

Addendum to the module
Kali Ghati

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This is an unofficial addendum for the *Delta Green* adventure *Kali Ghati* published by *Arc Dream* in 2015. The original module is available online on the official website (<https://www.delta-green.com/>). This document offers background information that a Handler may use to enrich the scenes and improve gameplay. Although the addendum offers additional realistic details, it does not claim to present a completely accurate depiction of the historical and social reality of early twentieth-first century Afghanistan.

TIME AND PLACE

Events in the module *Kali Ghati* are not provided with an exact timeframe. Although the Handler is free to keep events approximate, a precise schedule may help players with immersion and investigation. It is suggested to set the story in 2009, and following is a suggested timeline of a few relevant events:

Jan 20 Barack Obama is inaugurated president.

Jun 10 McChrystal is appointed General and approved by the Senate as commander of the operations in Afghanistan. Michael Flynn is appointed director of intelligence.

Aug 1 New moon

Aug 6 Ellis sneaks out of FOB Turner in the night

Aug 11 Delta Green agents arrives at FOB Turner

Aug 20 Afghanistan presidential election

The location of the events is obviously Afghanistan. It is suggested to place the events in Eastern Afghanistan, as on the map in Figure 1. A physical and orographic detail of this area is provided in Figure 2. The Handler is invited to share these maps (or similar variations) as part of the intelligence available to the agents at the beginning.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The year 2009 has been a critical year for the war effort in Afghanistan. January has seen the transition in the US presidency, with a new White House staff taking over the direction of the nation and the war. Continuity had been guaranteed with the retention of some key figure, such as the Secretary of Defense Robert Gates, and with the implementation and increase of a surge in troops approved during the previous presidency in order to counter a fierce insurgency that had plagued the country since 2003-2004. From July the leadership of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) passed from General McKiernan to General McChrystal who immediately went to the field to

assess the state of the troops. McChrystal believed in the need for a full-blown counter-insurgency (COIN) strategy that would work not only against terrorists, but also in support of the local population. This required a shift in the military culture, and Michael Flynn was picked to oversee this transformation as a director of intelligence. Flynn pushed the army and the services to collect and work not only on *red intel* (information to fight and defeat insurgents), but also *white intel* (information to support the civil society and build consensus). McChrystal is respected and admired within the army, but his approach to COIN is predicated on a deeper engagement with the locals, bringing with it inherent risks and dangers. "I care less about U.S. and allied casualties than I do about protecting U.S. and allied interests. But I would never ask a soldier to do something I would not do myself" - McChrystal asserted. For some soldiers, like the ones at FOB Turner, who are used to remaining fortified within the safety of their encampment, the new tactics may sound unwelcome. Some soldiers may also think that the disappearance of Ellis may be connected to some risky mission in "white intel" collection. The players may hear soldiers discussing this new situation.

Within Afghanistan in the summer of 2009 tensions are particularly high due to the coming presidential elections. Elections are a sensitive and symbolic target for Talibans and anti-government forces. Security levels are heightened all around the country, including FOB Turner. The incumbent and favorite candidate is Hamid Karzai. However, participation in the electoral process and trust in the system are generally limited. In remote areas of the country, such as in Kuluj Khel, political awareness may be extremely low. ANA soldiers are certainly aware of the upcoming elections, but their interest in the event may be quite limited. Yet some of them may tentatively connect the disappearance of Ellis with the plans of some terrorist group to upset the electoral process.

SOCIAL CONTEXT

FOBs. Forward operative bases (FOB) are military encampments spread throughout Afghanistan¹. A number of FOBs are located all across the Afghan countryside, with the aim of controlling the territory, supporting local communities and providing strongholds in the fight against Taliban. While certain military bases, like the large and international base at Bagram, feels like modern and large complexes able to offer any sort of service or product you could find in a modern cities, FOBs deep in the Afghan territories are normally much starker. FOB Turner, as an example of a remote base, could probably be envisioned as a very essential and spartan settlement. Prefabricated barracks would be the norm. Plain walls would be punctuated by bullet holes, and sometimes decorated with rough graffiti. Building and objects would often be covered by dust and fine sand. Access to the base would be through a single entry point fortified with a control point and constant surveillance. Soldiers would sleep in rough cots or hammocks. Outdoor showers and public latrines would be just the essential. Comforts would be rare, and, anyway, often despised. A shared gym with improvised weights and benches may be present somewhere in the base. A corner of the base may also be reserved as a commemorative cemetery for fallen comrades; crosses may be kept here, although, of course, the actual burial of fallen soldiers would at home. Cats may be seen roaming around, sometimes cared for by soldiers in exchange of their services at keeping rodents at bay; despite that, however, rats and insects will likely abound.

Beyond the locales mentioned above, standard locations that players may visit would include: *a landing zone*, where they land with the army helicopter; *a HQ* (headquarter), where they will likely meet Cpt. Byers; *a DFAC* (dining facility) where they can mingle with the personnel of the FOB; *a mechanical barrack*, under the responsibility of Spc. Bryant; *a doctor's barrack*, for Spc. Booker; *a communications' office*, where Sgt. Sams works; US and ANA barracks hosting the soldiers.

ANA. The premises of the FOB are shared with soldiers of the Afghan National Army (ANA). American soldiers may work with them and share meals in a common kitchen. They may have gotten to know each other quite well, although the local soldiers are not normally considered up to the fight. ANA soldiers are

often poorly equipped and trained, and their morale very low, as many of them joined the ANA out of necessity more than conviction.

Tribal structures. The Afghanistan state has a strong tribal-based organization. Groups are often divided along ethnic and clan lines (see Figure 3). Different tribes and clans administer different regions and areas, often competing and bypassing the central authority of the state. The first loyalty of individual is usual towards their own clan, and old and respected figures in the villages command strong authority. Decrees and deliberations from outside are normally accepted only once the elders approve them.

Oral culture. Culture has a strong oral component, especially in small villages like Kuluj Khel. Instructions and wisdom are passed through stories, either with a traditional or religious quality. Sayings are an equally common way to assert traditions. For instance, players who assert their authority and do not respect their turn in social exchanges may be admonished by being reminded that "If your father owns the mill, you still have to wait in line".

Hospitality. A sense of hospitality towards the stranger is common, especially as long as other tribal norms are not violated and etiquette is upheld by all parties. Players visiting Kuluj Khel or other villages are likely to be offered tokens of respect and invited by the elder to sit with them. In such gatherings, the guest may be offered typical delicacies, such as candied almonds, raisins, and hot green tea. Players will be expected to conform to the traditional norms, such as knowing where to sit, how to correctly take turns in speaking, and how to address the members of the gatherings. Their interpreter Yasim Rahimi is not originally from the region, but he can help in instructing the players about the basic norms of hospitality.

Languages. Afghanistan is a mosaic of different ethnic groups and languages. The most common languages are Pashtun and Dari, which are both considered official languages. The region where FOB Turner is located belongs to the Pashtun area, so all locals and ANA soldiers may be expected to understand Pashtun. Since they are not originally from this region, ANA soldiers may also speak languages or dialects from other areas (e.g.: Uzbek or Urdu); moreover, some of them may have picked up basic English. Some older locals may also speak elementary Russian, having learned it in school during the time of the Soviet invasion.

Cover. Depending on the setup chosen by the Handler, the players may have to adopt a cover identity during their assignment at FOB Turner.

¹See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_NATO_installations_in_Afghanistan for a list.

A reasonable choice would be to let them choose or to provide them with documents from another agency of the federal government such as CIA or DEA. Dealing with foreign intelligence, CIA could have multiple reasons to perform intelligence gathering in the area of the FOB. DEA is responsible for law enforcement, and it could be engaged with tracking possible smuggling networks. Another option could be to be affiliated with USAID, an independent agency of the federal government responsible for development aids, and potentially interested in surveying eastern Afghanistan for possible investments.

Military ranks. Not having a military rank, the characters do not easily integrate into the military hierarchy. However, they may be inserted in the hierarchy through their position in the *general schedule grade*: their governmental grade will determine their corresponding location in the military hierarchy. This will not mean that they will be treated as real officers: they won't be given the military salute, nor they will have the authority to issue orders; however, they will be given the respect of the grade they belong to. Reasonable equivalent grades would be, in ascending order: *Sergeant Major* (which would be the highest non-commissioned officer at the FOB), *2nd Lieutenant* (equivalent to Erik Jacobsen), *1st Lieutenant* (equivalent to Bill Castro), *Captain* (equivalent to Eliot Byers), *Major* (higher than any officer at the FOB).

DISCLAIMERS, REFERENCES AND SOURCES OF INSPIRATION

The author claims no first-hand knowledge of the reality of 2009 Afghanistan. The following sources have been used for reconstruction and are suggested as possible further reading:

- Rajiv Chandrasekaran, *Little America: The War Within the War for Afghanistan*. A detailed study of the Afghan reality and the efforts taken by the American mission up to 2012 to manage and develop the country.
- Paolo Giordano, *The Human Body*. A novel describing the experience of Italian soldiers in Afghanistan.
- Barack Obama, *A Promised Land*. The presidential memoirs, containing several insights on the policies and key actors in the Afghan scenario.
- Seth G. Jones, *Hunting in the Shadows: The Pursuit of al Qaeda since 9/11*. An account of the war on terror, with several chapters leading to Afghanistan.
- Rodric Braithwaite, *Afgantsy: The Russians In Afghanistan, 1979-1989*. A view of Afghanistan through the lens of the Soviet invasion of 1979.

Importantly, although the background may involve real events and persons, all the characters and their relationships presented in the module remain purely fictional.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

- *Content*: Byron the Bard
- *Proofreading*: Byron the Bard
- *Playtesting*: M. Jordan, Julia, Byron the Bard
- *Layout*: DnD 5e LaTeX Template (<https://github.com/rpgtex/DND-5e-LaTeX-Template>)
- *Cover art*: *Cavalry drill in the mountains, Afghanistan (detail)* by Wellcome Library London, Fæ (photography), licensed under CC BY 4.0, retrieved at https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Cavalry_drill_in_the_mountains,_Afghanistan._Watercolour._Wellcome_V0050455.jpg



Figure 1: Map of Afghanistan. The red circle refers to the suggested fictional location of the module. Picture from <https://www.openstreetmap.org/>.

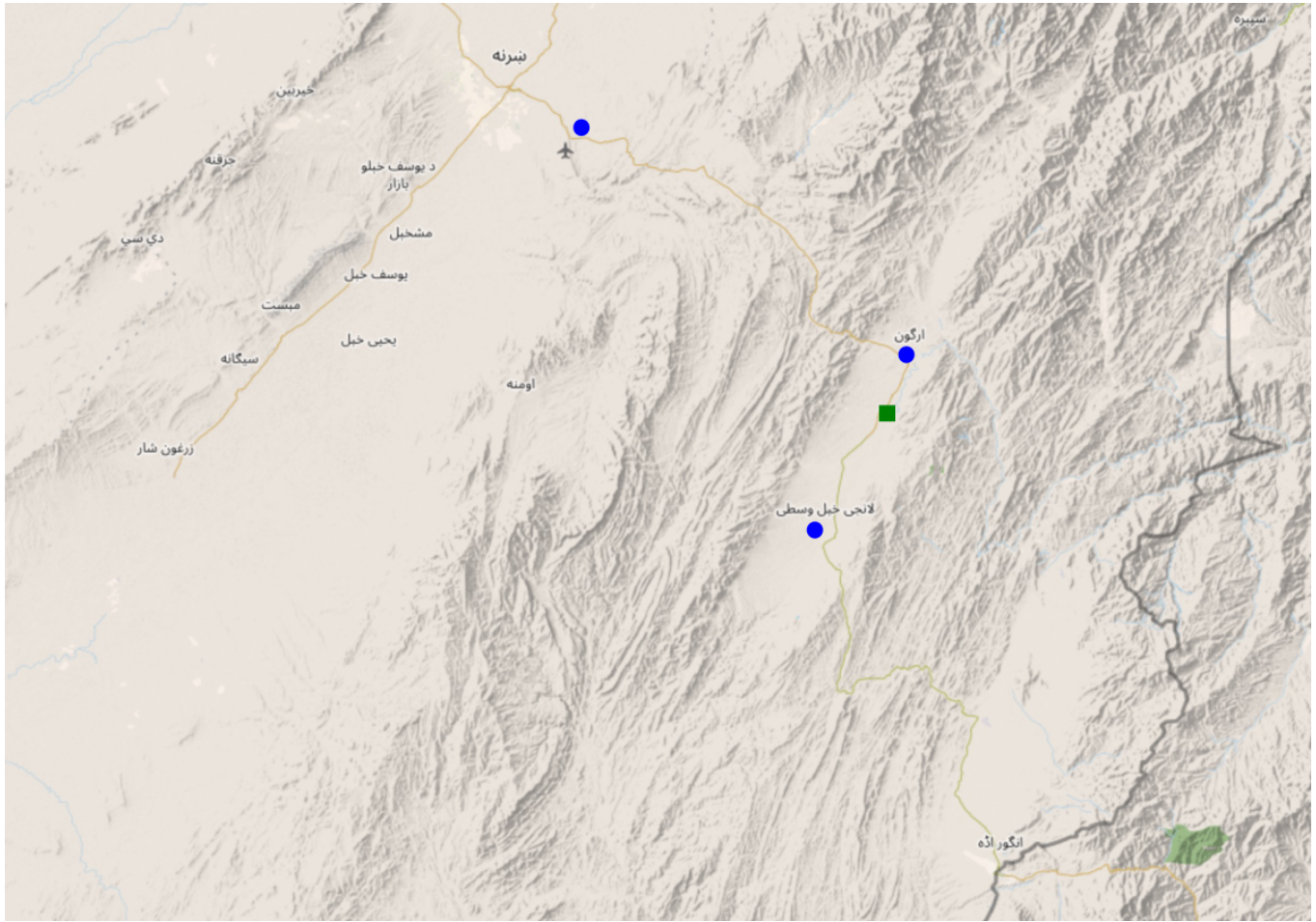


Figure 2: Map of the area surrounding FOB Turner. The green square represents the fictional FOB; blue circles represents fictional villages (including Quluj Khel). Picture from <https://www.openstreetmap.org/>.

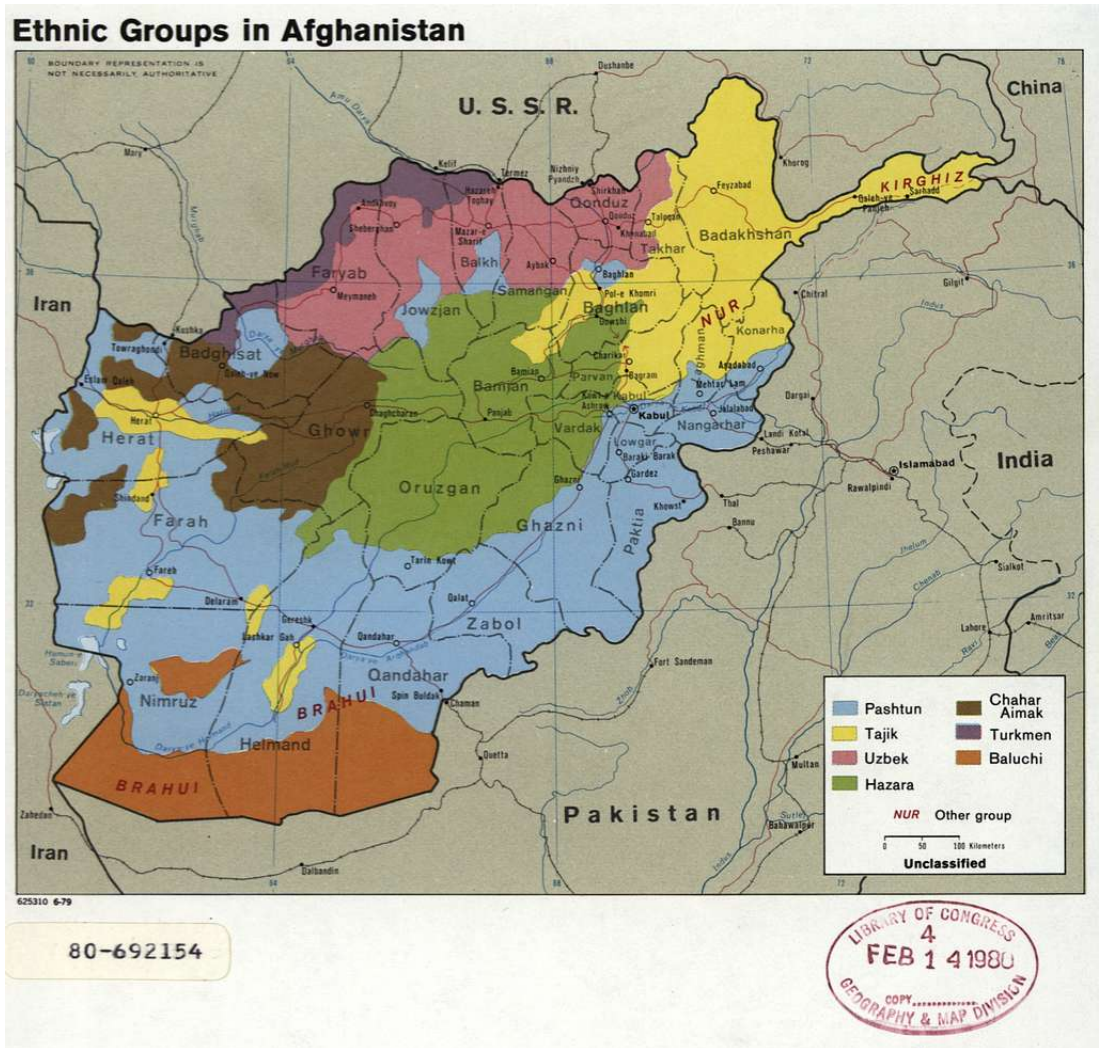


Figure 3: *Ethnic groups in Afghanistan* by United States Central Intelligence Agency, licensed under public domain, retrieved at <https://picryl.com/media/ethnic-groups-in-afghanistan>.