

# PKSOI lends expertise to Afghanistan mission

*Thomas Zimmerman, Army War College Public Affairs Office*

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*Col. Mike Anderson, PKSOI, (left) Col. Kim Field, military assistant to the Department of State, Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization, and Col. Scott Wuestner, PKSOI, all recently*

*served in Afghanistan recently in support of a new joint command.*

Nov. 9, 2009 – Two members of the Peacekeeping and Stability Operations recently returned from a two-month deployment to Afghanistan to help develop the doctrine that will lead the new joint command in the region.

Richard Smyth, PKSOI special staff, and Col. Mike Anderson, PKSOI strategic plans senior analyst, each brought their unique backgrounds to assist in the development of the operations plan for the new three-star joint command in International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan. The command will be headed by Gen. Stanley A. McChrystal. Smyth and Anderson were part of a six-member team were charged with helping to develop a plan that would help lead to greater stability in the country.

"I think we finally have a sustainable strategy in Afghanistan," said Smyth. "We know have a much better understanding and awareness of our environment as well as the TTPs (tactics, techniques and procedures) for the complex environment."

Smyth, a career foreign services officer, has spent nine year total in Afghanistan and brought some familiarity to the issues facing the region to the table.

"After 30 years of war, Afghanistan is due for a break," he said. "You can feel the gratitude for the U.S. actions and support by the vast majority of the Afghan people."

Anderson said the experience was beneficial to see how to apply the lessons taught at schools like the Army war College.

"In planning we have to look closely at the civilian and military links and how they affect stability," he said. "The college, it's organizations and staff are truly SME's in these areas and the ability to reach back for guidance and advisement really adds to their value."

Smyth agreed.

"Commands can truly benefit from the specialist expertise on dealing with priorities and proven methods to promote stability."

The benefits for situations like this aren't just for the command according to Anderson.

"With these engagements we are able to bring back knowledge of what's going on in the field that we can integrate directly into the planning and educational process."