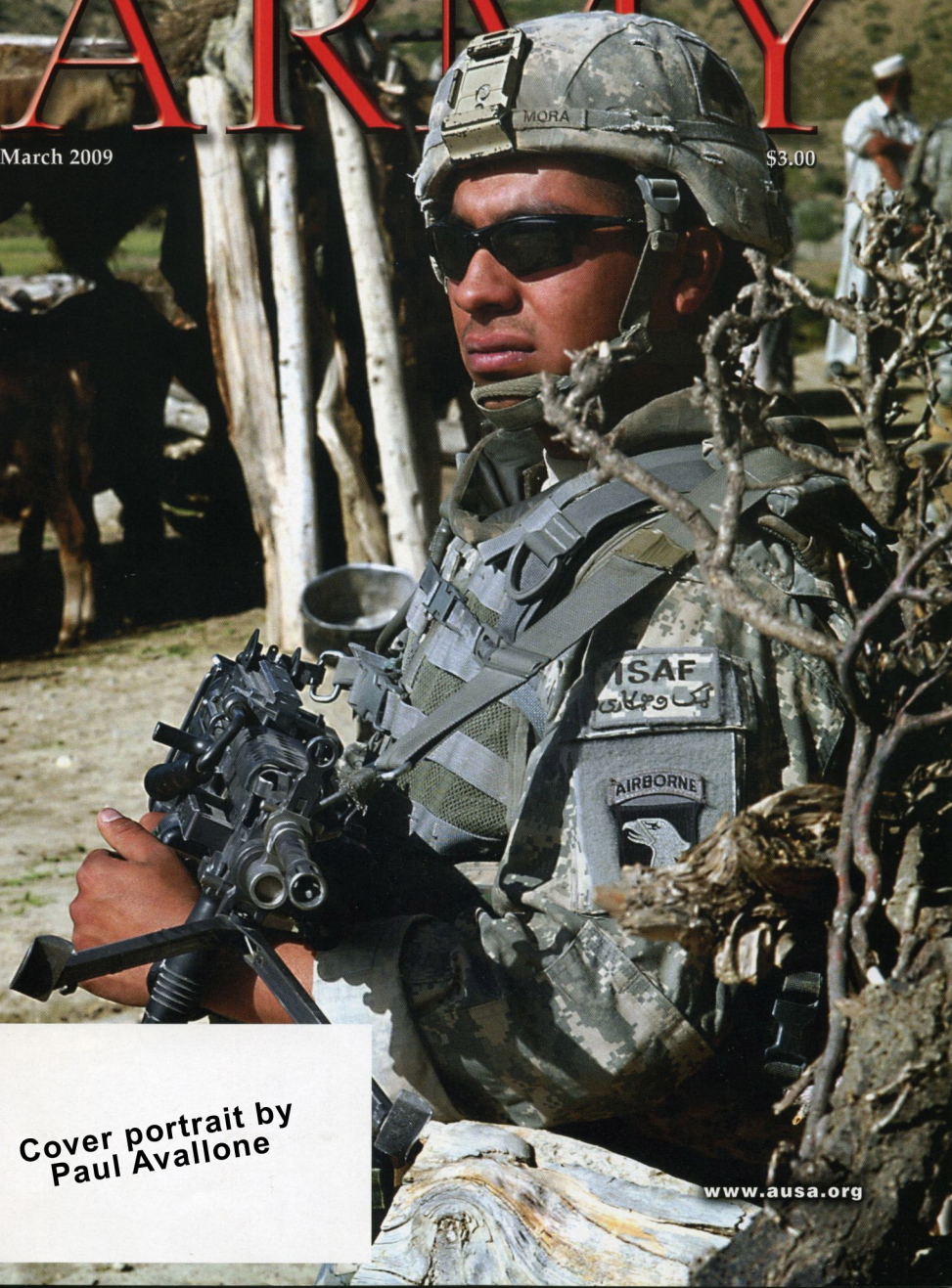


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# Afghanistan:

By Dennis Steele  
Senior Staff Writer

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he equivalent of an Army division has been requested to reinforce the NATO mission in Afghanistan, which will allow U.S. troops to launch an aggressive campaign to secure towns and villages and tamp down a morass of violent factions that threaten the country, including a resurgent Taliban and continued threats from terrorists with al Qaeda ties along with opium kingpins, bandits and run-of-the-mill tribal warlords. Meanwhile, soldiers must contend with near top-to-bottom corruption and paralyzing poverty in Afghanistan and overcome an ingrained Afghan virulence against outsiders on their soil. Beyond that are the ramifications of what appears to be the Great Game 2.0 being played in the region.

## *America's Main Effort Redux*

Paul Avallone