U.S Forces Afghanistan Memorandum from General John Allen: Supporting the Mission with Operational Energy | December 11, 2011

In a memorandum to the Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines, and Civilians of United States Forces-Afghanistan, General John Allen describes the crucial role that operational energy plays in supporting our mission in Afghanistan. General Allen writes that "Operational Energy in the battle space is about improving combat effectiveness" - and, in a handwritten note at the bottom, says that "Operational energy equates exactly to operational capability." Read the full memorandum below.

HEADQUARTERS
UNITED STATES FORCES-AFGHANISTAN
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MEMORANDUM FOR the Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines, and Civilians of United States Forces-Afghanistan

SUBJECT: Supporting the Mission with Operational Energy

1. Through 10 years of combat, we have shown ourselves to be resourceful, innovative, and lethal. How we use energy in the battlespace can provide a strategic and tactical advantage. A military force that reduces its fuel consumption becomes more agile and insulates itself from logistics-related disruptions. To increase combat effectiveness, I want to improve our energy use along three lines of effort: our processes, our equipment, and our personal choices.

2. We need to improve our operating processes. Our current systems are inefficient. We can do better in how we schedule aircraft, distribute fuel, generate electricity, and incorporate renewable energy. I expect commanders to improve fuel accountability and employ more efficient electrical generation systems.

3. We also need to improve our equipment. We need to work with LOGCAP, suppliers, and the Services to improve inefficient facilities and devices – notably generators, air conditioners, and hot water heaters. Even as we reposture the Force, I expect commanders to make informed decisions and leverage appropriate opportunities to use more efficient equipment and reduce fuel demand.

4. Most of all, I need your help with personal choices. Every light bulb, hot water heater, and air conditioner is supplied electricity by burning fuel. We move that fuel throughout the country in a contested battlespace to hundreds of generators at forward locations. By turning off lights, taking shorter showers and shutting off unused air conditioners, you can help eliminate a resupply convoy or flight. Your small choices may save someone's life. We all can do better.

5. Some have seen operational energy programs as efforts "just to save money." Not so. While we must be good stewards of our resources, Operational Energy in the battle space is about improving combat effectiveness. It's about increasing our forces' endurance, being more lethal, and reducing the number of men and women risking their lives moving fuel. Each of you must do your part. Together we can create an even more effective fighting force.

Operational energy equates exactly to operational capability. Let's all work this hard, together!

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