



RHUMB LINES

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Update on Navy Operations in Afghanistan

"Naval forces are fighting alongside our international partners and with the Afghan National Security Forces and are working to make a better life for the Afghan people. Sailors will leave here having made a significant difference for Afghanistan and as they return to the fleet, the Navy will be better for their experience."

– General David D. McKiernan, U.S. Army, Commander, ISAF and U.S. Forces Afghanistan

More than 2,000 U.S. Navy Sailors are assigned to U.S. Central Command, serving in all 34 Afghan provinces and in six Navy-led Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs). These Sailors support the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) that assists the government of Afghanistan in the establishment and maintenance of a secure and stable environment, with full engagement of Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF). With personnel serving in Afghanistan and additional support from ships at sea, the U.S. Navy significantly contributes to facilitating Afghanistan's reconstruction and stability.

Security

- Sailors serving in Balkh province, Helmand province, and Herat province partner with and mentor ANSF personnel to encourage independent capability for counterinsurgency operations.
- Navy experts trained the first graduates of the ANSF Explosive Ordnance Disposal School. Graduates are now assigned throughout the country, targeting and defeating Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) and unexploded explosive ordnance that threatens safety in the region.
- Carrier Air Wing (CVW) 8, deployed with USS Theodore Roosevelt (CVN 71), has flown more than 650 sorties into Afghanistan, providing vital close air support to coalition forces operating as part of the ISAF. CVW 8 integrates closely with multinational, coalition forces to prevent and counter Taliban, insurgent and al Qaeda attacks.

Development/Reconstruction

Sailors are helping improve access to food sources, water, electricity, employment, education and medical assistance for Afghan citizens.

- In September, Sailors assisted ANSF in delivering a new turbine to Kajaki Dam in the volatile Helmand province.
- Sailors serving with PRTs, assist in development at the village, province, regional and national levels. Efforts have resulted in the establishment of 2,000 schools, 13 state universities and 14,500 km of refurbished regional highways. PRTs have also supported immunizations for children and training for teachers.

Governance

- Navy Individual Augmentees (IAs) and Global War on Terrorism (GWOT) Support Assignment (GSA) Sailors are in highly volatile areas, providing training, intelligence and logistics, and ensuring the relationship between the illicit narcotics industry and funding for the insurgency is broken.
- Sailors are assisting the ANSF in the Afghan-led effort to plan, coordinate and implement security for the voter registration process that began in October and will last until March 2009, in preparation for presidential and provincial council elections scheduled for September-October 2009.

Key Messages

- The Navy is a crucial partner in both parts of the Afghanistan mission: providing an opportunity for the government of Afghanistan to establish a secure foundation for democracy, and helping bring security and stability to the people of Afghanistan.
- Navy personnel play important roles as part of coalition forces serving on the ground in Afghanistan as part of ISAF/NATO forces.

Facts & Figures

- More than 1,400 Sailors are serving as IAs/GSAs and approximately 600 Sailors are deployed on the ground with their parent units.
- 994 of the more than 2,000 Sailors on the ground in Afghanistan are mobilized Reservists.
- 76,000 Afghan police personnel and 68,000 Afghan army personnel are now equipped and trained, with further increase to 134,000 army personnel by 2014.