

Three nations, two armies discuss border security

Written by U.S. Army Maj. S. Justin Platt, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division Public Affairs
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FORWARD OPERATING BASE SALERNO, Afghanistan – The flags of three nations, one Pakistani Army corps, and two U.S. Army divisions were represented at Forward Operating Base Salerno June 5 in a multi-national border coordination meeting that included senior leaders from Regional Command East, the Pakistani Army, Afghan National Security Forces and Task Force Rakkasan. Pakistani 11th Corps commander, Lt. Gen. Malik Asif; U.S. Army Maj. Gen. Curtis Scaparrotti, Combined Joint Task Force 82 commander; incoming CJTF-101 commander, U.S. Maj. Gen. John Campbell; and 2nd Zone Afghan Border Police Commander, Maj. Gen. Nabi Jan Mollakhail, met with the 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division to discuss cross-border coordination between military and border police forces. Task Force Rakkasan hosted the meeting because it shares almost 300 miles of border with Pakistan. For the Rakkasans to be successful in their security mission in Paktika, Paktya and Khost Provinces, cross-border cooperation is essential, said U.S. Army Col. Viet X. Luong, the 3rd BCT commander from Fort Campbell, Ky.

To assist in the cooperative security mission, facilities like the newly-constructed Lwara Border Coordination Center and the improvements to the Ghulam Khan Point of Entry will set the conditions for increased control of traditional enemy infiltration routes, said Luong.

The Pakistani military also sees the advantage of cooperating with International Security Assistance Force forces on the Afghanistan side of the border. Pakistani forces have been increasing their operations against insurgents in North and South Waziristan according to Asif. “Things will be heating up in the next coming months due to our operations against insurgents. Be prepared to see a lot of insurgent traffic on your side [of the border],” he said.

The security mission falls heavily on the shoulders of the ABP, and Mollakhail believes continued cooperation with Pakistan is essential.

“I hope that these (coordinated) missions show what is possible . . . We have a common enemy. There shouldn’t be any border to defeat terrorists,” Mollakhail said.

Asif agreed, adding the best way to defeat terrorists is through continued meetings and joint planning of cross-border security operations. Both nations have the same goal and are eager to

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make it happen through the Border Flag Meeting process, he said.

“It is not a question of intent. It is one of mechanisms. The objective of a Border Flag Meeting shouldn’t be just to show flags. There is no substitute for face-to-face talks,” Asif said.

Ultimately, such constructive dialogue between Pakistan and Afghanistan is the way ahead, and will continue when CJTF-82 transfers authority of RC-E to CJTF-101 later in June, said Scaparrotti. He reaffirmed ISAF’s commitment to a security partnership with Pakistan, thanking them for being a willing partner in regional stability.

“I appreciate the hard work your country is doing. I’m confident the success of this brigade (3BCT) will continue. So long as we work together, that’s how we’re successful,” Scaparrotti said.

[e 5. Pakistani Army 11th Corps commander, Lt. Gen. Malik Asif \(far left\); U.S. Army Maj. Gen. Curtis Scaparrotti \(left center\), Combined Joint Task Force 82 commander; and the incoming CJTF-101 commander, U.S. Army Maj. Gen. John Campbell \(right center\), attended the meeting, intended to foster cross-border coordination and increase border security along the Afghanistan-Pakistan border. \(U.S. Army Photo Courtesy Photo\)" class="caption" src="images/stories/feature_stories/images/2010_06/018/100605-a-xxxx-003.jpg" />](#)