



Preparing for redeployment to the United States, Lt. Col. Michael King is presented with a farewell gift from a former Afghan mujahedin leader whom King had befriended during his deployment as a member of the Afghanistan-Pakistan Hands Program (circa 2010–2011). King had spent more than year undergoing Dari language and cultural immersion as part of a Pentagon-led effort to develop a cadre of language-capable and culturally astute personnel capable of returning to Afghanistan to support further stabilization efforts. While deployed to Afghanistan, King had lived in an Afghan Training Center, using his language skills to interact personally with Afghan police instructors, trainees, local contractors, local village elders, and other members of the populace. (Photo courtesy of the U.S. Army)

# Rule of Law and Expanding the Reach of Government

## Lessons Learned from an AFPAK Hands Foxhole



Maj. Theresa Ford, JD, U.S. Army, Retired

*We were told after the surrender at Bataan that the men were so weakened by malaria caused by a lack of quinine that they were too weak to continue ... Has anyone enquired why there was a shortage of quinine on Bataan when that defense was prepared for many long years in advance ... Why, when quinine was as important as ammunition and food, was it not provided in comparable quantities?*

—Ernest Hemingway

Writing in 1942, Ernest Hemingway was trying to make sense of the surrender at Bataan, involving the surrender of twelve thousand U.S. troops, the largest surrender ever in U.S. history. The surrender in Afghanistan in August 2021 was not due to a lack of medicine or from sickness, it was due to decisions that fell outside the soldiers' purview. As early as 2009, the United States had decided on a timetable for exiting Afghanistan:

As Commander-in-Chief, I have determined that it is in our vital national interest to send an additional 30,000 U.S. troops to Afghanistan. After 18 months, our troops will begin to come home ... these additional American and international troops will ... allow us to begin the transfer of our forces out of Afghanistan in July of 2011.<sup>1</sup>

Like Hemingway, who traversed the battlefields of World War I and who was trying to make sense of mission failure at Bataan, veterans of the Afghanistan war are similarly trying to make sense of the war and its abrupt end.

Since the withdrawal from Afghanistan, many have discussed the lessons the United States should learn from our years of engagement there.<sup>2</sup> As one of the few soldiers who spoke Dari, my perspective is shaped in large part from my interactions with Afghans over the course of my deployment in 2013. I was a member of the Afghanistan-Pakistan Hands Program (AFPAK Hands), a program created in 2009, designed to bolster language and cultural competency to mentor Afghans in critical nodes of government.<sup>3</sup>

## Lesson 1: Use Language Skills to Expand the Reach of Government

*There is justice for all Afghanistan.*

—Afghan Border Police Commander<sup>4</sup>

My experience in Afghanistan taught me that if a mission is to train a foreign military and aid security and governance, we need to have soldiers able to speak the language of those we are training. Army doctrine regarding linguists says to “treat language training with the same priority given to physical fitness training, Soldier common skill training, and MOS training.”<sup>5</sup> One of the most important lessons I learned was that language training is as vital to the linguist as it is to the infantryman, and that if more soldiers had been afforded language training over the course of the twenty-year conflict, the outcome might have been different, and we would have more linguists or language-capable soldiers in our ranks and likely fewer “green-on-blue” attacks.<sup>6</sup> Two examples will help illustrate the importance of language training.

**The border commander goes to court.** On 15 April 2010, an Afghan Border Police commander was driving down the road when something caught his attention. He told his driver to back up the vehicle as another officer got out to inspect the object in the road. As soon as the officer exited the vehicle and touched the object, he was killed by an improvised explosive device (IED). The commander collected his officer's remains and the IED remnants and turned them in to authorities. Three years later, the commander received a phone call



These two uniform patches were worn by AFPAK Hands members so they could be identified by U.S. military personnel in the event they needed assistance during their travels around the country. (Photo courtesy of the author)





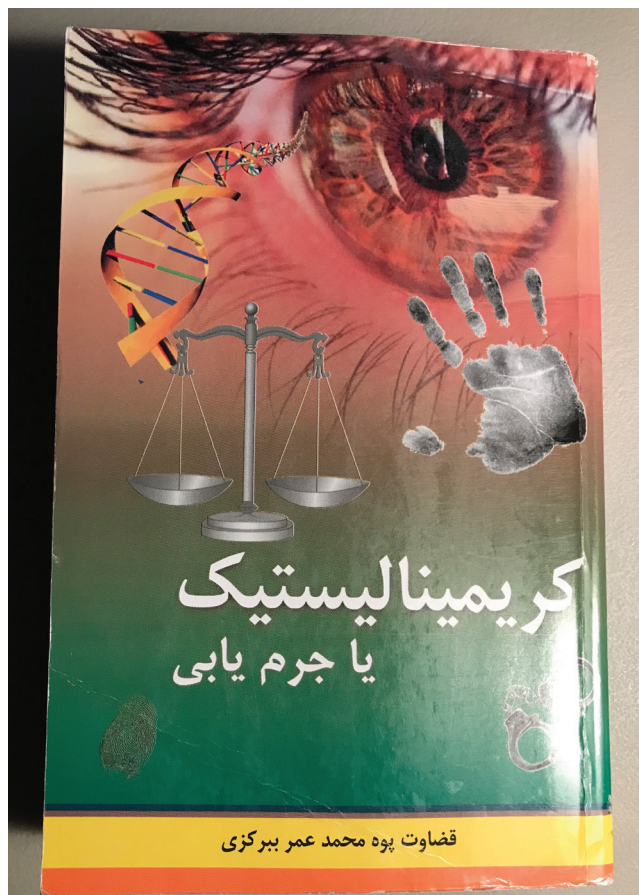
Officers with the “Mustang” Squadron attend Dari language training September 2012 at Fort Stewart, Georgia, in preparation for deployment to Afghanistan. (Photo courtesy of the U.S. Army)

informing him that the person that made the IED was standing trial at Afghanistan’s National Security Court, referred to here as the Justice Center in Parwan (JCIP). He was asked if he would come testify at the trial and he said that he would.

The above facts are from an actual case at the JCIP. Biometric evidence linked the detainee to the IED, but we knew nothing about the victim except his name.<sup>7</sup> While at the JCIP, I noticed that no Afghan witnesses—elders, villagers, or family members—came to testify. In fact, family members were never informed that a trial had taken place. I thought this was a missed opportunity to spread the word across the country that justice was being delivered for the Afghan people by their government. Prosecutors presented their cases by reading the charges and presented evidence in the form of a weapon or other property seized at the point of capture, along with biometric evidence. They generally did not have the time or inclination to seek out witnesses, which was a cumbersome task.

I decided to use my issued Afghan cell phone to call other AFPAK Hands across the country to find any witnesses that might have known the victim or were familiar with the incident. Through a stroke of luck, I was able to locate the victim’s commander and learned the circumstances surrounding the IED blast. When I spoke to him on the telephone and said I was a U.S. soldier, he seemed surprised to hear an American speaking Dari, and equally surprised to learn that the perpetrator had been caught and was standing trial.

The morning of the trial came, and as time went by, the commander was nowhere to be seen. Finally, he appeared at the gate, and I introduced myself, placing my hand on my heart. His words and demeanor reflected a deep sadness and guilt, as he felt responsible for his officer’s death. The Afghan court personnel were equally shocked to see him, word spread, and the judges heard of his arrival and invited him to their chambers to have tea as a way of thanking him for coming.<sup>8</sup>



This book, translated as *Crime Investigation*, was written by former Afghan Supreme Court Justice Muhammad Omar Babrakzai. Babrakzai served on the Afghan Supreme Court from August 2006 to July 2013 and promoted the use of fingerprint and DNA evidence. He came to the Justice Center in Parwan and presented a discussion about his book and fingerprint evidence to judges from across the country. (Photo courtesy of the author)

The courtroom was packed, and the commander was calm as he explained what had happened on that tragic day three years earlier when he made the decision to have his officer inspect the object in the road. He calmly said that he did not know the detainee or anything about him, but that he knew what took place that day and was there to tell the court what happened and to get justice for his fallen officer. The detainee became belligerent, and when fingerprint evidence was introduced showing that he had made the IED, said that he “did not believe in fingerprints.” The three-judge panel found that the detainee violated the Afghan Law on Combat against Terrorism Offenses and issued a seventeen-year sentence. When the commander exited the courtroom, he said, “There is justice for all Afghanistan.” He said that when he returned home,

he would tell the victim’s family, villagers, and fellow officers about the case and the outcome. In addition, he said morale of his men had been low as they lost many officers to IEDs and did not know that the JCIP was prosecuting perpetrators of the attacks.

This case helped to link Afghan officials in remote parts of the country to each other to achieve a common purpose. After the commander came to testify in the case, the prosecutors took greater pride in their work and felt that their actions were making a difference.

**The elders go to court.** Unlike most of the other cases I worked on at the JCIP, a case involving the death of an elder in Helmand Province lacked forensic evidence and consisted solely of witness statements. The killing of an elder is a significant injustice and particularly heinous given the standing of elders in the community, especially in the southern Pashtun heartland of Helmand Province. Targeting elders was a tactic used by the Taliban to diminish the traditional roles of the elders as key decision-makers in a community and replace them with the Taliban. Therefore, getting justice for the elder who was killed would show the village that the Afghan government could effectuate a meaningful outcome, despite the large distance between the two.

The court granted a continuance in the case to give the prosecutor time to obtain evidence and said the charges would be dropped if no witness statements or other evidence was obtained. Like the border patrol case, this case had similar difficulties; how would we find witnesses familiar with the death of an elder in one of the most remote villages in the most violent district in Afghanistan?<sup>9</sup>

Nahr-e-Saraj District, located in Helmand Province, was at the opposite end of the country from the JCIP. Once again, I made a call with my Afghan cell phone and called the prosecutor for Nahr-e-Saraj District who I had met a few months earlier when I was stationed in the district of Musa Qala in Helmand Province. The prosecutor at the JCIP did not know or have any contacts with the Nahr-e-Saraj prosecutor, likely because he was from Kabul and had very little dealings with his counterparts in the southern part of the country.

I found that I was able to bridge the gap between the two of them. I also contacted a U.S. Army Special Forces unit that was operating in the area and sought its assistance in locating any elders that might have



known the victim in the case. Local elders were located, and they fully supported the efforts at ensuring the detainee would never harm anyone again. The elders agreed to write sworn statements that contained their thumbprints, as this was the customary method of signing a sworn statement and was the procedure the Afghan judge had specifically requested. The elders

Weeks went by until the prosecutor announced on 18 November 2013 that the evidence had arrived. He had a sense of accomplishment that the Afghan process had worked, as I was skeptical it would ever arrive. This was a collaborative effort, as the Special Forces team miraculously found the elders, the elders took great risk in making the statements, and the National Directorate

“When the United States and international partners were successful in a particular area, such as education, health, or the rule of law, we made ‘these gains in the form of ‘islands’ of progress that were largely urban or highly local.’”

said that the detainee was “a very dangerous man” and agreed to make video statements, an idea proposed

by the Special Forces team. The elders provided both written and videotaped statements and asked that only the judge and the defense attorney be allowed to see their faces, for fear of retribution.

I informed the prosecutor that the elders had been located, and that they made both written and videotaped statements and asked how he wanted this evidence to get to the court. The prosecutor was clear that the evidence come through Afghan channels. Based on his guidance, the Special Forces team worked with the local National Directorate of Security and handed the evidence to them for forwarding to the JCIP.<sup>10</sup>

of Security managed to get the evidence to the court. The court sentenced the detainee to a sixteen-year prison sentence.

As some have correctly concluded, when the United States and international partners were successful in a particular area, such as education, health, or the rule of law, we made “these gains in the form of ‘islands’ of progress that were largely urban or highly local.”<sup>11</sup> I found that the JCIP could go beyond a mere “island” of progress and instead could reach out and touch the Taliban in the remotest corners of the country, delivering justice for the Afghan people, effectively undermining and marginalizing Taliban influence. I could not have accomplished what I did at the JCIP without the extensive language and cultural training that I received as a member of the AFPAK Hands Program.

## Evaluation of Rule of Law Programs in Afghanistan

The Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR) conducted numerous inquiries of various aspects of the U.S. government’s involvement in Afghanistan. Germane to my work at the JCIP, the SIGAR conducted an audit in 2015 of rule of law programs and came to an interesting conclusion regarding the Rule of Law Field Force-Afghanistan (ROLFF-A), of which I had been a part. The SIGAR found that the “DOD does not have a complete picture of what the program accomplished.”<sup>12</sup> Surprised to learn that the Department of Defense was unaware of the progress made at the JCIP, I was even more surprised to

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read the SIGAR's testimony before Congress in 2020, where he stated that the U.S. rule of law strategy for 2013 "contained no performance measures at all. If you have no metrics for success, how can you tell if you are succeeding?"<sup>13</sup>

As I was at the JCIP in 2013 during the period that the SIGAR addressed and saw how the judges braved IEDs on their way to and from Bagram and looked into the eyes of terrorists every day that were successfully prosecuted and removed from the battlefield, the metrics for success seemed rather clear. I reported on the results of the proceedings, and every day discussed cases with the prosecutors, mentored and advised them, and translated documents and exhibits so that they could be used in the proceedings. The number of cases prosecuted at the JCIP was no mystery and had been reported in various reports and speak for themselves.<sup>14</sup>

In a letter to the SIGAR, the U.S. Agency for International Development stated that the JCIP primary court conducted thirty-one trials in 2010, 288 in 2011, 974 in 2012, and 780 in the first four months of 2013.<sup>15</sup> The State Department issued a report in 2016 that provided additional details on progress at the JCIP in the years 2014 and 2015.<sup>16</sup> It was reported in 2015 that "the JCIP successfully conducted over 7,000 primary and appellate trials ... maintained an overall conviction rate of over 75% and a conviction rate of 98% if there was DNA or a fingerprint match to an IED."<sup>17</sup> In short, the SIGAR's conclusions are contrary to my own experiences at the JCIP, the publicly available data, as well as the former commander of U.S. and NATO forces in Afghanistan, Gen. John Nicholson.<sup>18</sup>

## Lesson 2: The Afghanistan-Pakistan Hands Program Worked

*Through what you do, you have a chance to be special here ... you can be special if you are that connective tissue that connects people ... you get Afghans working with Afghans.*

*And you, by virtue of your skills; by virtue of your language skills; by virtue of your contacts ... you become that connective tissue wherever you happen to be assigned.*

—Maj. Gen. William Rapp<sup>19</sup>

The AFPAK Hands Program was modeled after a U.S. program in 1919 with the Military Intelligence Division that sent officers to foreign countries to be immersed in the culture and language.<sup>20</sup> The experience of Gen. Joseph W. Stilwell, one of the only



Generalissimo and Madame Chiang Kai Shek and Lt. Gen. Joseph W. Stilwell, commanding general of the China Expeditionary Forces, in Maymyo, Burma, 19 May 1942. Due to earlier training and experience in China, Stilwell was conversant in Chinese and familiar with Chinese culture. (Photo courtesy of the Department of Defense)

American generals fluent in Chinese, tasked with training Chinese forces, was similar in many ways to our mission in Afghanistan. Like Afghanistan, he encountered corruption and a Chinese leader fearful of a Western-trained Army.<sup>21</sup>

The SIGAR reported on the training that AFPAK Hands members received, quoting officials at Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan: "An individual who is coming here to be an advisor better understand Afghanistan and her culture."<sup>22</sup> Another said, AFPAK Hands members "who frequently have more substantial language training than other advisors, have the most

advisor training among uniformed personnel.”<sup>23</sup> I credit the training I received with keeping me and my fellow soldiers and marines safe.<sup>24</sup> For many other soldiers deployed to Afghanistan, the pre-deployment training fell far short of what was required.<sup>25</sup> One soldier, who was preparing to deploy as an advisor to the Afghan army, said that during his cultural awareness training, the trainer said, “All right, when you get to Iraq ...”; after being corrected that he was going to Afghanistan, the trainer said, “Oh, Iraq, Afghanistan. It’s the same thing.”<sup>26</sup>

In my opinion, language and cultural competency should not reside with a limited few but is instead a necessity for all soldiers.<sup>27</sup> Like quinine on Bataan, language and cultural training was just as important as the weapon I carried. The Army needs to create incentives for soldiers to learn foreign languages, whether Dari or Ukrainian, Polish, or Chinese. The Army recently announced changes to the Selective Retention Bonus Program; however, just three of the career fields listed required language ability to receive a bonus.<sup>28</sup> If the Army does not want to give bonuses for learning a foreign language, it should give credit in the form of promotion points, and officers should receive favorable consideration in their promotion boards. The Army needs to understand and cultivate an appreciation, like it did in 1919, for the importance of language and cultural training. Adopting a program like the Air Force’s

Language Enabled Airmen Program would be a significant step in cultivating a bench of language capable soldiers.<sup>29</sup>

As this article has shown, I expanded the reach of the Afghan government through my work at the JCIP and built an informal network to reduce Taliban influence. I formed relationships with prosecutors, Afghan military, and police personnel in the southern part of the country, and most importantly, enabled them to build connections with their counterparts in the northern part of the country. None of this would have been possible but for the great language instruction that I received, and the insights and cultural nuance that I learned from the Afghans that taught me so well in the ACPAK Hands Program.

The ACPAK Hands Program has ended, but that does not mean that the lessons it taught should end. Just like the linguist, language training should be on the training schedule of every unit, with soldiers rewarded for progress made and scores achieved in language testing. As Hemingway said, “Once a nation has entered into a policy of foreign wars, there is no withdrawing. If you do not go to them then they will come to you. It was April 1917 that ended our isolation—it was not Pearl Harbor.”<sup>30</sup> If Hemingway is correct, then we will find ourselves needing the skills of ACPAK Hands again in the future. ■

## Notes

**Epigraph.** Ernest Hemingway, *Men at War* (New York: Crown, 1942), xxii–xxiii.

1. Barack Obama, “Remarks by the President in Address to the Nation on the Way Forward in Afghanistan and Pakistan” (speech, West Point, NY, 1 December 2009), accessed 1 September 2022, <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/remarks-president-address-nation-way-forward-afghanistan-and-pakistan>.

2. Anthony Cordesman, *The Lessons of the Afghan War That No One Will Want To Learn* (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 15 June 2022), accessed 31 August 2022, <https://www.csis.org/analysis/lessons-afghan-war-no-one-will-want-learn>; Craig Whitlock, *The Afghanistan Papers: A Secret History of the War* (New York: Simon and Schuster 2021); Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR), *What We Need to Learn: Lessons from Twenty Years of Afghanistan Reconstruction* (Arlington, VA: SIGAR, August 2021), accessed 31 August 2022, <https://www.sigar.mil/pdf/lessonslearned/SIGAR-21-46-LL.pdf>; SIGAR, *Divided Responsibility: Lessons from U.S. Security Assistance Efforts in Afghanistan* (Arlington, VA: SIGAR, June 2019), accessed 31 August 2022, <https://www.sigar.mil/interactive-reports/divided-responsibility/index.html>.

3. Mark W. Lee, “The Afghanistan-Pakistan Hands Program,” Army, 12 February 2014, accessed 31 August 2022, [https://www.army.mil/article/115523/the\\_afghanistan\\_pakistan\\_hands\\_program](https://www.army.mil/article/115523/the_afghanistan_pakistan_hands_program); also see SIGAR, *Divided Responsibility*. Members of the Afghanistan-Pakistan (APAK) Hands Program received four months of intensive language training in either Dari, Pashto or Urdu, as well as cultural training with numerous Afghan cultural events scheduled during the training. Because many ACPAK Hands would be on their own in remote areas, we were issued two sets of body armor—one outer ballistic vest and one low profile worn underneath the uniform—and two weapons, and we received intensive weapons training by members of the Army marksmanship team, including their shooting at close range, shooting with our nondominant hand in case of disability, and familiarity with and firing of the AK-47 was also included. We also learned the pursuit intervention technique maneuver from a race car driver during driver’s training. In short, this was the best training that I had ever received in the Army.

4. Statement by Afghan Border Police commander at the Justice Center in Parwan (JCIP), 25 September 2013, after testifying at the trial of a detainee responsible for the death of one of his officers and learning of the sentence.

5. Army Regulation 11-6, *Army Foreign Language Program* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Publishing Office, 25 February 2022),



para. 1-20(b), accessed 31 August 2022, [https://armypubs.army.mil/eupubs/DR\\_pubs/DR\\_a/ARN34930-AR\\_11-6-001-WEB-2.pdf](https://armypubs.army.mil/eupubs/DR_pubs/DR_a/ARN34930-AR_11-6-001-WEB-2.pdf).

6. Jeffrey Bordin, *A Crisis of Trust and Cultural Incompatibility: Red Team Study of Mutual Perceptions of Afghan National Security Forces Personnel and U.S. Soldiers in Understanding and Mitigating the Phenomena of ANSF-Committed Fratricide-Murders* (Arlington, VA: U.S. Department of the Army, 12 May 2011), 45, 50, accessed 6 September 2022, <https://nsarchive2.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB370/docs/Document%2011.pdf>. The study of "green-on-blue" attacks found U.S. personnel "generally were not satisfied with the quality or comprehensiveness of the cultural training they received." AFPAK Hands were not immune to green-on-blue attacks, however, as two members of the program lost their lives in these attacks. See J. P. Lawrence, "U.S. Ends Afghanistan-Pakistan Hands Military Advisor Program," *Stars and Stripes* (website), 1 October 2020, accessed 26 October 2022, <https://www.stripes.com/theaters/middle-east/us-ends-afghanistan-pakistan-hands-military-adviser-program-1.647033>. One member of the program, in my same cohort, was wounded in a car bombing attack that killed three U.S. soldiers and U.S. State Department officer Kate Smedinghoff in April 2013. Of note, a retired operations officer with the Central Intelligence Agency reported that "there was never one green on blue incident that CIA ever suffered in Afghanistan." See *The Recruiter*, C-SPAN, video, 33:29, 20 September 2021, accessed 26 October 2022, <https://www.c-span.org/video/?514633-1/the-recruiter#>.

7. See David Pendall and Cal Sieg, "Biometric-Enabled Intelligence in Regional Command-East," *Joint Force Quarterly* 72 (January 2014, 1st Quarter): 69–74, accessed 31 August 2022, <https://ndupress.ndu.edu/Media/News/News-Article-View/Article/577484/biometric-enabled-intelligence-in-regional-command-east/>. The use of biometric evidence increased at the JCIP and became a trusted source of evidence by the Afghan prosecutors and judges.

8. As it turned out, the commander had traveled over three hours by taxi, in civilian clothes, from his village, and was dropped off at the wrong gate and walked over a mile to get to the correct gate. The chief prosecutor of the JCIP, moved by the fact that the commander went to such lengths to come testify, personally drove the commander back to Kabul where he spent time visiting family before heading back to his village.

9. See Department of Defense, *Report on Progress Toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan* (Arlington, VA: Department of Defense, November 2013), 17, accessed 31 August 2022, [https://dod.defense.gov/Portals/1/Documents/pubs/October\\_1230\\_Report\\_Mas-ter\\_Nov7.pdf](https://dod.defense.gov/Portals/1/Documents/pubs/October_1230_Report_Mas-ter_Nov7.pdf). Nahr-e-Saraj was the most violent district in Afghanistan from April to September 2013.

10. The National Directorate of Security was equivalent to the FBI and had offices in every province.

11. "The U.S. was largely responsible for creating a failed international effort to coordinate the nation-building effort in the form of a UN agency—United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA)—that never succeeded in creating an effective ability to coordinate aid and outside support efforts and that maintained a de facto structure of dependence on the United States ... This structure did make real progress in areas like education, the rights of women, health, and the formal structure of the rule of law in supporting human rights, but it often did make these gains in the form of 'islands' of progress that were largely urban or highly local." Cordesman, *The Lessons of the Afghan War That No One Will Want To Learn*, 4.

12. SIGAR explained that Rule of Law Field Force-Afghanistan (ROLFF-A) officials "were able to provide anecdotes of program success and failures, but problems with ROLFF-A's performance management system have made it difficult for DOD to determine the extent

to which its program activities met their objectives or identify the outcomes and impacts from its efforts. More importantly, DOD does not have a complete picture of what the program actually accomplished." SIGAR, *Rule of Law in Afghanistan: U.S. Agencies Lack a Strategy and Cannot Fully Determine the Effectiveness of Programs Costing More Than \$1 Billion*, SIGAR 15-68 Audit Report (Washington, DC: SIGAR, July 2015), 11, accessed 31 August 2022, <http://www.sigar.mil/pdf/audits/SIGAR-15-68-AR.pdf>.

13. U.S. *Lessons Learned in Afghanistan, Testimony Before the House Committee on Foreign Affairs*, 116th Cong. (15 January 2020) (statement of John Sopko, Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction), 5, accessed 1 September 2022, <http://www.sigar.mil/pdf/testimony/SIGAR-20-19-TY.pdf>.

14. U.S. Department of State (DOS), *Country Reports on Terrorism 2015* (Washington, DC: DOS, June 2015), 227, accessed 7 September 2022, <https://2009-2017.state.gov/j/ct/rls/crt/2015/index.htm>; DOS, *Country Reports on Terrorism 2016* (Washington, DC: DOS, June 2016), 232, accessed 6 September 2022, <https://www.state.gov/reports/country-reports-on-terrorism-2016/>; Patrick Reinert, "The Military Role in Rule of Law Development," *Joint Force Quarterly* 77 (2015, 2nd Quarter): 124, accessed 31 August 2022, [https://ndupress.ndu.edu/Portals/68/Documents/jfq/jfq-77/jfq-77\\_120-127\\_Reinert-Hussey.pdf](https://ndupress.ndu.edu/Portals/68/Documents/jfq/jfq-77/jfq-77_120-127_Reinert-Hussey.pdf). I worked on over forty cases during my time at the JCIP. The majority of cases involved Afghan victims, but some involved U.S. military and coalition killed and wounded.

15. U.S. *Lessons Learned in Afghanistan*, Appendix I. In his testimony before Congress on 15 January 2020, the SIGAR, John F. Sopko, referenced an appendix that he had provided, Appendix I, "Correspondence between SIGAR and U.S. Government Agencies Regarding Most and Least Successful Reconstruction Projects and Programs in Afghanistan." In the appendix there is a copy of the response provided by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) to the SIGAR's request for information about the most and least successful reconstruction projects. On page 4 of USAID's response, they cite to the progress made at the JCIP since its inception in 2010: "Coordinated U.S. Government support enables the JCIP to hear thousands of cases and builds both the adjudicative capacity of the court and its personnel ... The JCIP tried 31 primary court cases in 2010; 288 in 2011; 974 in 2012; and 780 in just the first four months of 2013. Even with its growing caseload, Afghan defense attorneys who have worked at the JCIP consistently describe the court as providing among the fairest trials in Afghanistan."

16. DOS, *Country Reports on Terrorism 2016*, 232. The report found that 533 primary court trials were held in 2014 and 1,153 appellate trials. The numbers went down in 2015, with 215 primary court trials and 451 appellate trials.

17. Additionally, the article stated: "The JCIP provided a sustainable foundation for Afghanistan to effectively implement Afghan law to criminalize the insurgency and build the people's confidence in the national government and legal system. The effective prosecution at [the] JCIP creates a beacon of hope for the rest of the criminal justice system in the eyes of the Afghan people." Reinert, "The Military Role in Rule of Law Development," 124. Reinert was the ROLFF-A commander during my deployment in 2013.

18. Gen. John Nicholson said about the JCIP: "It will be an essential part of a future counter-terrorism platform in Afghanistan." Paul Tait, "Giant Prison Aims to Avoid Pitfalls of Past," *Reuters*, 15 April 2016, accessed 31 August 2022, <https://www.reuters.com/article/afghanistan-security-prison/giant-prison-for-afghan-militants-aims-to-avoid-pitfalls-of-past-idINKCN0XC1YS>.



19. William Rapp, U.S. Army Forces Afghanistan–Support deputy commander, quoted in Mark Porter, “Afghan Hands Helping to Reshape Afghanistan,” Defense Visual Information Distribution Service, 13 July 2012, accessed 1 September 2022, <https://www.dvidshub.net/news/91588/afghan-hands-helping-reshape-afghanistan>.

20. “The MID planned to develop a well-chosen, well-trained corps of attachés having, it hopefully prescribed, ‘detailed knowledge of the language, military establishments, political conditions and customs of foreign nations.’” Barbara W. Tuchman, *Stilwell and the American Experience in China 1911-1945* (New York: Grove Press, 1971), 92.

21. Ibid., 22. “To Chiang every unit trained by the Americans was one that loosened his control. He could not reject the program since he was utterly dependent on American aid but he could stall and thwart and divert supplies”; SIGAR, *Collapse of the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces: An Assessment of the Factors that Led to Its Demise*, SIGAR 22-22-IP Evaluation Report (Washington, DC: SIGAR, May 2022), 2, accessed 1 September 2022, <https://www.sigar.mil/pdf/evaluations/SIGAR-22-22-IP.pdf>. This report stated that “President Ashraf Ghani frequently changed ANDSF leaders and appointed loyalists, while marginalizing well-trained ANDSF officers aligned with the U.S. . . . Young, well-trained, educated, and professional ANDSF officers who grew up under U.S. tutelage were marginalized and their ties to the U.S. became a liability.”

22. SIGAR, *Afghanistan National Defense and Security Forces: DOD Lacks Performance Data to Assess, Monitor and Evaluate Advisors Assigned to Ministries of Defense and Interior*, SIGAR 19-03 Audit Report

(Washington, DC: SIGAR, October 2018), 11, accessed 1 September 2022, <https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/pdfs/AD1139361.pdf>.

23. Ibid.

24. On more than one occasion, while serving at a remote outpost in Helmand Province, my ability to engage with the local police chief, prosecutor, and criminal investigator and to create working relationships with them was vital to our own security. On one occasion, the police chief came to warn us to shut down our front gate, as he heard that a suicide bomber was coming to the district center.

25. Whitlock, *The Afghanistan Papers*, 70.

26. The soldier concluded: “Our mission was all about developing personal relationships . . . so we have legitimacy and credibility with the people we were trying to work with. I’ll tell you that was tough. It was a tough job. Were we prepared to go and do that? I’d have to say that at the time, absolutely not.” Ibid.

27. The Defense Language Institute, available at <http://www.dliflc.com>, has a wide range of training aids available on its website that soldiers could use.

28. MILPER Message Number: 22-237, “Selective Retention Bonus (SRB) Program,” 23 June 2022, accessed 1 September 2022, [https://armyreup.s3.amazonaws.com/site/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/23222247/SRB\\_22\\_237\\_20220623.pdf](https://armyreup.s3.amazonaws.com/site/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/23222247/SRB_22_237_20220623.pdf).

29. More information, along with a video explaining the Language Enabled Airmen Program is available at <http://www.airuniversity.af.edu/AFCLC/Language-studies>. This program might also assist with recruiting efforts for the Army.

30. Hemingway, *Men at War*, xxiv.



## Combat Studies Institute Staff Ride Team

The Combat Studies Institute Staff Ride Team develops and conducts live and virtual staff rides for soldiers. A staff ride is a historical study of a campaign or battle that incorporates systematic preliminary study, an extensive visit to campaign sites, and a concluding discussion that focuses on lessons derived from what has been observed. For more information on what the staff ride team can provide units, visit <https://www.armyupress.army.mil/Educational-Services/Staff-Ride-Team-Offerings/>.

