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# **The Defense Logistics Information Service Trainers Help Rebuild a Nation**

**By  
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With so much attention on Iraq it is easy to forget about transitions occurring in Afghanistan as it moves to assume responsibility for its own defense. A country nearly the size of Texas using complicated weapons systems will have large logistics requirements. To help meet those requirements the Defense Logistics Information Service made a staff assistance visit to the Combined Security Transition Command Afghanistan (CSTC-A) this summer to assess what Afghanistan needs to establish a national cataloging system to serve as the foundation for large logistics operations.

Randy Haglund, Defense Logistics Information Service (DLIS) deputy for international cataloging, and John Zellers, a supply systems analyst, conducted the assessment and provided the training. Their primary objective was to stress the benefits of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) Codification System (NCS) and the advantages of entry level sponsorship to Afghan Defense Ministry senior civilians and general officers.

Participating in the NCS through the sponsorship program is an important first step towards achieving interoperability with NATO countries and other allied nations, Haglund said.

Besides briefing senior Afghan logistics leaders, overview training was also provided to thirty-three senior Afghan National Army officers from the logistics, supply, and acquisition disciplines. Topics included the fundamental principles of item identification, sponsorship in the NCS and the various information products and tools available through DLIS. Zellers stated the following:

The students seemed to be most interested in issues related to sponsorship and understanding the concepts of materiel identification necessary for the exchange of logistics data internationally. The senior officials expressed interest in continuing support within the next few years from DLIS and other NATO countries contingent on Afghanistan's request and eventual approval for NCS sponsorship.

Members of the CSTC-A have been supporting Afghanistan for some time, first with the development of an action plan outlining a time-phased process to establish a effective national defense system. Some of the areas in this action plan are to develop the management systems to support acquisition and training both the Army and Afghan Police Force. As part of this action plan, CSTC-A has initiated cataloging training and produced an initial catalog for equipment used by the Army to support the acquisition of weapon systems and spare parts for maintaining those systems. They plan to engage DLIS technical expertise in the future to assist in the implementation of an Afghan national cataloging system. In this first phase of support, the DLIS team provided initial overview training to include basic principles of the NCS, a review of the Afghan catalog as well as information on products and services offered by the Defense Logistics Agency and DLIS.

Based on conversations with Afghan leaders and student' active participation in the classroom, I believe that Afghanistan will aggressively pursue movement toward NCS sponsorship, Haglund concluded.

DLIS will also work to establish contacts between Afghanistan and the NATO National Codification Bureaus of other nations, particularly those familiar with the Russian equipment used by Afghan forces. Ben Franklin once said, "For the want of a nail, the shoe was lost; for the want of a shoe the

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horse was lost . . .” By helping the Afghan government build an effective national cataloging system, DLIS, in collaboration with the NATO community, will be helping to ensure Afghan logisticians have the essential information to obtain nails for whatever else they require to support their national interests.

A field activity of the Defense Logistics Agency, DLIS’ mission is to provide interoperable, integrated, quality logistics data and information technology solutions that are applicable across the Department of Defense, other federal agencies and international partners in order to optimize the effectiveness and efficiency of the supply chain. DLIS is a recognized leader in employing best practices to develop and deliver such tailored solutions for customers’ evolving needs. For more information on DLIS go to the following web site: [www.dla.mil/dlis](http://www.dla.mil/dlis) .