

Miramar Community Leaders Forum May 20, 2010

The monthly meeting of the Miramar CLF committee was held at 5:30 p.m. in the Commanding Officer's conference room onboard the air station, May 20, 2010.

The guest speaker this month was Capt. Staci Reidinger, Deputy Director of the Public Affairs Office, MCAS Miramar. Captain Reidinger has recently returned from a deployment to Afghanistan where she worked with the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF). Her duties included teaching and advising Afghan government representatives and influencing Afghan government leaders. Capt. Reidinger spent a great deal of her time getting the Afghan press (her counterpart) to report the news in an unbiased manner. It is important for the credibility of the press to remain unbiased and to simply report the news. Historically, Afghans who work in the public information field have either elected, or been directed, to slant stories in favor of the local government. On occasion, these press reports bore little resemblance to the actual truth.

It was interesting to note that ISAF (the "I" stand for International, remember) has divided Afghanistan into four areas where international teams take the lead in security assistance. These four areas are led by the following International Commands: The North region is under German command, Western region under Italian Command, Southern Region under Great Britain and U.S. Command, and the Eastern Region is under U.S. Command except for the capital of Kabul, which is under the command of Turkey. Obviously, being able to deal with all of these Security Assistance teams which speak different languages as well as the two languages commonly used in Afghanistan by locals certainly presented a challenge to all.

Bringing Afghanistan into the twentieth century and encouraging Afghans to work with the rest of the world, in spite of huge cultural/educational differences has been a major challenge. The Taliban, as well as the traditional culture norms of suppressing women and education have been some of the biggest obstacles to overcome. People of Afghanistan, especially in the remote areas, have forever been cut-off culturally from the rest of the world. They know no different. Without modern methods of communication, for instance, winning the hearts and minds of the locals is challenging to say the least. Compromises are necessary just to be able to communicate. Practices that would never be tolerated in our country must be overlooked in some cases just to make progress.

Capt. Reidinger is an excellent speaker. I would highly recommend that the community (a church group, for instance) request one of her talks. She can be reached at Miramar's public affairs office: (858) 577-9191.

The air operations report for last month (April) shows that the base experienced 7134 flight operations compared with 6664 flight operations for the same period last year. The increase is largely due to an increased in field carrier landing practice ops. However, noise complaints were down. The base received 17 noise complaints this past April

compared with 31 complaints for April of last year. It is difficult to pin point the exact cause for this decrease except for the fact that more of the operations were confined to the base (FCLPs) and weather often plays a role in either subduing or amplifying aircraft noise.

The base only received a single noise complaint for the two routes that affect Rancho Bernardo. These routes are the Helicopter I-15 route and the Lakee North jet route. The single noise complaint that the base did receive did not come from Rancho Bernardo.

The Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the introduction of the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter is now on the street. There will be a couple of public meetings where the local populace can pose questions to Marine Corps officials regarding this aircraft and it's possible impacts on the communities (note: the F-35 will be the replacement for the F-18). There will be up to 182 of these aircraft based on the west coast, split between Miramar and Yuma. That equals 10 active duty squadrons that can have 16 aircraft each, a reserve squadron with 16 aircraft and a flight test squadron of 6 aircraft. Although one option places all 10 of the active squadrons at Miramar, the Marines prefer to base roughly half of them at Miramar and the other half at Yuma. The meeting of most interest to residents of Rancho Bernardo will occur on the 15th of June in the Scripps Ranch Library. That meeting will last from 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. I will be attending that meeting for the Planning Board, but all members of the public who are interested are invited to attend. There will be another meeting at Miramar on June 24th for the CLF members, which I will attend as well. Copies of Draft EIS are available in the library.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeffrey C Frederick