

# COALITION

*Issue 70*



*Exclusive Interview with*

***Mr. Arben IMAMI***

*Defense Minister of the Republic of Albania*

*Coalition International Night at  
USCENTCOM*

*Coalition Continues to be  
Integral in Afghanistan*

*Iraqi Childres's Hospital  
Opens Doors*

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**Cover Pages**

**Front Cover:** Mr. Arben Imami, Minister of Defense of the Republic of Albania, who had the courtesy of giving an exclusive interview for this issue of Coalition.

**Back Cover:** KABUL, Afghanistan - Dutch Sergeant Emma Woodman assembles decorations for the Thanksgiving Day meal at ISAF Headquarters. Woodman, a resident of Amsterdam, the Netherlands, is an international military police officer assigned to ISAF HQ, Afghanistan. Photo Courtesy of [www.isaf.nato.int](http://www.isaf.nato.int)



## Editorial



With the year 2010 reaching its culmination, we have in our hands the last issue of Coalition Bulletin for the current year. First of all I would like to pay tribute to all the Coalition countries for continuing their magnanimous support in our unified Fight against Terrorism. As

2010 marks another signpost of the contributions and sacrifices made by the Coalition members, it would be most worthwhile to acknowledge the sacrifices of the service members serving in Afghanistan and their families, who are indeed paying a heavy price for keeping all of us safe.

We are pleased to share the details of the interview with Mr. Arben Imami, The Defense Minister of Albania. The Defense Minister has very amply highlighted the contributions made by the Albanian Armed Forces in the ongoing fight against terrorism.

Also in the Magazine you will find an account of the Afghan National Army's (ANA) response to the gradual reduction in support from the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) by taking on more self-sustainability and self-help projects.

Pakistan has recently suffered from the worst floods of its history. The Armed Forces of Pakistan, like always, have stood shoulder to shoulder with the people of Pakistan by providing the relief efforts across the board in all flood affected areas around the country.

Other stories in the Magazine highlight the Coalition efforts in the Area of Responsibility (AOR), Coalition's Thanksgiving experience with the Tampa Bay community, details of a ground holding operation conducted by the Afghan troops and inauguration/construction of a new hospital in Iraq.

I am hopeful that you will enjoy reading the current issue of the Coalition Bulletin. Your contributions through stories in helping us best project the Coalition efforts in the AOR are valuable and most welcomed.

Major Ghazanfar Iqbal  
Pakistan Armed Forces  
Coalition Media Engagement Officer

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### Spanish team delivers winter equipment to five western police stations

KABUL, Afghanistan – Members of the Spanish Police Operation Mentoring Liaison Team delivered winter equipment to the five police stations in the Qal'eh-ye Now district of Badghis province, Nov. 21.



The delivery came after a request for the equipment from Afghan National Police Col. Golan Navi, main police station operations chief in Qal'eh-ye Now.

The equipment consisted of 145 winter coats, 36 pairs of winter shoes, 145 pairs of boots, 145 pairs of gloves, 80 winter hats, 105 blankets, five heaters and two tents.

"This contribution will significantly improve the working condition of our officers," Navi said.

[www.nato.int/isaf](http://www.nato.int/isaf)

### Coalition Continues School Supply Delivery in Faryab Province

KABUL, Afghanistan – Soldiers of the 3rd Battalion, 6th Field Artillery of 1st Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division are continuing the delivery of more than \$50,000 in school supplies to students in Faryab.

The pens, paper and book bags were purchased on the local economy with Commander's Emergency Response Program funds. In early October the contractor delivered more than 7,500 book bags filled with notebooks and pens.

Staff Sgt. Perris Dumas, non-commissioned officer in charge of the battalion's civil military affairs, spearheaded the effort to purchase the school supplies.

[www.nato.int/isaf](http://www.nato.int/isaf)

# Interview with Mr. Arben IMAMI

## Minister of Defense of the Republic of Albania

Interview by CPT Dritor Papa  
Senior Editor of Coalition



Arben Imami was born in Tirana, Albania in 1958. He was Professor at the Academy of Arts in Tirana. He joined the Student's Movement of '90s, and was one of the founders of the Democratic Party (DP)

of Albania and political pluralism. He was elected as a Member of Parliament in five legislatures and had party and as well as state leading positions during his political activity in DP (2002-2009). His contributions involve constitutional and legal-institutional areas.

### Education and Qualifications

1977-1981 High Institute of Arts, Tirana, Albania  
1999-2000 Fellowship, School of Foreign Service, Georgetown University, Washington D.C., USA.

### State Positions

2009- Minister of Defense  
2005-2009 Cabinet Chief of Prime Minister  
2001-2002 Minister of Local Government and Decentralization.  
2000-2001 Minister of Justice  
1997-1999 Minister of Legislative Reform and Parliament Relations.  
1997-1998 Co-Chair of the Parliamentary Commission for compilation of the Constitution of the Republic of Albania.  
1997-2005 Member of Parliament  
1992-1996 Member of Parliament  
1992 Chief of the Parliamentary Commission of the Regulations, Mandates and Immunity  
1991-1992 Member of Parliament, Vice Chairman and Chairman of the Parliamentary Group of the Democratic Party.

### Political Positions

2000-2002 Executive Chairman of the Democratic Alliance Party  
1992-1997 Secretary General of the Executive Chairman of the Democratic Alliance Party  
1990-1992 Democratic Party of Albania Founding Group Member, Democratic Party Vice Chairman.

### Marital Status

Mr. Imami is married and has two children.

1. Mr. Minister, before we get started, on behalf of Coalition Public Affairs Office I would like to express our deepest appreciation for finding the time and share with us your insight on some issues that we would like to convey to the readers of Coalition Magazine.

Could you tell us a few words about the reformation of the Albanian Armed Forces since the end of communist system in Albania? What would you highlight as the main achievement of this period?

The beginning of the democratic process found the Albanian Armed Forces (AAF) with more than 100,000 active duty personnel, old equipment and with a Cold War oriented doctrine and strategy.

Albania, in its challenge toward the European oriented democratic changes, had to accomplish a lot of achievements to become a NATO member.

The achievement of NATO membership standards required deep structural reforms, doctrine, equipment, education and training. The AAF's process of transformation to meet the NATO standards was a challenge that required immense efforts.

The main objective was the transformation from a territorial defense force to a professional force, able to accomplish the requirements of constitution, and to contribute to the peacekeeping operations.

The transformation of the AAF is an ongoing process, and is not a process of number reducing but a process of mentality and concepts management change.

Being a NATO member requires that the AAF go through a significant transformation and improvement of defense planning, based on the achievement of higher standards of an effective force, professional, deployable and interoperable with the other NATO members.

During this year, we had a fruitful cooperation with NATO in the political, strategic and operational levels, which was concretized with action plans, which promote the further development of the integration and reformation processes. Our successful performance has been the key factor in achieving our objectives. Our Armed Forces have already achieved one of their main goals, the one of transforming into a professional, well trained and equipped, and NATO interoperable force.

One year after the NATO membership, Albania has increased its contribute in the operations abroad. We are currently engaged in a wide spectrum of operations: in Afghanistan, Iraq, Chad, BiH, and in the operation "Active Endeavor," and in all of them we have been praised for our

professionalism and ability to fully accomplish our duty. At the same time, our military personnel are being professionally engaged in different positions in the NATO commands and other regional military structures.

Some other achievements that I would like to emphasize include the balanced Recruiting System, an effective Human Resources Management System, and a centralized Financial Planning and Management.

Additionally, the AAF has an Integrated System of Projects Management, which guarantees the procurement of the accurate equipment on the right time and quantity; the establishment of Standard Operation Procedures (SOP), which facilitate a proper training, cooperation and coordination.

*2. Has Albania been affected from the economical global crisis and if yes, did this have an effect in the participation of the Albanian Armed Forces in peacekeeping operations?*

I can frankly say that in the meetings that we had during the Lisbon Summit, some of the defense ministers expressed their concerns pertaining the effect of the financial constraints in the European region. However, some of the member nations, even though suffering these financial difficulties in their budget, have increased and will keep increasing their presence in Afghanistan, and this is very important.

Despite the fact that Albania was not directly affected from the global economic crisis, on some levels, we could feel its effects and so did the planned budget for our Armed Forces. Thanks to a careful and effective planning and by the setting up of priorities, we managed to minimize these effects. Our goal is and will remain the effective distribution of the allocated budget, which will gradually increase in the future, starting with a 9% increase in 2011.

So, despite the global economic crisis, our contribution to the peacekeeping operations not only did not decrease, but it increased with 44 Special Forces personnel in a combat in Afghanistan, and the number of our personnel currently

deployed in Afghanistan reaches the number 305. Albania, compared by the country population and the number of its Armed Forces, remains one of the best contributing countries in the peacekeeping operations all over the world.

Our contribution will increase further next year and we



will reach the number of 350 personnel deployed in Afghanistan.

*3. Last July Albania sent to Afghanistan an additional contingent of combat troops and this happened at a time when other NATO members have been reducing their presence, or even pulling out from Afghanistan. How do you explain this happening that very easily could be set as an example for other countries fighting the global war against terrorism?*

Albania is a small country, with a tragic wars and invasions history; a victim of dreadful decisions that left big territorial parts outside the borders, a country that has always been under consistent threats.

The Albanian membership in NATO was the milestone in our history which granted us the safety that we always have been looking for. Albania today enjoys the status of full membership rights, but at the same time, we are eager to contribute for the peace and security not just in the region but wherever the alliance needs us in the world.

The vast support of the Albanian population in the way toward the NATO membership, the support of the Albanian parliament for participation in peacekeeping operations can be considered a key factor in the decision making process when considering the increase of our contributions.

*4. What would you consider the hardest challenge during your assignment as Minister of Defense?*

This year found Albania a member of NATO, whose requirements would comprise the challenge to maintain a profes-



Mr. Imami accompanied by the CHOD of AAF, MG Maksim Malaj while visiting one of the units of the AAF.

sional and contemporary modernized force, able to create and maintain high levels of combat and rapid deployment abilities, able to play an active role in increasing the regional and international security, able to participate in humanitarian and peacekeeping operations wherever needed.

In this aspect, there were three main challenges to successfully achieve these strategic objectives:

- The new structure of the AAF, the integrated staff of the Ministry of Defense.
- The increase of the operational capabilities of the AAF.



- The demolition of surplus ammunition.

The reorganization of the force as a must couldn't be done alone, but it required at the same time the reorganization of the Ministry of Defense and the General Staff. The aim of this reorganization was the radical transformation in the conception of planning methodology, training, education, the logistic support and the modernization of the AAF. I would like to stress at this point that the idea was not just a mechanical change of numbers or people, but a new conceptual structural reform which aimed and achieved the objective of creating an integrated staff comprised of civilian and military personnel working together to accomplish defense related objectives.

The increase of the operational capabilities in order to guarantee the protection of national interests and accomplish our NATO related requirements, was and remains another challenge, which requires a combination between the national and NATO defense planning process.

The operational planning had to better accomplish the requirements of the AAF mission on their collective defense participation, and in the operations of civil emergency response.

These processes were accompanied with an improvement and increase of the operational capabilities of the AAF in general, and their Special Forces in particular. This provided the possibility to increase our contribute in Afghani-

stan, where presently our combat troops, side by side with the American troops, are engaged in Kandahar, Afghanistan. The successful way that these troops are carrying out their duty is encouraging. It shows an increase of our capabilities, it shows our force, and how seriously these troops evaluate the accomplishment of their mission.

I would like to accentuate the importance of the process of destruction of 90,000 tons of excessive ammunition. This required the establishment of a new and clear strategy, which defined the required financial, personnel and the logistic support sources.

The modernization of the process, the process of creating the required conditions to avoid accidents, the increase of dismounting capability, the cooperation with NATO Maintenance and Supply Agency (NAMSA), are the pillars that we were based while setting up our realistic objectives. These objectives were financially and technically supported, had defined terms, and aim a safe and rapid ongoing process, which facilitates the destruction of the excessive ammunitions by the end of 2013.

*5. If there was a message that you would like to deliver to the Albanian troops deployed abroad, what would that be?*

We are thankful for your service, and for the success that you have achieved while carrying out your duty in Afghanistan. We have always received impressive feedback from the strategic commands where you are deployed.



Group photo of Mr. Imami, Senior Officers of AAF, and other high level officials with the 6<sup>th</sup> departing contingent to Herat, Afghanistan.

You are well aware of the importance of the mission that you are assigned to. Be Albanian men, brave and faithful; be professional and not hateful toward the enemy, obey the orders of your superiors, and at every moment think about and help each other.

We are proud of all of you, and once again I would like to express my confidence that you will accomplish you mission in a successful manner, and come back safe and sound to your beloved homeland, friends and families.

# New Courthouse Strengthens Kapisa Rule of Law

*Written by U.S. Air Force 2nd  
Lt. Ashley Skillman  
Kapisa PRT Public Affairs Office*

KAPISA PROVINCE, Afghanistan – A ribbon-cutting ceremony to celebrate the completion of the Nijrab District Courthouse was co-hosted by District Gov. Mohammad Sultan Safi and the Kapisa Provincial Reconstruction Team on Nov. 13.

The opening of the newly constructed courthouse marks another step taken by the Kapisa district government in strengthening rule of law for the people of Kapisa.



Mohamad Sharif Hakinzda Safi, the acting governor of Kapisa; Nijrab District Gov. Sultan Mohamad Safi; and Mohamad Husain Kahn, provincial council chief, cut the ribbon on the new Nijrab Courthouse during a ceremony with the Kapisa Provincial Reconstruction Team, local government officials and residents on Nov. 13

As part of the ceremony, Mohammad Sharif Hakimzada Safi, the acting provincial governor of Kapisa; the district governor; Provincial Council Chair Mohammad Husain Khan; and other key leaders from Kapisa Province addressed the audience.

“We’ve assembled here today to celebrate the opening of this courthouse,” said Jim Morris, Kapisa PRT Director of State representative from Chappaqua, N.Y. “Although this project appears to be finished, it’s really just beginning.”

“This project was not intended to simply create a nice building; it was meant to bring justice to this area of Afghanistan,” said Morris. “I hope, by working together, this building is used to its fullest extent so the people of Nijrab may find justice here in this courthouse.”

During the ceremony, many key leaders of Kapisa stressed how important the new courthouse was for the people of Nijrab.

“This courthouse will allow our justice system to protect the rights of ordinary citizens from cruel individuals who

wrongly mistreat them,” said the acting governor, through an interpreter.

Prior to the construction of this courthouse, Nijrab did not have a local court where the people could seek legal assistance. Now, Kapisa provincial leadership can better address legal concerns that Nijrab citizens may have.

“We are all very happy with the completion of the courthouse,” said Abdul Hanan, a villager from the area, through



Members of the Kapisa Provincial Reconstruction Team, local government officials and residents tour the new courthouse facility in Nijrab District (Photos by U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Kyle Brasier, Kapisa PRT

an interpreter. “Now the people [of Nijrab] have a place where they can bring their problems and find solutions.”

The courthouse project is intended to support the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan by providing the people a legitimate alternative to the Taliban vigilante justice system.

“We hope this building will not only provide a structure for the judicial system to use, but will also act as a symbol of GIROA’s legitimacy and fair administration,” said U.S. Army Maj. Seth Middleton, Kapisa PRT civil affairs officer and native of Wichita, Kan.

The courthouse facilities consist of a justice center, residential quarters, generator room, jail facility, guard shack and restrooms.

The Kapisa PRT assists the GIROA in providing a secure, stable environment for reconstruction efforts by increasing government officials’ capabilities and capacities. The Nijrab District courthouse project is an example of the development projects the PRT is using to connect the government to the people and to improve quality of life in the province.

# Coalition International Night at USCENTCOM

*Story by: CPT Dritor Papa  
Albanian Armed Forces  
Senior Editor of Coalition*

On Dec. 9, the Coalition partners celebrated one of the biggest events of the year here at MacDill AFB, Florida. This event, named “The Coalition International Night,” has become a yearly event, which involves coalition partners from more than 55 countries.

Gathered under one of the biggest hangars of the base, provided with the generous support from 6th Air mobility Wing, Coalition members together with their families, set up tables with their respective flag on the background, post-

ers from their best tourist places, and different plates, cups, showing their national customs and culture.

Behind the desk, country representatives, some of them in their national costumes, cherish and welcome everyone passing by and offer their specialties while explaining what they are made of and how they are cooked.

As expected, community, service members and their families participated in large number; which speaks of the interest and enthusiasm of the community in support of the Coalition. Thanks to the coordination and hard work by the organizing committee, all the administrative details were thoroughly worked out in order to make this event a complete success. About 1500 people from different walks of life in Tampa Bay area, people from different origins living in Tampa and service members and families located at MacDill Air Force Base were happy to be part of this event.

The Deputy Commander of USCENTCOM, Lieutenant General John R. Allen, as well as Admiral Eric Olson, Commander USSOCOM, met all the representatives and thanked them for the efforts that they had put together to arrange such a graceful event.

When asked to comment about the importance of holding such events, the majority of the people held the view that such events provide an excellent opportunity to socialize and interact with





each other. One of the participants commented “Everyone feels comfortable, happy, friendly and very hospitable here. It’s my lifetime experience to see people from about 60 nations under one roof. All of us seem to be extremely happy, smiling, caring and enjoying the company of each other, conveying a message of unity, adaptability and cohesion to the world.

Nothing could be more fascinating and cherishing to watch than to have the honor of enjoying the warmth and hospitality of the Coalition comrades. This event spreads a message of peace, unity, strength and cooperation for all of us. We together can make a big difference in bringing peace and harmony in the world if we care for each other and work shoulder to shoulder for our common goals.”

According to the Chairman of Coalition, BG Jens Praestegaard, this was an event characterized by a brilliant atmosphere, and the feedback from the guests has been outstanding. He took time and thanked the organizing committee, especially CDR. (Navy) Finn Frigest Larsen, Liaison National Officer, Danish Office and SMSgt Victor Gilroy, from Coalition Coordination Center for their endless efforts in organizing this tremendous night, starting with invitations, setting up the place, dealing with the sponsors etc.

The Coalition representatives expressed their gratitude to the participants for the support that the community has been providing to Coalition since it was formed in the year 2001. The community has been forthcoming in inviting the Coalition members in various professional and socially vibrant activities throughout the period.

In reciprocation the Coalition members always felt honored to host the community on International Night with great sense of pride and jubilation.



# The Deluge of Floods: Yet another Combat Relief Efforts by Pakistan Army

*Story by: MAJ Ghazanfar Iqbal  
Coalition Media Engagement Officer*

Pakistan's most destructive flood in memory claimed over 1,700 lives. The flood inundated 5,436,601 acres of land in all Provinces of the country including Gilgit Baltistan and Azad Kashmir. A total of 6,359 towns / cities and small villages were inundated by the worst natural disaster since the creation of the country. KPK is the worst hit province with 24 districts while 19 districts of Sindh, 12 of Punjab and 10 of Balochistan, 7 each of Azad Kashmir and Gilgit Baltistan have been affected due to these floods. As many as 474 Bridges and 1,237,343 buildings have been completely washed away due to these floods in the country. 282 Bridges alone in KPK and 182 in Gilgit Baltistan were completely destroyed.

Pakistan Army, in a bid to provide relief and rescue support to the flood affected population, commenced its preparations well before the onset of monsoons through its constant flood monitoring system. Army, along with entire nation has been battling with recent floods all over the country. This has proved to be another challenge for Army already committed to eliminate the menace of terrorism from the soil. The catas-

trophe was so severe that it has destroyed all the bridges and badly damaged the communication infrastructure in Malakand. According to a UN report, the magnitude of the recent floods was much more than tsunami and October 2005 earthquake. On the instructions of COAS General Ashfaq Parvez Kayani, all available Army troops in respective areas were fully mobilized to provide assistance even before the receipt of formal requisition from civil administration.

Within no time after the deadly floods, relief and rescue operations were started by the Pakistan Army on war footing. A total of 72000 troops are deployed for rescue and relief operations alongwith 943 boats and 70 helicopters in flood hit areas of the country. As many as 217 relief camps have been established where 13.2 people are being provided cooked food and medical facilities. Army soldiers and Aviation Pilots took some daring missions to rescue stranded people and managed to rescue over 8 people to safer places. Besides that, 2,391 Tons of dry rations have also been distributed till date among the affectees. Pakistan Army troops also collected relief items at Lahore, Karachi, Rawalpindi,



Multan, Gujranwala and Quetta.

Army had established three Aviation Bases at Chaklala, Abbotabad and Tarbela. Special Support Group in collaboration with NDMA, regulated and dispatched the local and foreign relief goods support to people residing in badly stricken places. The marooned people of Southern Punjab, Sindh and Balochistan were being looked after from Bases at Multan, Rahim Yar Khan, Sukker and Naseerabad. The Army engineers remained busy in opening roads and making diversions to facilitate the flow of traffic and have constructed foot bridges along almost all destroyed bridges. Pakistan Army doctors and paramedical staff provided necessary medical treatment to the patients. Field hospitals, Medical Camps and Mobile Medical Teams in concert with civil administration are still providing necessary medical treatment free of cost in all flood affected areas.

As many as 55 helicopter including 15 helicopters from other countries participated in rescue and relief operations. Army Aviation dropped 4, 50,000 kg relief goods including ration at various flooded areas. More than 1,000 boats including 50 life-saving boats took part in rescue activities. Animal Transport Battalion was busy in dumping of ration in inaccessible areas in Malakand. Furthermore, in the line with their tradition, soldiers of Army felt proud and shared 2,500 tons of rations from its own with the marooned people. Some friendly countries also sent their medical and rescue teams for relief work in flood affected areas. An Australian



field hospital, comprising 138 men, was established at Kot Addu. A Chinese field hospital established at Thatta, Japanese hospital at Multan, Palestinian at D I Khan, Sri Lankan hospital at Charsada and two Saudi Arabian Hospitals at Hyderabad and Rajanpur. 50 beds each Turkish hospitals are established at Dera Murad Jamali and Nowshera in Balochistan.

The Army is also contributing meaningfully towards rehabilitation and reconstruction activities and stands committed to reconstruct and rehabilitate flood affected areas in collaboration with civil administration.



# Coalition Continues To Be Integral In Afghanistan

*CENTCOM Public Affairs*

KABUL, Afghanistan - The International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), a 48-nation coalition, continues to be an integral part of the international community's comprehensive approach to Afghanistan and its efforts to bring a lasting peace and stability back to the country.

ISAF is considered a key component to the international community's engagement in Afghanistan, assisting the Afghan authorities in providing security and stability, to create the conditions for reconstruction and development.

By supporting resolutions made by the United Nations Security Council, ISAF assists the Afghan government in the establishment of a secure and stable environment. ISAF personnel, together with the Afghan National Security Forces, conduct security and stability operations throughout the country. ISAF units such as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) Training Mission Afghanistan are directly involved in the training and development of the Afghan National Army (ANA) and the Afghan National Police.

ISAF conducts operations such as security at the Kabul International Airport as well as providing protection and security for numerous reconstruction projects throughout Afghanistan. ISAF troops have also taken an active role in the eradication of heroin and drug trafficking that has enabled the Taliban for years if not decades. A large and increasing proportion of these operations are conducted in partnership with the Afghan National Security Forces.

A main goal of ISAF is the transition of security responsibility to Afghan authorities. The NATO Training Mission Afghanistan plays a central role in this process. Their efforts to train and equip Afghan National Security Forces will enable the Afghans to take an increased role for their own security with NATO in a supporting role.

ISAF troop contributing nations recently have deployed operational as well as police mentoring and liaison teams. These teams are embedded in the Afghan army and national police units to support training and deploy on operations in an advisory role.

In addition to training and mentoring Afghan forces, ISAF coalition nations have provided donations to equip the Afghan security forces. Equipment donations include individual equipment such as small arms, ammunition and uniforms, as well as larger equipment, such as tanks and helicopters. An ANA Trust Fund covers the transportation and installation costs of equipment donations, the purchase of equipment, the purchase of services for engineering and construction projects, and training, both inside and outside Afghanistan.

ISAF's primary mission consists of securing Afghanistan and has allowed reconstruction, development, and practical support for these efforts to continue.

The coalition has gradually expanded the reach of its mission since NATO took command of ISAF in 2003. Originally limited to Kabul, it now covers all of Afghanistan's territory. The number of ISAF troops has grown from the initial 5,000 to over 140,000 troops from 48 countries, including all 28 NATO member nations.

ISAF forces focus on several critical issues such as; a strong and reliable partner in Kabul; enhancing the civilian component of international community efforts in Afghanistan; and improving coordination for enhanced training and development of the Afghan National Security Forces. ISAF forces continue to put the Afghan people at the core of the efforts. Coalition forces respect and seek to protect the Afghan people from coercion and violence.

Every member of the ISAF coalition contributes to the overall Afghan mission. The essence of the contribution in Afghanistan is that 48 nations are standing together to bring about security and stability in Afghanistan and the international commitment remains strong. The essential task at hand for the people of Afghanistan and the Coalition is ensuring there is a fair balance of effort that shares the risks and costs of the mission.

All allies and nations have done a noble job of supporting the NATO/ISAF mission and continue to seek better ways to contribute to an ever-changing and complex mission.



Kabul, Afghanistan. Sgt. Tony Michlethwaite, 4th Battalion, Yorkshire Regiment of the British Territorial Army, while conducting a foot patrol for ISAF Mission. (Photo by U.S. Air Force Tech. Sgt. Laura Smith)

# Coalition and Community Celebrate Thanksgiving

*Story & Pictures: Courtesy  
Mr. Robert Rowen*

'Thanksgiving 2010 Coalition members with American families', was a great success. The 4th year of this program had 26 people from nine countries. There were families from Pakistan, Georgia, Poland, Belgium, Nepal, Bangladesh, Ukraine, Korea and Germany hosted by South Tampa Chamber members. The participants from both sides loved the experience. Several Coalition families vowed to take the celebration back home as they loved the idea of Thanksgiving as a way of showing gratitude for the good things that come to them. For the American families, they experienced the holiday through other eyes and all said they would be glad to do it next year.

The Thanksgiving experience afforded an excellent opportunity for the Coalition members and their families to spend quality time and learn about the American social norms and customs, culture and hospitality. Thanks to the cooperation and support extended by the South Tampa Chamber of Commerce in making all this possible, where the warmth and hospitality of American hosts was overwhelming and reassuring.

Coalition members and families who attended the Thanksgiving dinner were; Helmut Shoepe and his wife, Carsten Klenke and Heiko Ziegen (Germany), Ghazanfar Iqbal and family (Pakistan), Bineya Rana (Nepal), Monir Akhand and family (Bangladesh), Kim Hyungsuk and his wife and Kim Sooseong and his wife (Korea), Zbigniew Zachariasz and

Zbigniew Lenarczyk (Poland), Valeryi Mamitko and Vitaliy Smolovskyi (Ukraine), Gverdsiteli Archil (Georgia), Greg Elliot and family (New Zealand), Peter Van den Brouke and wife (Belgium). The participants deeply appreciated the



Photo of Mr. Alan Armstrong, his sister and the Senior Representative of Bangladesh Col Monir Akhand

kindness, hospitality and generosity of the hosts and vowed to continue participating in such like unique events in future as well. The Coalition members also extended their special gratitude to the South Tampa Chamber of Commerce members who made Thanksgiving experience the most memorable and cherishing.



# Afghan Troops Show The Future With First Groundholding Operation

*Story and photos courtesy of:  
Ukforcesafghanistan*

## *Members of the Afghan National Army in Helmand have launched their most significant operation yet.*

Operation OMID CHAR (“Hope Four” in English) is a major operation, building on previous Afghan National Security Force operations which have been carried out in conjunction with International Security Assistance Force troops.

Whilst in the past, ISAF forces have taken a more proactive role, this time the operation has been completely devised and led by forces from the 3rd Brigade of 215 Maiwand Corps Afghan National Army (known as 3/215 Brigade), in close consultation with the district governor. The brigade has also worked closely with the chief of police in Nahr-e Saraj, ensuring all authorities are coordinated in their response to the operation.

The operation will secure a key area near Gereshk in Nahr-e Saraj district, restrict Taleban freedom of movement and see a higher profile Afghan National Army presence in what is currently an area suffering from insurgent influence.

3/215 Brigade’s British mentors, from 1st Battalion Irish Guards, are on hand to observe and support throughout the operation where requested. But for the first time, engineering, artillery, counter-IED and reconnaissance support is be-

ing carried out by the ANA’s own integral capability.

The operation began on 17th October, and the initial phase has already been successfully completed, with clearances having taken place in settlements around the area of Gerday Ghundey. At the end of the first day of the operation, General Sherin Shah, Commander of 3/215 Brigade conducted a shura with local elders in the village of Saidan.

Operation OMID CHAR is important for reinforcing the reputation of Afghan National Security Forces, amongst Helmandi people, as a Government-controlled, professional, Islamic force which is growing rapidly in size and competence and has the power to beat the insurgency. It marks significant progress in the ANA’s ability to provide security within Helmand.

Colonel Amin Jan, Executive Officer of 3/215 Brigade ANA, said: “Fundamentally, operation OMID CHAR has been planned and initiated by Afghan National Army officers. There will also be Afghan National Police involved too, but ISAF will only be there in a supporting role.

“We are conducting this operation for the benefit of the local people because many have brought their complaints about the Taleban in the area to us. It is an important area for the insurgents. They use it as a base to come around our provincial capital Lashkar Gah to threaten the local people and put them in danger. There is also a threat to Gereshk and surrounding areas.

“This operation will bring peace and security and provide the people of the area with the opportunity to live in a peaceful environment. It will also create job opportunities for local people.”

Brigadier James Chiswell, Commander of the British-led Task Force Helmand, said: “Afghan conceived, planned and led operations represent the future of security in Helmand province. 3/215 Brigade of the Afghan National Army has become a formidable fighting force and the importance of demonstrating their capability in support of the local population should not be underestimated.”



Maj Matt Collins from 1 Irish Guards shadowing his Afghan counterpart in the village of Saidan near Gereshk on day one of Op Omid Char.

# Iraqi Children's Hospital Opens Doors

Story by Staff Sgt. Chanelcherie DeMello,  
305th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment  
Courtesy of: [www.usf-iraq.com](http://www.usf-iraq.com)

BASRAH – After six years and \$166 million, the proposal that stemmed from former First Lady Laura Bush's desire to provide health care for the children of Iraq has finally become a reality.

Iraq's Minister of Health, Dr. Salih Mahdi, officially opened the new Basrah Children's Hospital, the largest and first specialty care facility of its kind on October 21. The facility is a state-of-the-art acute and referral care center that specializes in pediatric oncology.

The 16,000 square foot complex includes 101 beds, 11 utility rooms, four care units, three special procedure rooms, three clinics, two operating rooms, an emergency room, and one dental suite, said Robert Jackson, a construction representative with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers here. The facility is also equipped with an oxygen plant, steam autoclave and a warehouse.

"More importantly, this hospital is full of enthusiastic Iraqi staff who are dedicated to its success from highly trained medical teams to hard-working technical support staff," said Peter Bodde, assistant chief of mission, U.S. Embassy, Baghdad.

Success was achieved through collaborative efforts of the governments of Iraq, the U.S., Spain, United Nations organizations and Project HOPE charity.

"We do this because we believe a healthier world is a safer and more secure world," Bodde said.

While the hospital has officially opened, there is still work to be done to improve the level of care the facility and its staff are capable of providing.

"We still have work to do in order to fully fulfill our promises," Bodde said. "Though construction has been completed and basic pediatric medical services are being offered, oncology services are several months away."

The hope is that the Hospital is able to make early diagnoses and provide treatment for children suffering from cancer in southern Iraq.

"A 2003 study about leukemia in Basrah found an increase amongst children and most of the cases of leukemia are high-risk," said Dr. Janan Hasan, a pediatrician at the Hospital.

"The five common forms of cancer account for 50 percent of all cases in Iraq," said Bodde. "A large portion of these cancers are preventable and half can be detected at early stages of development and if diagnosed in time, four types are curable by standard therapies."

"We must stay focused on the long term, not only addressing the urgent needs that people have today, but building the foundation for better health tomorrow and for the next generation," he said.

The Basrah Children's Hospital is but one of many health-care initiatives the U.S. has been involved with here.

"The U.S. has supported renovation and construction of over 140 primary health care facilities across Iraq," Bodde said.

"We believe that health promotes social and economic progress and realize the dream of providing a foundation for a strong and healthy future for Iraq's children," he said.



USA photo/Staff Sgt. Chanelcherie DeMello.



KABUL, Afghanistan - Dutch Sergeant Emma Woodman assembles decorations for the Thanksgiving Day meal at IS AF Headquarters. Woodman, a resident of Amsterdam, the Netherlands, is an international military police officer assigned to ISAF-HQ, Afghanistan. Photo Courtesy of [www.isaf.nato.int](http://www.isaf.nato.int)