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## Security Assistance: Train to Obtain

By  
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**Major General Abdule Wakil Hotak, Kabul, Afghanistan. He is the First Deputy for Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics for the Afghan National Army. He addressed the students on the first day of the International Purchaser Orientation Course. The DISAM class was held in Kabul to prepare the ANA and Afghan National Policy to acquire defense articles for the government of Afghanistan.**

The representatives from the Afghan National Army and National police waited in the small room for class to begin. They'd literally come to learn something early. For the 46 students waiting to learn about defense acquisition, it was information that will someday help keep Afghanistan free.

“We are teaching them to defend themselves,” said one of the instructors, Lieutenant Colonel Michael Ericksen, USAF.

Ericksen, and two other instructors from the Defense Institute for Security Assistance Management, came to Kabul to teach the International Purchaser Orientation Course from June 25 to, 2007 29. In the United States the course takes eight instructors two weeks to teach, but DISAM spent six months tailoring it to fit Afghanistan's needs.

“Afghanistan is of particular interest to us , , , their situation is unique,” DISAM instructor James Taphorn told the class.

The course is helpful to purchasing agents in recipient countries like Afghanistan, because the U.S. government is a very complex process. Ironically, it is also the most requested source.

DISAM teaches the regulations for security assistance and how to acquire the items. According to the syllabus, the course is designed to be an overview of the programs, without detailed financial, logistics, or training management information. DISAM instructor Lieutenant Colonel Ericksen, who was a logistics officer for fourteen years, stressed that the U.S. government does not sell things. The defense articles are not put in a catalog, have a salesman or get offered for sale. Foreign governments must first request the assistance from the Department of State, not the Department of Defense. The embassy in that country is consulted and each request is evaluated carefully. If the request is approved,

contracts will be signed. The end use will also be monitored. This assistance often takes the form of defense articles such as weapons, but can also come in the form of training. In fact, the U.S. government provides training of some kind in 134 countries.

Currently, all defense acquisitions from the United States are being handled by the Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan CJ-4 office, but eventually the ANA and ANP will do it for themselves. The old equipment being used today will someday need replacement and these students will probably be involved.



**Afghanistan-students from the Afghan National Army listen to James Taphorn a DISAM instructor explains the mission of DISAM on the first day of class. The International Purchaser Orientation Course was held in Kabul to prepare the Afghan National Army and Afghan National Police to acquire defense articles for the defense of Afghanistan.**

