



United States Special Operations Command, Afghanistan



OBJECTIVE:

Screen Afghan recruits to train and expand the country's defense capabilities without jeopardizing U.S. personnel

REGION:

Afghanistan

SOLUTION:

Clearspeed Verbal™

Problem

Insider attacks — known as 'green-on-blue' attacks — have been a deadly and demoralizing reality for United States forces operating in Afghanistan. Afghans who are hostile to the U.S. presence in the country try to gain acceptance to U.S. military training and employment as an opportunity to attack U.S. personnel.

Insider attacks are a serious threat to U.S. forces in the region. While the U.S. military keeps data regarding these attacks classified, [Real Clear Defense](#) reports that 99 attacks occurred between 2008 and 2017. During that time, the number of U.S. and coalition personnel killed in these attacks totaled 152. Another 193 were wounded.

United States Special Operations Command (SOCOM) needed to vet hundreds of Afghan commando recruits to train and expand the country's defense capabilities without jeopardizing the safety of U.S. personnel.

Commando recruits were drawn from the local population and existing Afghan National Army soldiers. Soldiers transferring in from other units already had an army identification number, whereas civilian recruits had nothing to identify them within the military system.

The existing commando enrollment process was hampered by the lack of immediately available actionable data regarding current insider threats, plus the increasingly effective countermeasures of high-risk applicants in defeating that process.

“This tech has been proven in identifying risk our current system misses — there's nothing else like it.”

**Commanding Officer,
U.S. Security Assistance Office,
Afghanistan**

DNA comparison – for example, with a database of known IED manufacturers – and cellphone analysis were the most likely methods to provide actionable information about recruits. These also required the most time to obtain. The fastest analysis of submitted information lasted 10 days, although two weeks was the usual turnaround time.

While U.S. personnel awaited results, commando training continued. During training, recruits were issued rifles and live ammunition, which presented many opportunities for insider attacks.

To make the job of counterintelligence screeners easier and more effective, SOCOM searched for an insider vetting process that

- Operated reliably and affordably in the field
- Provided insights not available through other vetting methods
- Lowered the risk of assaults against U.S. personnel

Solution

SOCOM selected the Clearspeed Verbal™ solution to screen their commando candidates.

Clearspeed Verbal uses voice analytics to identify risk at scale and reduce fraud. The solution identifies the level of an individual's vocal responses through our Remote Risk Assessment (RRA®) technology. RRA is an AI-enabled technology that uses validated voice analytics, proprietary technical processing, and large volumes of unique, real-world data – none of which are available elsewhere in the market today.

The solution is based on people answering a simple, brief, and automated phone questionnaire of yes-or-no questions. The verbal questionnaire can be conducted in any language. A sample question might be,

"Do you personally know anyone involved in the planning or execution of attacks on U.S. personnel?"

Questionnaire responses were analyzed and a low-to-high risk level was assigned. The results were used as an additional data source to SOCOM's initial and on-going insider threat vetting processes. People flagged as low or average risk could be cleared through the process much faster and at scale, unless there were other indicators to the contrary.

Individuals with a high-risk level may have required additional follow up based on the question and the risk profile of SOCOM and the role of the commandos. This allowed SOCOM to focus their scarce investigative resources on the areas of highest risk.

Implementation

Clearspeed staff deployed inside Afghanistan for 12 days. For the security of Clearspeed personnel and better sound capture, the team brought their own pre-built screening center.

715 Commando recruits screened

20 Hours required to screen all recruits

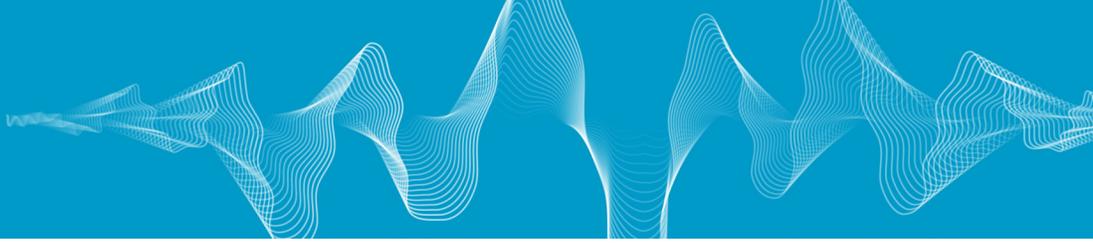
100 Percent of known high-risk individuals also identified by Clearspeed

8 Additional high risk individuals identified by Clearspeed, but not by the existing process

>95 Percent accuracy

2.38 Percent of false positives

12 Days total Clearspeed team spent in-country implementing solution



The specially constructed, modular facility contained nine interview rooms plus one control room.

Questionnaires were conducted in tandem with the established bio-enrollment process that included:

- Personal biographical information (name, age, father's name, etc.)
- DNA swab
- Photograph
- Iris scan
- Fingerprinting
- Cellphone SIM card rip

The team screened 715 recruits in just 20 hours, in both the Dari and Pashto local languages. Seven contracted linguists assisted with the process. Clearspeed personnel worked to accommodate the meal and prayer times and working practices of the linguists and recruits.

Clearspeed personnel provided SOCOM with a daily informal briefing. Staff also uploaded the data gathered to Clearspeed data centers for AI-powered analysis.

Results

The Clearspeed Verbal solution identified 100 percent of those commandos flagged as 'at risk' by the existing analytic process. In addition, the Clearspeed solution also identified

- Eight candidates who were confirmed as 'high risk' but not identified by the current process.
- Three candidates who, upon notification of being flagged for risk, went AWOL – indicating the potential that they were not identified as 'high risk' by the current process.

During this project, the Clearspeed solution demonstrated a >95 percent accuracy rate, with 2.38 percent false positives. There were no false negatives.

Next Steps

Clearspeed is preparing for additional security screenings to prevent green-on-blue attacks. In addition, Clearspeed Verbal continues to be used in other parts of Afghanistan to screen private security guards.

About Clearspeed

Clearspeed™ voice analytics technology provides unique risk alerts based on an individual's vocal responses. It can be quickly and effectively applied for fraud, security, or safety risk screening to clear the low-risk majority while identifying potential high-risk responses that are often missed. Leading global corporations and government organizations use Clearspeed to build trust in their people and vetting processes in hiring, claims, applications, insider threats, compliance, and workplace safety. www.clearspeed.com

**Learn more about protecting
against insider threats and
building a trusted workforce using
Clearspeed Verbal™**

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Clearspeed was formerly AC Global Risk

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