

PKSOI conference discusses challenges, best practices

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Jan. 14, 2011 -- Late last year, more than 130 stakeholders took part in the Peacekeeping and Stability Operations Institute held the 5th annual Stability Operations Training and Education Workshop, entitled “*Peace and Stability Operations Education and Training: Teaming Challenges and Best Practices*”, at the National Conference Center, Lansdowne, Virginia.

The workshop, designed to provide a forum for trainers and educators from within U.S. Government civilian and military agencies, academic institutions, and international and non-government organizations to discuss best practices in stability operations training and education in order to develop future collaborative projects in management, delivery, and evaluation tools, consisted of panel presentations addressing specific Peace and Stability Operational environments, such as Sub-Saharan Africa, Haiti, Iraq and Afghanistan.

The goal of the conference was to create synergistic effective training and education programs throughout the community, while reducing redundancy along common task lines.

Guest speakers Minister Ali Jalali, former Afghan Minister of the Interior, Susan Page, Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Bureau of African Affairs, U.S. Department of State, and Lt. Gen. Robert L. Caslen, Jr., commander of the Combined Arms Center, addressed current challenges and best practices toward improving civilian and military teaming efforts from a variety of different peace and stability operational environments from a comprehensive approach perspective.

Ali Jalali, provided a host nation perspective on International teaming challenges in Afghanistan. He presented four challenges for the international community to address, if Afghanistan is to become a self-reliant entity. He said that Afghanistan will only achieve peace and prosperity through a whole-of-government approach that addresses:

- Protection of the civilians’ security concerns,
- Delivery of essential services,
- Establishment of rule of law and a sustainable justice system,
- Safeguarding of national interests.

He added that these goals must meet host nation approval, and must be sustainable by Afghan leadership and the international community must develop a coherent vision for the future of Afghanistan and must coordinate their efforts to achieve peace in Afghanistan and in the region.

Page outlined five priorities that govern the US administration's relationships with African countries.

- Promoting good government throughout Africa by helping to build strong, stable democracies and by protecting democratic gains made in recent years.
- Committed to working alongside African countries to advance sustainable economic growth. Continue its focus on public health and health-related issues in Africa by working with African governments and civilian organizations to ensure that quality health care is accessible to all communities.
- Committed to working with African governments and the international community to help prevent, resolve and mitigate conflicts and disputes.
- Deepen its focus on transnational challenges facing African countries, e.g., trafficking in persons, arms and illegal drugs; and the illegal exploitation of Africa's mineral resources.

Caslen presented four issues to consider in connection with challenges in Iraq.

- Security is a challenge of paramount importance.
- Communication and cooperation are essential.
- One of the key doctrines of counterinsurgency is reestablishing the local natural hierarchy in order to legitimize authority.
- A major challenge is to train the trainers to function in complex environments

Panel discussion topics included:

- UN integrated mission challenges in Sub-Saharan Africa
- Continuity of stability and reconstruction initiatives in Haiti during a disaster response
- Comparison of CivMil PRT teaming challenges in Iraq and Afghanistan
- Incorporation of lessons learned into curriculum development and practical application