



NEWS RELEASE

International Security Assistance Force – Afghanistan
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Engineers improve base, construct road

By U.S. Army Spc. David Huddleston
Task Force Sword Public Affairs

PAKTIKA PROVINCE, Afghanistan – Afghan local national contractors hired by U.S. Army and supervised by U.S. civilian inspectors constructed a road at Forward Operating Base Sharana July 19. By paving a primary route, they are helping to improve the FOB, as well as, the Afghan economy.

According to U.S. Army Capt. Justin McMillan, 243rd Construction Management Team, Task Force Sword, the Afghan economy does not receive much revenue from exports or trade, and is forced to rely on internal money distribution, which is not abundant.

To help the economy grow, McMillan employs up to 300 local nationals a day to provide services to sustain and improve FOB Sharana.

“Hiring local national contractors improves their economic situation by creating jobs and feeding external money into their economy which helps stimulate commerce in their hometown,” said McMillan, a base master planner from Colorado Springs, Colo. “Boosting the local commerce helps achieve our strategic goal of creating a self-sufficient Afghanistan.”

McMillan said coalition forces have an Afghan-first policy which requires the hiring of Afghans for labor to develop the workforce. In addition, forces seek local materials and services to expand the industrial, commercial and agriculture bases of Afghanistan.

“Our projects employ a lot of Afghan workers. The Afghan-first policy puts

money directly into those workers' hands," said U.S. Army 2nd Lt. Elyse Vail, 243rd CMT public works officer from San Diego. "For an economy that does not have an external market, this program is one of few that directly puts external funds into their economy."

Afghan contractor Haji lives on FOB Sharana and has been doing construction for years. The contract defined his responsibility for managing, manning and equipping the project.

Haji said the hardest part of fulfilling the contract was "the time it takes to get through the gate. Sometimes (workers) get in too slow, but we know its all because of security."

U.S. civilian inspectors Dave Hartley from Niceville, Fla., employed with CH2M Hill/KBR Global Service, inspected the work throughout the process and assured the contractor abided by conditions set forth in the contract.

"We had no problems at all with work," said Hartley. "They are excellent, hard workers."

McMillan said it is a win-win situation.

"By building this partnership with the local nationals, we are providing them work opportunities, while teaching them the best practices when it comes to construction and construction management," said McMillan. "In turn, the Army is receiving a low cost method of constructing, and achieving the enduring goal of stimulating the Afghan populace."

Haji said these partnerships help support the counterinsurgency by helping the Afghans help themselves.

"The last few years I have been doing this. I have learned a lot-especially about construction," said Haji. "We are happy with what we are doing. This is our country. We do it to support our family and people. Our children, our family, and the Afghan people can use it in the future."

CUTLINES:



110719-A-KK129-004

PAKTIKA PROVINCE, Afghanistan – Afghan workers spread asphalt on a new road being built on Forward Operating Base Sharana, July 19. To help stimulate the economy and grow a skilled workforce in Afghanistan, the 243rd Construction Management Team, Task Force Sword, maintains an Afghan-first policy when selecting contractors for jobs. (Photo by U.S. Army Spc. David Huddleston, Task Force Sword Public Affairs)



110719-A-KK129-018

PAKTIKA PROVINCE, Afghanistan – A truck dumps asphalt into a bitumen spreader as Afghan workers spread asphalt across a new road at Forward Operating Base Sharana, July 19. To help stimulate the economy and grow a skilled workforce in Afghanistan, the 243rd Construction Management Team, Task Force Sword, maintains an Afghan-first policy when selecting contractors for jobs. (Photo by U.S. Army Spc. David Huddleston, Task Force Sword Public Affairs)



110719-A-KK129-056

PAKTIKA PROVINCE, Afghanistan – A truck dumps asphalt into a bitumen spreader as Afghan workers spread asphalt across a new road at Forward Operating Base Sharana, July 19. To help stimulate the economy and grow a skilled workforce in Afghanistan, the 243rd Construction Management Team, Task Force Sword, maintains an Afghan-first policy when selecting contractors for jobs (Photo by U.S. Army Spc. David Huddleston, Task Force Sword Public Affairs)

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