



The 7th International Scientific Conference
**“DEFENSE RESOURCES MANAGEMENT
IN THE 21st CENTURY”**
Bra ov, November 15th 2012



**KABUL INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT (KAIA) TRANSITION
PLAN: CASE STUDY ON HUMAN RESOURCES
MANAGEMENT (HRM)**

Capt. cder. Marius PETRE,

Offensive Air Operations Section Head/Air Operational Component/ROU AF HQ
Former KAIA Air Operations Group Commander on the 2nd rotation -“ROU KAIA Lead
Nation” (01.10.2011 – 31.03.2012)

Abstract:

The purpose of this paper is to present a case study, along with the way of approaching, on HRM, regarding KAIA Transition Plan from International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) led by NATO, to Afghan Government Authority, represented by Ministry of Transportation and Civil Aviation (MoTCA).

As you have already known, at the end of 2014, NATO/ISAF will finalize its mission in Afghanistan, and until 31st of December 2014, the security of the country will be gradually transferred to the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF). Also, the administration and management of the civil organizations/ structures (including the airports) have to be fully handed over to the Afghan Authorities.

NATO's involvement in Afghan aviation rehabilitation and transfer of responsibility, to Afghan authorities on civil aviation structure, were outlined in SACEUR's directions and guidance for Afghanistan, which referred to operating KAIA – and other airports – as a key military task with the intention of transferring the responsibilities to Afghan Authorities as soon as practicable while safeguarding military operational requirements. At the same time, SACEUR highlighted that any transition plan had to be considered the "human capital issue" to enable the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GIROA) to take over and run the airport.

Key words: Transition Plan, KAIA, ISAF, MoTCA, TASKIL, TAS.

1. Introduction

KAIA is the most important airport from Afghanistan. The command and control of the military side of the airport (KAIA, which operates 24/7) belong to a NATO/ ISAF one-star general (COMKAIA), and the civil side of the airport (South KAIA or KIA, which operates only the daytime) is led by the President of KIA, an Afghan civilian. But, even if there are two different command and control airport authorities, COMKAIA is responsible to provide Air Traffic Control services inside the Kabul TOWER's area of responsibility, and overall Flight Safety, Meteo Service, AIS (Aeronautical Information Services), FCRS (Fire Crash and Rescue Service) and Force Protection, for the whole airport.

Only to have an idea on its capabilities/airport operations, I will give you some details regarding the number of flights (both side military and civil) and number of passengers/ cargo tones handled (on load/offload) by KAIA CATO (Combined Air Terminal Operations). The period taken into consideration for the aforementioned numbers, is from April 2011 to April 2012, when Romania had the KAIA Lead Nation role:

- number of flights (military/civil) – 126,000

KAIA TRANSITION PLAN: CASE STUDY ON HRM

- number of passengers handled by CATO – 275,000
- Cargo Quantity (in tones) handled by CATO – 91,000

KAIA is also a very “busy” place...more than 5,000 permanent residents and thousands of ISAF/ANSF transient personnel on a daily base, with a lot of different structures and stakeholders which are located inside the airport area, each of them having a different higher echelon and specific responsibilities. This has caused many troubles in managing the airport in an integrated manner, especially for COMKAIA as both Battle Space Owner and GDA (Ground Defense Area) Commander.

2. The Transition Plan: background and considerations

In 2008, the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) was contracted by MoTCA, to develop a transition work plan (WP) and execute it, with assistance from ISAF, accordingly. The WP incorporated a detailed list of activities/timelines related to the transition process and envisaged transition being completed by end of March 2010.

Unfortunately, the WP was unsuccessful, mainly due to difficulties with the recruitment and retention of personnel linked to the lack of involvement and willing at the MoTCA highest level. First, the TASHKIL (translated to ‘Table of Organization and Equipment’) or the MoTCA organizational structure, had not been endorsed by MoTCA Minister, even if the recruitment and training had already commenced. Secondly, the proposed Technical Allowance Scale (TAS), - as a measure to pay and retain personnel once they graduated from the Afghan Civil Aviation Training Institute (CATI) and hired by MoTCA to fill posts identified on the TASHKIL - had not gained the approval from the Afghan side.

The second KAIA Transition Plan, named ‘Transition of Airport Functions at Kabul International Airport (KAIA)’ is an ambitious and big challenge. It has been developed between 2010 and 2011, at ISAF level, and finally was endorsed at JFC Brunssum, in June 2011. The main objectives of the plan are the transfer of KAIA vital airport functions to Afghan side by 2014 and MoTCA to develop the capability to take over and run the airport.

Five airport functions had been taken into consideration to be handed over to the Afghan side:

- Air Traffic Control (ATC);
- Fire and Crash Rescue Services (FCRS);
- Safety Management Office (SMO);
- Meteorological Services (METEO);
- Communications, Navigational Aids and Systems (CNS) Maintenance.

In the same period of time, there were discussed and made the necessary arrangements with MoTCA, on the hand, to solve the problems and difficulties with the recruitment, and retention of personnel (updating, signing and implementing the TASKIL, elaborating and implementing the TAS), and on the other hand, to elaborate and sign a Letter of Agreement (LoA) on KAIA transfer of the aforementioned airport functions between ISAF and MoTCA, as a legal and bi-lateral document on the transition issue. Finally, in March 2012, MoTCA Minister endorsed and has started to implement both the updated TASKIL and the new TAS.

This new Transition Plan was thought to be a reference model, which could be applied, for the transition process, to the other Afghan airports, where are located NATO/ISAF bases, such as Kandahar or Herat.

KAIA TRANSITION PLAN: CASE STUDY ON HRM

Speaking about the phased approach, the plan has three phases (at certain point, phases have to be developed in parallel):

- Phase I - Capability building (Afghan human specialized resources), in five recognized vital airport functions (they have already mentioned above). This phase is on-going and I will give more details on it in the next chapter, because Phase I is linked to the purpose of this paper - the HRM based on a case study.

- Phase II & III: Equipment & Infrastructure (SHAPE will produce guidance with regard to extent of the investment)

Preconditions for success and considerations:

a) legal:

- Afghan Civil Aviation Law and Afghan Civil Aviation Authority to be in-place and effective working;
- LoAs to provide assignment of MoTCA personnel to KAIA, for the Transition period;
- Essential Qualifications/certification to be comprised in the Job Description, in accordance with ICAO and NATO standards;

b) KAIA CE (Crisis Establishment) balance between gradually increasing of Afghan/ MoTCA employees and decreasing of NATO/ISAF/ contracted personnel, accordingly.

c) Mentoring:

- a number of mentors from NATO side to train the selected afghan personnel on OJT (On-the Job Training) program and they have to be maintained in the future for the personnel/new equipment to be taken over by Afghan side during Phases II and III.
- it was the intent that the mentors would be primarily responsible for ensuring that the MoTCA personnel, selected to be trained/ prepared to take over the responsibility from ISAF personnel, will achieve the necessary qualifications/standards in order to assume their operational duties.

3. Phase I: capability building (human specialized resources)

This Phase has already started and it will set the conditions for follow-on work that will be needed in subsequent Phases (including equipment, infrastructure, contractors, airspace etc). The final goal of the Phase I has been (as I have already mentioned) “the gradually handover of the following operational/ airport vital functions at KAIA, from ISAF to Afghan Authorities, represented by MoTCA:

- Air Traffic Control;
- Fire and Crash Rescue Services;
- Safety Management Office;
- Meteorological Services;
- Communications, Navigational Aids and Systems (CNS) Maintenance”

It was established that the execution/ implementation of the Phase I, had to be applied independently to each of the above airport functions. Also, the operational capability of KAIA had not to be affected during this Phase as it has been imperative to ensure the continued delivery of safe and effective airport services to both civil and military air traffic (building of human capacity was considered not be at the detriment to normal operational services).

The selection of candidates had been made by MoTCA during the first trimester of 2012, along with their vetting, ensured by the specialized structure from ISAF/ ANSF. There were a number of trained Afghan nationals in the fields, in the past, but for most of

KAIA TRANSITION PLAN: CASE STUDY ON HRM

them, considerable time has occurred since formal education and practical application have taken place.

The courses/OJT program started in April 2012, when 15 mentors from a NATO country, arrived at KAIA in March 2012, have been ready to train the selected candidates, to qualify them (only for those who has been in one of the TASHKIL positions), to be licensed by MoTCA. A formal agreement between MoTCA and ISAF to define responsibilities and liability was necessary to be signed, in order to allow training and certification of MoTCA employees.

Speaking about the selection, the candidates had to fulfill as a minimum, the following requisites:

- Education at High School Level – Grade 12;
- Aeronautical / Aviation background;
- Good command of English (Understanding, Speaking, Reading and Writing);
- Driving License;
- Good physical and psychological condition.

All candidates were subjected to an individual evaluation based on:

- test on general aviation and aerodrome concepts (40% weight for final result);
- individual interview with the applicants (30% weight for final result);
- applicant's curriculum (30% weight for final result); the Curriculum's evaluation criteria took into consideration the following factors:
 - Education
 - English Level
 - Experience in aviation field.

Some essential employment conditions had been established between ISAF and MoTCA, as follows:

- MoTCA Tashkil and TAS to be in-place;
- MoTCA cooperation with ISAF has to ensure that only the Afghan personnel who meet minimum qualification will be included in OJT program;
- training will be made in accordance with GIRoA Civil Servant's Law and the technical requirements of the specified position;
- supervision of MOTCA employees designated for training or working in the areas covered by LOA, will be a joint (ISAF/MoTCA) responsibility;
- administrative supervision as required by the GIRoA Civil Servant's Law and associated regulations will be the responsibility of MoTCA supervisors;
- the MoTCA selection of the Afghan personnel, has to be done in the most objective manner, with oversight from ISAF side, in accordance with LoA between MoTCA and ISAF;
- for Afghan Meteo future employees, must be re-called on duty those which ISAF has already trained in the past and left due to they were not on the TASKIL.

4. Conclusion

NATO, ICAO, and US Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) cooperation in Afghanistan has been vital in moving forward the complex, multi-faceted problem regarding the handover of responsibility of KAIA from ISAF to GIRoA. The recruitment and retention issues that have plagued previous plans to grow capacity in key specialist areas have now been resolved.

KAIA TRANSITION PLAN: CASE STUDY ON HRM

Through a concerted effort between ISAF and MoTCA, the publication/endorsement of the TASHKIL and TAS created the real opportunity to grow the necessary skills and experience and finally, to start the process of transition. This should be regarded as the first step of many but is vital if transition is ever to be achieved. For example, rehabilitation and normalization of the aviation sector and infrastructure/equipment issues are equally important for the process to be completed.

We have assessed that, whilst a small initial investment in terms of manpower is required (just 15 mentors), the savings are significant (more than 80 CE Posts). A further 25 CE posts will be saved once the Afghan personnel have assumed the leadership and supervisory roles bringing the total saving to more than 100 CE posts. As a result, NATO will save a big amount of money (e.g: an average monthly payment for an ICC is around 7, 500 Euro; for an Afghan LCH is between 500 \$ and 1200\$ depends on the field, the biggest payment is in ATC field and the lowest is in FCRS)

However, even if the Plan seems to be achievable, there are some challenges and a certain grade of risk which from my point of view, can hamper or delay the implementation of the Transition Plan, such as:

- willing of the Afghan side to be really involved in the Transition Plan.
- TAS/ Payment issues:
 - to retain the Afghan personnel trained and qualified by ISAF trainers;
 - to retain the Afghan personnel graduated from CATI
- availability of the trainees for the training program;
- additional tasks out of the OJT program to be given by MoTCA, for trainees;
- quality and experience of the majority of the Afghan personnel is very low in comparison with ISAF personnel (especially ICCs);
- problem to find the suitable Afghan candidates, due to the very limited percentage of the people with a high school degree (almost 90% of the Afghan population are illiterates).

References

- [1] ISAF HQ, *KAIA Transition of Airport Functions at KAIA*, Kabul, 2011;
- [2] KAIA HQ, *Implementation Transition Plan – Phase I of the Transition of Airport Functions at KABUL International Airport to MoTCA*, Kabul, 2012;
- [3] MoTCA/KAIA AIS, *Afghanistan - Aeronautical Information Publication (AIP)*, Kabul, June 2012;
- [4] MoTCA, *Islamic Republic of Afghanistan Civil Aviation Master Plan*, Kabul 2010;
- [5] GIRoA, *Afghan National Development Strategy 2008 – 2013*, Kabul, 2007;
- [6] ISAF and MoTCA, *Letter of Agreement (LoA) between ISAF and MoTCA on transition of airport operational at Kabul International Airport, Phase I - Build Capacity*, Kabul, 14 Aug 2011;
- [7] [http:// www.motca.gov.af](http://www.motca.gov.af).