

Training Afghan Air Force Pilots, 2006-2011





Forrest L. Marion

(Overleaf) The Kabul International Airport (Air Base) flightline, 2008-2009, with Afghan Mi-17 and An-32 aircraft. (Except where otherwise credited, all photos courtesy, Maj. Gen. Walter D. Givhan, USAF Ret.)

WHEN THE U.S. MILITARY BEGAN TO ASSESS... REBUILDING AN AFGHAN AIR FORCE, IT FOUND THAT NEARLY ALL THE ELIGIBLE FORMER PILOTS WERE SOVIET-TRAINED AFGHAN AVIATORS

Since 1947, the U.S. Air Force has trained pilot-candidates and pilots from nations around the world. Beginning in 2005-2006, the Air Force – under combined U.S./coalition initiatives – began attempting to rebuild the air forces of its erstwhile adversaries, the Iraqis and the Afghans. Although the Iraq war did not begin until 2003, a year after the U.S.-led military operation in Afghanistan had apparently stabilized the security situation there, the approval of a development program of U.S./allies former enemies' air forces began, first with Iraq in 2005, and a year later with Afghanistan.

Afghanistan's rulers had experienced air power and its effects in 1919 when the Royal Air Force employed a lone Handley Page V/1500 to bomb the royal palace in Kabul – and which apparently frightened and scattered the king's harem into the city's streets. From the 1920s, the Afghan king wanted an air service and he made arrangements with the Soviets, Italians, and British to obtain assistance in building one. A few Afghan pilot-candidates went to the Soviet Union and Italy for training. For most of the 1930s the Afghans managed to maintain a few aircraft in flying condition while functioning largely on their own – a situation not unlike the 1990s. During World War Two, the combination of Afghan neutrality, preoccupation of its aviation-partners with their own survival, and the logistical obstacles of Afghanistan's landlocked location ensured that its air capabilities remained minimal.¹

After the war, the small Afghan air force employed largely obsolete aircraft mainly for internal policing (i.e., counterinsurgency) purposes. In 1955 a renewed relationship with the Soviet Union brought with it newer aircraft as well as a sovietized Afghan air force to include the training of Afghan pilots. Although the Soviets held sway with the Afghan government, the United States provided assistance as well, as the Afghans deftly played the two Cold War superpowers off of one another. In the early 1960s the U.S. government built Kandahar Airport in the southeastern part of the country while the Soviets constructed Shindand Air Base in the southwest. And during that decade, a small number of Afghan pilot-candidates came to the United States for training. In a poignant moment in the spring of 2009, retired Afghan Air Force Col. Ghulam Mustafa Tayer – who fifty years earlier had become the first of his countrymen to earn pilot wings in the United States – addressed the pilots and pilot-candidates of the Afghan National Army Air Corps shortly before the first group traveled to America to begin training.²

By the 1970s, Soviet-trained Afghan pilots flew Soviet-built aircraft, especially MiG-21 fighters and Mi-8 helicopters. Both aircraft types became mainstays in the Afghan inventory, and two decades later they were flown by the air forces of the Taliban and other factions then vying for control of the country. (The current Afghan 'workhorse,' the Mi-17 helicopter, is an upgraded version of the Mi-8; in recent years most senior leaders in the Afghan Air Force have been former MiG-21 or Mi-8 pilots, all of whom completed pilot training under the Soviets).³

Such were a few indicators of a thoroughly sovietized Afghan air service marked by the 'stovepiping' of information and decision-making generally at the highest levels. From the mid-1980s when the Afghans possessed up to 400 or more aircraft – including significant numbers of fighters, transports, light bombers, and helicopters – to the end of the following decade when perhaps only a few dozen fixed-wing and helicopter types remained flyable in Afghanistan, the training of new Afghan pilots dropped off even more precipitously than did the number of aircraft – apparently to zero by 1992, when the Afghan communist government fell to mujahideen warlords. The several Afghan factions, including after 1994 the Taliban, managed to keep a small number of aircraft flying, and almost all Afghan military pilots were the products of the Soviet training system. A decade later when the U.S. military began to assess the human materiel available for rebuilding an Afghan air force, it found that nearly all the eligible former pilots were Soviet-trained Afghan aviators mostly in their forties. Moreover, nearly all were considered limited to day-time flying under visual flight rules, or VFR.⁴

Following the reestablishment of a friendly Afghan government in Kabul in 2002, it was 2005 before U.S. Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld directed the development of an Afghan presidential airlift capability which initially was the lone objective for American air planners. By 2006, a few U.S. Army aviators based in Kabul, led by Col. John T. Hansen, conducted Mi-17 training flights with Afghan pilots on an ad hoc basis. Later that year, a U.S./coalition plan for the Afghan National Army Air Corps began to take shape. This plan, based on Hansen's work, became the basis for the U.S.-led Combined Air Power Transition Force-Afghanistan (CAPTF-A), activated in the spring of 2007, whose mission was to "set the conditions for a fully independent and operationally capable" air corps to meet Afghanistan's security needs (the term "independent" referred to the capability to conduct operations without outside assistance, not to the status of a separate service).⁵

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Brig. Gen. Givhan with Maj. Gen. Mohammad Dawran, commander, Afghan National Army Air Corps (later, Afghan Air Force), at Kabul, Afghanistan. Dawran, a former MiG-21 pilot, had been trained as a cosmonaut by the Soviets.



IN THE SPRING OF 2009 THE FIRST GROUP OF AFGHAN PILOT-CANDIDATES IN SEVERAL DECADES HAD TRAVELED TO THE UNITED STATES

Organizationally, the initial plan envisioned three ‘wings’ – one for presidential airlift and two others, one rotary-wing and one fixed-wing. Meanwhile, the early 2006 International Conference on Afghanistan produced what was known as the Afghanistan Compact calling for an Afghan Air Corps of 7,000 members carved out of the much larger Afghan national army.⁶

When in 2007 the CAPTF-A began its work in Kabul, the Afghan Air Corps possessed about two dozen aircraft. Coalition partners agreed to provide additional rotary- and fixed-wing aircraft to the fledgling air corps, led by the United Arab Emirates (U.A.E.) and the Czech Republic which together contributed thirteen additional Mi-17 helicopters by 2008. Ukraine donated three An-32 fixed-wing transports, refurbished with U.S. funding. While aircraft donations by coalition partners were significant at the outset, within the next several years the assistance of those nations’ Mi-17 instructor pilots became equally critical in the training of Afghan pilots.⁷

In the spring of 2009 the first *group* of Afghan pilot-candidates in several decades had traveled to the United States to begin English language training followed by undergraduate pilot training, or UPT. Some sixty Afghans were slated to undergo fixed- or rotary-wing UPT; about thirty who were already qualified as fixed-wing pilots were to complete instrument training before returning to Afghanistan. Additionally, four Mi-17 pilots and three flight engineers were to attend instructor training. As some of the Afghans were settling in to their new surroundings in San Antonio, Texas, in June 2009 the first of the modern-era’s U.S.-trained Afghan pilots, Lt. Faiz Ramaki, earned his wings at Columbus AFB, Mississippi.⁸

By early 2011 more than thirty coalition partners provided personnel to assist the U.S. in the ‘train-and-advise’ mission for the Afghans. At Kabul and Kandahar, two of the three major Afghan air installations – the other was at Shindand – former Eastern European Mi-17 instructors proved invaluable to the training of Afghan airmen. At Kandahar, most of the one dozen air advisors from Lithuania, Ukraine, and Latvia had been trained in the Mi-17 under the Soviet system. At the time, Col. Michael R. Outlaw, a special operations C-130 pilot, commanded the U.S. Air Force’s air advisory group there, part of the 438th wing that bore the dual designation of the NATO Air Training Command-Afghanistan (or, NATC-A, which merged with CAPTF-A). Colonel Outlaw’s group was charged with training Afghan airmen in Mi-17 operations as well as in various ground support specialties from airfield firefighting to medical support to communications to managing a dining facility.⁹

Outlaw recalled that the first commander of the coalition air advisor team at Kandahar, a Lithuanian pilot who arrived early in 2011, “had trained under the Soviet system prior to the [Berlin] Wall falling down and Lithuania [kind of] ‘westernizing.’” He had experienced firsthand “the pain” of the Soviet system but then following the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact he had also undergone additional training under a westernized system. “So he could identify and bridge the gap because all [that] the Afghans knew was the Soviet system,” Colonel Outlaw recalled. The Lithuanian instructor pilot provided the Afghans with firsthand experience as to why a Western/U.S.-style training and command-and-control system that emphasized institutionalized procedures and also allowed for individual pilot and aircrew initiative and decision-making was better than the Soviet system. Moreover, the

Here is then-Capt. Antanas "Tony" Matutis, Lithuanian Air Force, an Mi-17 instructor pilot based at Kandahar, picture taken near Bastion, Afghanistan, June-July, 2011. (Photo courtesy of Maj. Antanas Matutis.)



Lithuanian spoke with the Afghans in Russian which many of the older Afghan airmen spoke. That was a considerable advantage because none of the American pilots spoke Russian and few of the Afghans spoke more than a basic level of English.¹⁰

But even a unique perspective communicated

to the Afghans in Russian may not have been sufficient to convince some pilots in the Kandahar Air Wing to embrace fully the Western/U.S.-style training (perhaps the use of Russian made such a prospect counterintuitive?). In the fall of 2011, the Lithuanian instructor who commanded the coali-

Brig. Gen. Givhan teaching English to Afghan officers.



An Mi-17 in the snow from a winter exercise, 2008-2009.



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tion air advisor team informed Colonel Outlaw that although the Afghans had begun using the Western-based training system, “they were keeping their own Russian-style training system” basically in their ‘hip pocket.’ Presumably, this had been the case since the beginning of training at Kandahar (the group had been activated in late 2009), but it took the Lithuanians’ collective ability to discern what the Afghans meant when they said certain things and then doing some ‘digging’ on their own to discover that the Afghans were keeping their own system for future use in spite of current Afghan regulations that dictated the adoption of the Western system.¹¹

Recalling that the older Mi-17 pilots had flown that particular helicopter for many years, the system the Afghan Mi-17 pilots at Kandahar were keeping in their hip pocket may have amounted simply to the intent to return to relying mostly on memory and handwritten notes in lieu of practicing consistent checklist discipline, conducting standard aircrew briefings, and keeping detailed aircraft maintenance records. Moreover, the traditional practices of Afghan aviators (regardless of locale) included a “personal-based mission generation system” whereby the Afghan unit commander or another senior leader tasked individual aircrews for specific missions. While such an informal system was adequate for a small number of flyable aircraft conducting only a few sorties daily, it was inadequate for a larger fleet such as the one U.S./coalition air planners anticipated for the Afghans in the coming years. Moreover, the personal-based command-and-control system often upset the top priorities of U.S./coalition air advisors with the Afghans: 1), supporting Afghan army units’ battlefield mobility

requirements; and, 2), conducting aircrew training.¹²

Among the issues raised by the Lithuanians’ discovery at Kandahar, one was the importance of the English language skills of Afghan airmen. While the U.S./coalition partners developed numerous English programs – English being the language of aviation – they encountered serious challenges. The traditional low literacy rate in Afghanistan was challenging enough. But an added difficulty was that Afghan Air Force recruits underwent basic training under the Afghan Army’s oversight, and it was not uncommon for the more literate and promising recruits to be diverted from the Air Force to the Army. Lieutenant Colonel (later, Col.) Gregory A. Roberts, who commanded the U.S./coalition rotary-wing advisory squadron at Kabul from 2010-2011, recalled that English language skills seemed “more valuable on some level than flying skills,” a conviction he reached after flying with the first two newly-minted Afghan pilots that returned to Afghanistan from their training in the United States. In comparison with nearly all of the older pilots, the young pilots were “remarkably more competent.” Two issues related to the widely differing English and flying skills between the younger and older pilots were, first, personal jealousies that perhaps were anticipated to some degree; and, second, the reluctance of Afghan Air Force unit leadership in some cases to allow their young pilots to fly, which may not have been anticipated. Indeed, at least a few newly-qualified Afghan pilots, upon their return home, were assigned to *non-flying jobs* despite the American advisors’ counsel otherwise.¹³

Among those Afghans that had traveled to the U.S. for language training to be followed by flight

Brig. Gen. Walter D. Givhan, 438th Air Expeditionary Wing (438 AEW)/Combined Air Power Transition Force (CAPTF)-Afghanistan commanding general, with Afghan air cadets, Sept. 2008-Sept. 2009.



BY LATE 2011, SOME FIFTY AFGHANS WERE UNDERGOING ENGLISH TRAINING AND A DOZEN WERE IN PILOT TRAINING

training, a number proved to be a ‘flight risk’ – going AWOL, or absent-without-leave, most attempting to get into Canada. Although AWOLs were not an uncommon occurrence, the November 2009 jihadist attack at Fort Hood, Texas, raised the level of concern for Afghan officers that fled from their training programs. That unfortunate though not entirely unanticipated trend facilitated a U.S.-U.A.E. plan whereby eighty Afghan pilot-candidates would undergo their training in the Emirates. By late 2011, some fifty Afghans were undergoing English training and a dozen were in pilot training in the U.A.E. In addition, in 2010 the NATO Air Training Command-Afghanistan established an English-immersion program at the Kabul air base intended for pilot-candidates to learn English before leaving their homeland for pilot training. Known as the ‘Thunder Lab,’ the program was the single most visible and highly acclaimed NATC-A initiative in late 2010 and early 2011. In January 2011, the Air Force chief of staff, Gen. Norton A. Schwartz, devoted the bulk of his visit with the 438th wing to the Thunder Lab.¹⁴

The first part of 2011 was a promising period. In January, the first Afghan student-pilots flew Mi-17 training sorties at the former Soviet air base at Shindand, the installation intended as the key node in the country for initial pilot training. In February, the first two Afghan Mi-17 aircraft commanders graduated at Shindand, and a month later the first Afghan Mi-17 instructor pilot flew with a student-pilot there. Also in March, the first two all-Afghan Mi-17 helicopter movements of the President of Afghanistan took place, which U.S. advisors monitored from the control tower at Kabul. Also, the first two Fort Rucker, Alabama-trained

helicopter pilots completed their initial Mi-17 copilot certifications at Kabul following an intensive month of training under the Croatian air advisors – generally acknowledged as the best Mi-17 instructors in the world. In April, the first Afghan Mi-17 instructor pilot in the Afghans’ Kandahar Air Wing passed his flight check – which was administered by the Kandahar rotary-wing advisory squadron commander, Lt. Col. (later, Col.) Fred C. Koegler. By the fall of 2011, a total of five Afghan fixed-wing pilots had completed the entire training course from pre-flight to earning their pilot wings and eleven had accomplished the same feat as newly-minted rotary-wing pilots.¹⁵

But the spring of 2011 was marred by a treacherous attack on April 27, carried out by an Afghan lieutenant colonel at the Kabul air base. Nine Americans were killed – eight were U.S. Air Force members of the 438th wing – a tragic reminder of the inherent risks of close quarters training with foreign nationals of uncertain loyalty especially within a broader context that could not rule out the possibility of corruption as a contributing cause. In 2013, one reinvestigation of the attack referred to “the AAF [Afghan Air Force] Criminal Patronage Network (CPN).” The April 27 attack against those remembered lovingly by many as the ‘NATC-A Nine’ had been the worst single incident loss of U.S. Air Force life in a deployed location since the Khobar Towers bombing in 1996. While the several force protection measures of the 438th wing’s vice commander, Col. William D. Andersen – including a ‘buddy-system,’ team radios, a wing operations center, and a heightened weapons status – did not prevent the attack, they undoubtedly mitigated the

A social gathering with a senior Afghan Air Corps leader. The young man on far right was Brig. Gen. Givhan's cultural advisor/interpreter-translator.



THE TENDENCY OF SENIOR AFGHAN OFFICERS AND HIGH GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS TO TASK FLYING UNITS UNDER THEIR CONTROL WITH AIRLIFT MISSIONS,... MADE... ATTEMPTS TO FOCUS ON TRAINING AFGHAN PILOTS MORE DIFFICULT

immediate post-attack response and facilitated a far more orderly scenario than what might have unfolded only three weeks earlier when Andersen arrived at Kabul.¹⁶

The tendency of senior Afghan officers and high government officials to task flying units under their control with airlift missions, sometimes on very short notice and on occasion of questionable legitimacy, made U.S./coalition advisors' attempts to focus on training Afghan pilots more difficult than it needed to be, especially at Kabul where senior officials abounded. Two successive U.S. Air Force commanders of the 438th wing's helicopter advisor squadron there, Greg Roberts and Lt. Col. John P. Conmy, recalled that often the Mi-17s were tasked with missions to include hauling passengers with political or tribal connections to senior leaders or to deliver various supplies including livestock, toilet paper, or firewood. While some items may have raised the eyebrows of Western/U.S. airmen, they were legitimate missions in an Afghan context especially in support of Afghan army units that endured harsh field conditions and engaged in combat operations. But in a few cases, the Mi-17s flew more questionable cargo. On at least two occasions in 2010-2011, unidentified packages flown by Afghan Mi-17 crews were spirited away immediately by motorcycles upon the helicopter's landing at a remote airstrip. On one mission, U.S. airmen who observed the scenario from another Mi-17 noticed that crates of rice and fruit were left on the tarmac as the unidentified cargo was carried off by the motorcyclists.¹⁷

While the production of Mi-17 pilots was the foremost pilot training concern of U.S./coalition

advisors in terms of the numbers required, the struggles and eventual failure of the Afghan Air Force's C-27A Spartan airlifter program warranted attention as well. The air planners intended for the C-27 – also known as the Aeritalia G.222 – to replace the medium-sized Antonov transports that the Afghans had flown for decades, the An-26 and An-32. By 2011, all the Afghan tail numbers of those aircraft types had reached the end of their programed flying time and were no longer funded by U.S./coalition partners.¹⁸

The air campaign plan called for a total of twenty Spartans, the first two of which arrived in Kabul late in 2009. By early 2011 one-half of the C-27s had arrived, with a final tally of sixteen Spartans reaching Kabul before the program was discontinued at the end of 2012.¹⁹ While the U.S./coalition plan anticipated that a small number of selected, and older, Antonov pilots would travel to the United States first to improve their English, and then to undergo instrument flight training, those were not the pilots envisioned to become the foundation for a new Afghan Air Force. The greater interest was to train young Afghan pilot-candidates in the United States – like Lieutenant Ramaki – and return them to Afghanistan as qualified fixed-wing pilots who would then get checked-out in the C-27. But in the spring of 2011, if not generally, operational support missions rather than training took center stage, although the two were combined as much as possible. Coupled with an unacceptably low mission-capable rate for the Spartans – in early February 2011 no more than three C-27s typically were mission-capable on a given day – training took a 'back seat.' An ongoing shortage of C-27 aircraft

The start-up of rocket training for Afghan Mi-35s (the upgraded Mi-24 Hind). (Photo courtesy of the 438 AEW History.)



THERE HAVE BEEN POCKETS OF SUCCESS AND BEACONS OF HOPE, BUT THERE HAVE ALSO BEEN VALID REASONS FOR CONCERN

parts and reported problems in customer service from the manufacturer contributed to the announcement by U.S. officials at the end of 2012 that the aircraft's support contract would not be renewed. Even so, in March 2011 two Afghan C-27 pilots were certified to fly under U.S. Air Force supervision.²⁰

Beginning in the fall of 2011 a smaller airlifter program, the Cessna C-208B Caravan, substituted to a degree for the faltering C-27 Spartans. Between October 2011 and December 2012, the Afghans received a total of twenty-six C-208 Caravan aircraft, employing them mainly for the airlift of troops and supplies, medical evacuation,

and transport of human remains in accordance with Muslim cultural requirements.²¹

In short, the final chapter of the training of Afghan Air Force pilots in the post-9/11 era has not been written. There have been pockets of success and beacons of hope, but there have also been valid reasons for concern as to how things will turn out in the end. As the Pentagon's Inspector General stated, "Air power is critical to the mobility of the Afghan National Security Forces, and NATC-A officials are striving to increase the Afghan Air Force's ability to plan and conduct operations in defense of their country." Only time will tell if they are able to succeed.²² ■

NOTES

1. Forrest L. Marion, "The Destruction and Rebuilding of the Afghan Air Force, 1989-2009," *Air Power History*, vol. 57, no. 2 (Summer, 2010), p. 24.
2. Leon B. Poullada and Leila D. J. Poullada, *The Kingdom of Afghanistan and the United States: 1828-1973* (Lincoln, Neb.: Center for Afghanistan Studies, University of Nebraska at Omaha, and Dageforde Publishing, 1995), pp. 108-110, 180-81; Marion, "Destruction and Rebuilding of the Afghan Air Force," pp. 24-26. In April 2009, the author interviewed Colonel Tayer in Kabul and attended his address to the Afghan airmen.
3. Marion, "Destruction and Rebuilding of the Afghan Air Force," p. 24.
4. Marion, "Destruction and Rebuilding of the Afghan Air Force," 24-26; Hist, 438 AEW, Mar. 1, 2009-Apr. 30, 2009, narrative, 15, and Case File (CF) 02, brf, "Afghan National Army Air Corps (ANAAC)," Mar 2009, slide 27, AFHRA call number K-WG-438-HI (AEW) CD, Mar. 1, 2009-Apr. 30, 2009. Author Steve Coll describes 'Northern Alliance' leader Massoud's air

force by the late 1990s as "a few tattered helicopters pasted together from incompatible spare parts and with rotors that continually threatened to detach and fly away"; see Coll, *Ghost Wars: The Secret History of the CIA, Afghanistan, and Bin Laden, from the Soviet Invasion to September 10, 2001* (New York: Penguin Books, Inc., 2005), p. 460.

5. Marion, "Destruction and Rebuilding of the Afghan Air Force," p. 27, including quote.

6. Marion, "Destruction and Rebuilding of the Afghan Air Force," p. 27.

7. Hist, 438 AEW, Mar. 1, 2009-Apr. 30, 2009, narrative, pp. 16-17.

8. Hist, 438 AEW, Mar. 1, 2009-Apr. 30, 2009, CF 02, slides, "CSTC-A Commander's Update," Apr. 30, 2009; Sonic Johnson, "Afghan Officer earns USAF Wings," *Air Force Print News Today*, Jun. 13, 2009, at www.columbus.af.mil/news/story_print.asp?id=123154059 (May 25, 2015). In 2013 the first known Afghan female pilot to complete flight training in Afghanistan earned her wings; see Kristina Wong, "Afghan Air

Force graduates first female pilot in 30 years," *Washington Times*, May 14, 2013, at www.washington-times.com/news/2013/may/14/afghan-air-force-graduates-first-female-pilot-30-y/ (Feb. 21, 2015). The pilot was Lt. Niloofar Rhmani. She graduated from Cessna C-182 training at Shindand AB along with four male fixed-wing pilots and eight rotary-wing pilots who trained on the MD-530 helicopter.

9. Intvw, Col. Michael R. Outlaw, USAF, and Col. Daniel E. Blake, USAF, by F. L. Marion, AFHRA, Sep. 24, 2013 (original at AFHRA, transcribed). One of several oddities with the coalition effort was that despite the oft-used 'NATO' designation, there were several non-NATO participants who fell under the International Security Assistance Force (or, ISAF), including Mongolia who contributed an Mi-17 engine and body maintenance team; see doc, 438 AEW, "Significant Events Chronology, Jan-Feb 2011, Mar 2011, Apr 2011," entry for Jan. 1, 2011 AFHRA, Maxwell AFB, Ala.

10. Outlaw intvw, including quotes.

11. Outlaw intvw, including quote. Probably either the Lithuanian pilot advisor or Outlaw (or both) conflated the regimented, stovepiped Soviet system with the ad hoc, personal-based Afghan system that enjoyed freer reign in the 1990s at the end of the long period of Soviet domination of Afghan air service issues. While the Afghans may have blended elements of the Soviet system with Afghan ad hoc personalism, the main point was that the Afghans were reluctant to adopt the Western/U.S. system.

12. Intvw, Col. Fred C. Koegler, USAF, by F. L. Marion, AFHRA, Apr. 16, 2015 (AFHRA, intvw not transcribed); intvw, Col. Gregory A. Roberts, USAF, by F. L. Marion, AFHRA, May 19, 2015, including quote (AFHRA, intvw not transcribed).

13. Telecon, Lt. Col. Gregory A. Roberts, USAF, with author, Mar. 5, 2015, including quotes; intvw, Lt. Col. John P. Conmy, USAF, by F. L. Marion, AFHRA, Sep. 22, 2014 (AFHRA, intvw not transcribed); personal observations as 438th historian, Feb-May 2011.

14. James C. McKinley, Jr., "Afghan Soldiers Went AWOL in Texas," *New York Times*, Jun. 30, 2010; *Improved Pricing and Oversight Needed for the Afghan Air Force Pilot and English Language Training Task Order*, pp. 2, 13, at www.dodig.mil/audit/reports/fy11/11-113.pdf (May 22, 2015); Carol Huang, "Afghanistan's new armed forces receive training in the U.A.E.," *The National, U.A.E.*, Oct. 21, 2011, at www.thenational.ae/news/uae-news/afghanistans-new-armed-forces-receive-training-in-the-uae (May 23, 2015); brfg, NATO Training Mission-Afghanistan (NTM-A), "DCOM-Air," slide 11, entitled "Training Outside Afghanistan," ca. Nov. 2011 (electronic copy provided to author by Capt. C. C. Felker, USN, Feb. 18, 2015). Felker served as historian for the Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan (CSTC-A), in Kabul during 2011. Starting in 2009, English Language Training was conducted at San Antonio, Tex. The task order for the training in the U.A.E. called for 80 Afghan pilots, proficient in aviation-English, by October 2013.

15. Roberts interv; Koegler interv; doc, 438 AEW, "Significant Events Chronology, Jan-Feb 2011, Mar 2011, Apr 2011," entries for Jan, 8, Feb.14, Mar., Mar. 22, Mar. 29, and Apr. 12, 2011; brfg, NTM-A, "DCOM-Air," slide 12, entitled "AAF/AIU Aircrew Development Status: Oct11."

16. Report, *AR 15-6 Investigation, Green on Blue Incident at Kabul Int'l Airport*, Nov. 1, 2013, Report of

Investigation, Finding 01, including quote (copy at AFHRA); personal observations as 438th historian, Feb-May 2011; interv, Col. William D. Andersen, USAF (Retired), by F. L. Marion, AFHRA, May 6, 2015 (AFHRA, intvw not transcribed); intvw, Maj. Melissa Moon-Brown, USAF (Retired), by F. L. Marion, AFHRA, Apr. 25, 2013 (original at AFHRA, transcribed). On April 27, 2011, Colonel Andersen acted as wing commander in the absence of Brig. Gen. David W. Allvin who was returning to Kabul from the United States at the time.

17. Doc, 438 AEW, "Significant Events Chronology, Jan-Feb 2011, Mar 2011, Apr 2011," entries for Mar. 11 and 18 2011; Roberts interv; discussions with Lt. Col. Mark R. (last initial only) (in 2011), Lt. Col. Conmy (in 2014), and Lt. Col. (later, Col.) Roberts (in 2015). In 2012, the U.S. Government began an investigation into the possibility of Afghan Air Force aircraft being used to transport narcotics; see Kay Johnson, "Afghan air force ascent slow, imperiling battle with Taliban," *Reuters*, Jan. 25, 2015, at <https://ca.news.yahoo.com/afghan-air-force-ascent-slow-imperiling-battle-taliban-222810844.html> (May 23, 15).

18. Doc, 438 AEW, "Significant Events Chronology, Jan-Feb 2011, Mar 2011, Apr 2011," entry for 30 Mar 11. By the summer-fall of 2011, none of the Antonov transports were funded by the U.S./coalition; if they were flown, it was entirely an Afghan undertaking.

19. Doc, 438 AEW, "Significant Events Chronology, Jan-Feb 2011, Mar 2011, Apr 2011," entry for 20 Feb 11. The last four C-27s intended for Afghanistan were not delivered but remained in Europe. In 2014 the Afghan C-27 fleet was sold for scrap metal; several articles highlighted the fact that nearly one-half billion dollars had been wasted on the C-27 program. Not to excuse but to place in perspective, compare the C-27 program with the failed Defense Integrated Military Human Resources System (DIMHRS), a DOD pay/personnel system that consumed more than \$800 million between 1998 and program termination in 2010; see GAO-05-189.

20. Doc, 438 AEW, "Significant Events Chronology, Jan-Feb 2011, Mar 2011, Apr 2011," entries for 8 Feb 11, 24 Mar 11; SAJAD, "Afghanistan welcomes cancellation of Italian-made planes," *Khaama Press*, 29 Dec 12, at <http://www.khaama.com/afghanistan-welcomes-cancellation-of-italian-made-planes-2077> (22 May 15). Ramaki became the first Afghan C-27 pilot, completing his initial qualification on the aircraft in Feb. 2010; see Elizabeth Burke, "Airmen train Afghan National Army Air Corps' first C-27 pilot," *U.S. Air Force News*, 25 Feb 10, at <http://www.af.mil/News/ArticleDisplay/tabid/223/Article/117516/airmen-train-afghan-national-army-air-corps-first-c-27-pilot.aspx> (23 May 15).

21. Agneta Murnan, "Afghan Air Force advances battlefield support tactics," 438 AEW/NATC-A, *U.S. Air Force News*, 25 Jan 13, at <http://www.af.mil/News/ArticleDisplay/tabid/223/Article/109808/afghan-air-force-advances-battlefield-support-tactics.aspx> (23 May 15); Jim Moore, "Afghan pilots complete training," *Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association*, 18 Sep 13, at <http://www.aopa.org/News-and-Video/All-News/2013/September/18/afghan-pilots> (23 May 15); Michael A. Keltz, "Getting Our Partners Airborne," *Air & Space Power Journal*, May-Jun 2014, 11, 15, 17, at <http://www.airpower.maxwell.af.mil/digital/pdf/articles/2014-May-Jun/SLP-keltz.pdf> (14 Feb 15).

22. *Improved Pricing and Oversight Needed*, 16, including quote.