training efforts with those of the military trainers. As MPRI has noted throughout its testimony, we recognize the vital task of integrating contractor efforts with those of military trainers at multiple levels. MPRI accomplishes the integration task both vertically and horizontally.
- Vertically, MPRI personnel are always supervised by CSTC-A training and capacity building personnel who ensure that our training and mentoring is consistent with the overall CSTC-A objectives and approach. Communications

between MPRI and CSTC-A are continuous and a two-way street; CSTC-A leaders provides clear direction, and MPRI is totally responsive to CSTC-A's directions and guidance.

- Horizontally, MPRI often provides trainers and mentors who serve side-by-side with military counterparts in ANA units. Moreover, we coordinate and integrate horizontally with parallel organizations on a routine basis to ensure unity of effort.

Conclusion

We are committed to supporting CSTC-A in its responsibilities to train and prepare the Afghan National Security Sector and its ANSF. Over the past seven years, we have participated in the growth of the institutions of the Afghan security sector and in the professional development of the Afghans themselves. MPRI and our talented, dedicated trainers and mentors will continue to contribute significantly in the future.