Welcome to Operational Cultural Awareness Training - Afghanistan

Introduction and Overview

The purpose of this training is to familiarize U.S. military operators with the values, beliefs, behaviors and norms of modern Afghanistan, so they may understand and anticipate societal norms and behaviors of the people of Afghanistan. The intent is to minimize culture shock and increase the mission effectiveness of U.S. military personnel operating in the region.

For this training, culture is defined as the “common way of life shared by a group of people”. To be culturally aware is to know about and respect the values, beliefs, behaviors and norms of other cultures. It does NOT necessarily mean you must like or agree with all of the things you experience. You may, in fact, be frustrated or even offended by certain aspects of a new culture. For some, increased understanding will lead to greater respect, tolerance, and acceptance; for others, it will simply enhance awareness. Remember, culture is just one of numerous influences on human behavior.

The following topics pertaining to Afghanistan and its people will be presented:

- Geography
- History
- Peoples and Ethnic Groups
- Languages
- Religious Influences
- Society and Norms
- Behaviors and Etiquette
- Cultural Summary

Terminal Learning Objectives (TLOs)

By the end of this training, you should be able to complete the following learning objectives. Corresponding Enabling Learning Objectives (ELOs) are listed in each lesson.

- Recognize key aspects related to the geography of Afghanistan.
- Recall key historical events that have shaped the culture of Afghanistan.
- Recognize characteristics related to the people and ethnic groups of Afghanistan.
- Identify characteristics related to the languages and dialects spoken throughout Afghanistan.
- Recognize the influences of religion on the Afghan culture.
- Recognize characteristics related to the Afghan society.
- Distinguish between appropriate and inappropriate behaviors and etiquette to use in the presence of Afghans.
- Demonstrate an overall awareness with respect to the values, beliefs, behaviors and norms of the culture of Afghanistan.