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CAAT SPECIAL REPORT

Guidelines in Partnering for Transition

DECEMBER 2011

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COMISAF ADVISORY AND ASSISTANCE TEAM

“How effective is a unit if half the Soldiers are fluent in the local languages, understand the culture, know weather/seasons, history, politics, economic systems, local concerns, neighborhood boundaries, and locations of criminals and bad actors? In security force assistance and partnering...half your unit does—the host nation forces are the other half. In partnership there is one unit, made up from two nations, that both contribute value added portions for training, planning, operations, and sustainment.”

Counterinsurgency Training Center – Afghanistan’s COIN Handbook, Oct 10.

COMISAF ADVISORY AND ASSISTANCE TEAM SPECIAL REPORT ON GUIDELINES IN PARTNERING FOR TRANSITION

(NIU) Introduction and Discussion. The level of partnership with ANSF units largely depends on the individual coalition commander's discretion whether it is a partnered unit or an advisor team.¹ Although this discretion is important to empower leaders on the ground, the current parameters in partnering guidance are very broad which leads to varying levels of effectiveness and consistency. Standardized guidelines would provide specific tasks (e.g. develop and conduct all planning and operations from a Joint TOC) to units designated as ANSF partners. Additionally, true embedded partnership improves ANSF development, mission accomplishment and force protection. The recommendations in this paper offer uniformed standards throughout diverse allied forces, assistance during RIP/TOA, improvement in the development of the Afghan forces, and a path to effective transition.

(NIU) Doctrine as a First Step. Standardized procedures that mandate embedded partnership principles should be introduced to ensure collaborative arrangements are as effective as possible. The first step to partnering is coalition familiarization with current doctrine. Two examples of existing doctrine include U.S. Army FM 3-07.1 *Security Force Assistance* (2009) and U.S. Army FM 3-24.2 *Tactics in Counterinsurgency* (2009), which contributes to a structure for partnering. All allied doctrine, which addresses Security Force Assistance type operations, should be considered in order to provide detailed parameters in relation to ANSF capabilities.

¹ “Advising and partnering are complementary but inherently different activities. Advising requires relationship building and candid discourse to influence development of a professional security force. Partnering incorporates training with combined operations to achieve the same SFA goals.” Headquarters, Department of the Army, Field Manual 3-07.1, *Security Force Assistance* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, May 2009).

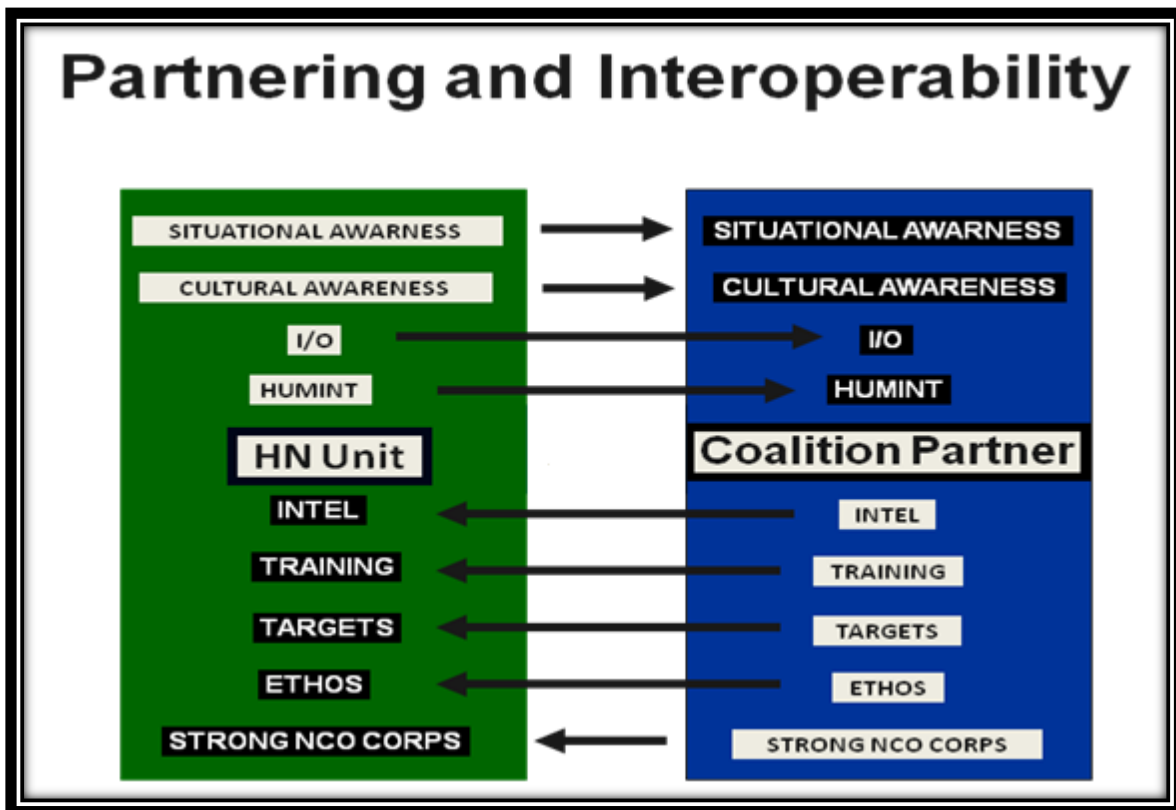


Figure 1. This shows the ideal dynamic between the host nation and coalition or advisor team. The point is a shared relationship where both sides can contribute in training, planning, and operations.

"In familiar conditions they fight well...make proper use of their knowledge of the country." T.E. Lawrence's 27 Articles

(NIU) How to Partner. Partnership is straightforward: combine for training, planning, meetings, and AARs as well as pairing up with counterparts during operations. Sleep, eat, socialize, work, and fight as one unit. This type of unified approach will provide a clearer understanding of how to match host nation doctrine, tactics, and procedures within their capabilities. Combined efforts in planning will bring the host nation into the process to provide insight on the enemy, terrain, and population. During operations, partners directly pair up with their counterparts to provide guidance, give direction as needed, and ensure human rights and the rule of law is respected. Additionally, the ANSF can provide their unique knowledge of the people and enemy as situations on the ground unfold. Combined AARs allow both units (partners and ANSF) to improve.² Partnering as described above is the goal but there are intermediate steps along the spectrum of partnering.

(NIU) Teach-Coach-Advise. Levels of interoperability fall into three categories: *teach*; *coach*; and *advise*. Recurring assessments are used to determine what 'level of partnering' should be utilized in this process (see figure 2). At early stages in ANSF development, based on the unit's assessment, the coalition unit has to *teach* their counterpart how to perform the particular role and demonstrate the correct method of execution.

² Ibid.

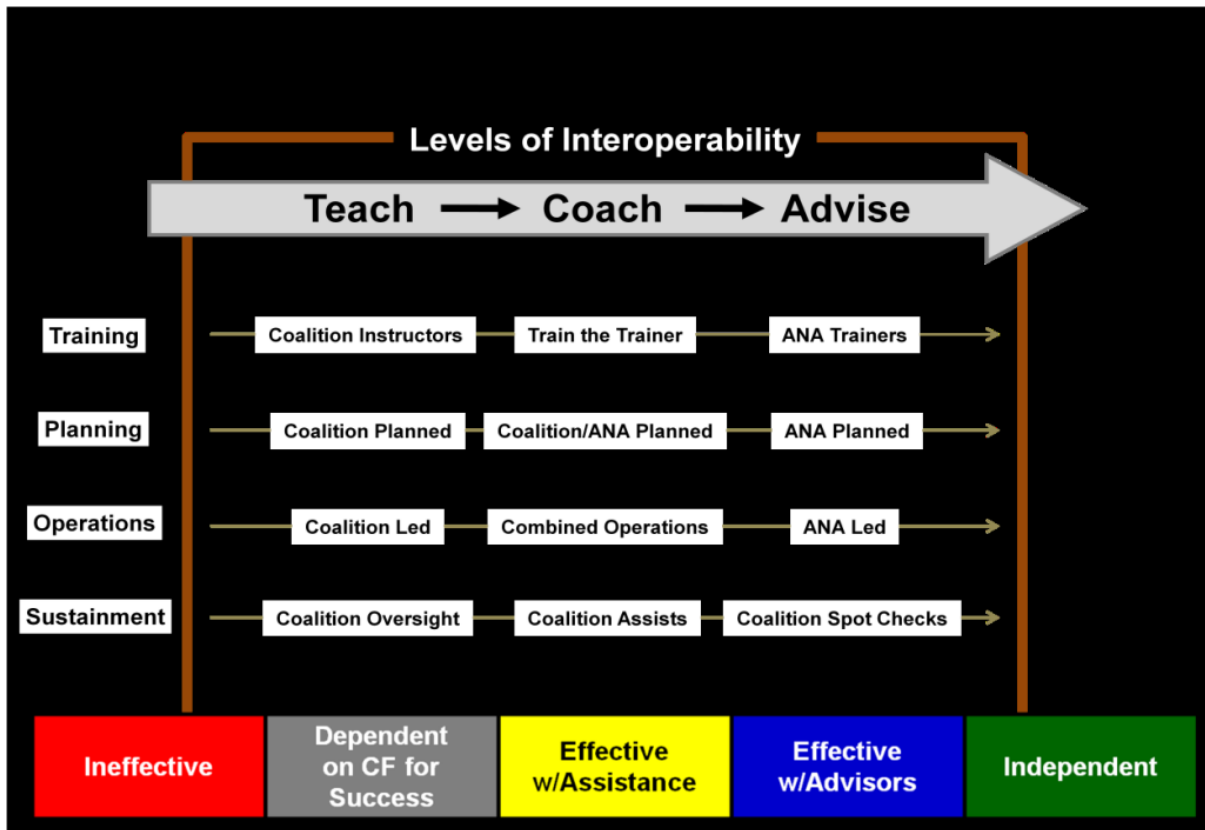


Figure 2. Diagram shows the partnering unit’s role in the development of the ANSF and provides guidelines for Training, Planning, Operations, and Sustainment encompassing the primary functions needed for the Afghan forces to take the lead.

(NIU) Taking into account that the ANSF’s method of execution might differ from the coalition standard, the coalition can factor ANSF doctrine, procedures, and even culture to achieve a successful end state. The next level of interoperability is *coaching* which is essentially doing everything together and side-by-side. This includes combined training, planning, operations, and sustainment. The final authority does rest with the coalition unit to avoid discrepancies in tactics or policies that can degrade mission accomplishment or force protection. The last level of interoperability is *advising* which begins when the ANSF is deemed able to take the lead. They can prepare and conduct successful operations, create a training plan in support of their Mission Essential Tasks, and forecast and conduct their sustainment. The coalition counterpart will provide advice, as necessary, to increase the effectiveness of the unit.³

(NIU) An example of coaching was observed occurred during a recent combat operation. The operation intent was to improve partnership and the ANSF’s ability to conduct unilateral operations. During the second iteration of this operation, the ISAF task force partnered one ISAF Platoon with an ANP Platoon for one week. This operation execution consisted of three days developing joint TTPs and conducting rehearsals, one day of Troop Leading Procedures (TLPs), and a two-day mission. During the mission, the ANP provided the main effort, and conducted mobile checkpoint operations while the ANA and ISAF provided outer security and command and control.

³ Ibid.



Figure 3. ISAF coaching ANSF during operation.

(NIU) This operation provides an example of a well planned and executed combined event that fostered a sense of partnership between ISAF and the ANSF, and also between the ANA and ANP. The two groups segregated themselves on the first day of the operations, but then began interacting positively until they reached a true combined effort. At the completion of the operation, both the ANP and ANA professionally executed a mobile checkpoint without ISAF involvement, fulfilling both the District Chief of Police’s and the ISAF task force commander’s desired end state. In this case they were at the *coaching* level, or side-by-side (shoulder-to-shoulder). One of the critical contributions to the operation’s success was the respect the ISAF forces showed their ANSF partners. ISAF leadership emphasized the valuable experience and observations the ANSF brought to the partnering exercise. This attitude or mindset, combined with simple, realistic training objectives, and flexibility served to make this a successful step in host nation unit development. The ISAF Platoon Leader set the tone for the entire week during the initial formation before the first day of rehearsals. The PL stated *“We are here to compare techniques so we know how each other work.”* The overarching concept regarding this period was that it was not training in the sense of ISAF teaching the ANSF how to conduct a task, but rather a sharing process between all parties involved. The result was an effective coaching operation.

(NIU) How partners can utilize advisors teams. The advisor team (OMLTs, ETTs, Partner Assistance Teams (PATs), Security Force Assistance Team (SFATs) or others) is not a substitute for partnering, but is instead the team which enhances the relationship between coalition and ANSF forces. Coalition units would benefit from looking at advisors as an added and specialized resource which aids in normal partnering duties. Advisors should also understand they are not a substitute for partnership.

“If partnering and advising are used in combination, it forms a three-part relationship amongst FSF [Foreign Security Forces or in this case ANSF], advisors, and the partner units. Partner units should look to the advisor to identify, shape, and facilitate operational partnering opportunities and training events.”

FM 3-07.1, Security Force Assistance, (2009)

(NIU) Within these guidelines are methods to maximize the development of the ANSF and speed them towards self sufficiency. Partners are still the primary agent for training, planning, and operations. Advisors can focus on specialized problems which can give the coalition units some time to complete their own unit specific actions. Advisors can also be used to extend the reach of ISAF during periods such as “surge recovery” when there may not be a matching number of ISAF units to partner with the ANSF. As transition continues there will be limited situations where an Afghan unit has an advisor team and a partner. Partnering units could consider building their own advisor teams from their ranks to enhance development and transition.

(NIU) Establishing Rapport. Building rapport is essential in establishing, developing, and sustaining a true embedded partnership. Doctrine states and practice shows that coexisting is the best method for gaining rapport and establishing trust. This consists of sharing meals and conducting other forms of rest and relaxation together, as a unit. Conducting this type of immersed partnership will establish and sustain rapport. It creates incentives for ANSF to share the risk with their coalition counterpart, with the desired result of improved retention and lower AWOL numbers within the Afghan forces. ISAF units need to review their force protection requirements and caveats in order to increase rapport as well as work with a higher number of ANSF units. Increased rapport would support discarding the “us” versus “them” mindset and improve both the mission and force protection. If trust and rapport is gained, the host nation provides superior HUMINT and knowledge of the local community. These factors provide improved lethal and nonlethal operations and situational awareness to safeguard the force. The inherent risk, with true embedded partnership, is balancing trust with operational security. In order to operate effectively, the coalition unit has to trust the ANSF unit. This trust, within established operational security boundaries, will encourage the ANSF to be more forthcoming with their contacts and intelligence. An established criterion and directive for partnering should include living, eating, and socializing to improve trust in the combined force. A prescriptive directive could also serve to minimize the sometimes counterproductive mindsets on why working, living, socializing, operating, or eating with the host nation is somehow considered a discretionary part of the partnering concept.⁴ As outlined in General Petraeus’ *COMISAF’s Counterinsurgency Guidance* dated 1 August, 2010: “*Work closely with our international and Afghan partners, civilian as well as military. Treat them as brothers-in-arms...Live, eat, train, plan, and operate together.*”

(NIU) Joint Tactical Operations Center (JTOC). Embedded partnership works most effectively when implemented at all levels. A fundamental element of partnering is establishing a Joint Tactical Operations Center (Joint TOC or JTOC). Establishing a Joint TOC will increase the overall capabilities of both the coalition and Afghan forces. Additionally, it helps compensate for the shortfalls of the individual forces’

⁴ Ibid., FM 3-07.1

limitations during operations, and provides a model for assimilation by the ANSF. The ANSF are much more adept at interacting with the populace; a JTOC provides enhanced intelligence gathering and situational awareness within the local communities. This intelligence can then be 'actioned' by the combined coalition and Afghan forces. Operating a Joint TOC with shared planning, operations, intelligence, and sustainment cells allows coalition staff officers to simultaneously teach, coach, or advise their partners based on capabilities. This will also provide a forum to improve the ANSF and introduce their contribution of human intelligence and situational awareness to planning and operations. The end-state would be ANSF operating a TOC without assistance of coalition partners and advisors. OPSEC is always a concern when dealing with the host nation, but does not disqualify joint cells within the multi-national coalition, and therefore should not be discarded as a concept strictly because of security concerns. The more embedded the units, the stronger rapport and trust. A "one team" mindset, where units operate side-by-side and shares the danger, reduces the OPSEC risk. Without sharing the hazards, a lack of trust and limited rapport adds to the danger for coalition forces. Compartmentalization and care of sensitive information will add to mitigating the hazards to operational security.

(NIU) Depending on the force structure an Integrated Command Teams (ICTs) and/or Operations Coordination Centers – District (OCC-D) may serve as an added collaboration with the ANSF as well as local GIRoA. COIN Guidance defines an ICT as *"a committee of district level representatives from GIRoA, ANSF, development agency representatives and ISAF. ICTs are formed in order to strengthen local unity of effort in governance, development and security by synchronizing, planning, de-conflicting, and sharing information at the district level."* ANSF are also establishing OCC-Ds as wells as OCC-Ps and OCC-Rs (Provincial and Regional respectively) as a method to utilize surge recovery and transition to reorganize themselves. Ideally, though case dependant, a Company Command Post (CP) collocates with either an existing ANP or ANA CP at a District Center. This combined effort provides a centralized location for the ANSF to coordinate with ISAF.

(NIU) Partnering the Staff. Coalition and ANSF commanders and staffs who work together in training, planning, and operations more effectively prepare the host nation for transition. The combined coalition/ANSF staff and command sections should share a common office space to mentor their counterparts, and conduct planning and operations as one unit. This level of interoperability will provide the optimum environment to assist the ANSF. It will serve to improve their level of proficiency to a point where they can perform with minimal assistance or independently. An evaluation assists the coalition determine the level of mentorship on the teaching, coaching, and advising scale (see Figure 2. Teach-Coach-Advise diagram). The coalition maintains final approval of training and operations until the assessment of host nation capabilities warrants a transition of authority. The commanders and staff of each unit conduct all daily events, meetings, and briefings as a team. These include:

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- Intelligence updates (ANSF provide their HUMINT, knowledge of the neighborhood, relevant historical data, discussions with local leaders, informants, and sources).
- Personnel reviews (e.g. personnel transfers, AWOL, retention, awards, evaluations, etc.).
- Training meetings (ANSF and coalition plan and conduct training together).
- Logistics meetings (ANSF discuss logistical problems; coalition offer guidance and advise, rather than material assistance to reduce the Afghans' dependence. ANSF and coalition conduct resupply convoys together).
- Battlefield Update Briefings
- Other meetings such as: Infrastructure, Medical, Health and Welfare, Outpost Security, and Force Protection.

(NIU) The coalition, in utilizing this approach, exemplifies a working model and gives direct guidance to ANSF leaders and staff. This would allow the coalition added visibility of host nation problems and their underlying issues, and realize a more unified 'one team, one mission' approach in fighting the war.

(NIU) Assessments and Evaluations. A fundamental element of this process is constant assessments. The coalition partner continues to assess the ANSF unit, and evaluate their progress. Assessments should focus on functions, such as: Leadership, Operations, Intelligence, Logistics, Training and Education, Personnel, Maintenance, Engineer, and Communications based on the type of unit and current established assessment criteria (e.g. Commander's Update Assessment Tool or CUAT). This ongoing assessment is critical to the partnering process as the operational effectiveness of the ANSF directly determines the level of partnering the coalition need apply. In terms of Teach-Coach-Advise, the determination should be based on both subjective and objective criteria. These assessment mechanisms are already in place in the form of the CUAT, and can be utilized by the coalition commander to determine ANSF capabilities.⁵

(NIU) Summary. Coalition forces currently utilize a wide variety of interpretations of partnering from complete integration to a loose affiliation. This inconsistency is seen across the RCs and appears to vary depending on the individual coalition unit's mindset, training, or experience rather than adherence to policy. Without the integration of forces, the lack of trust will remain an obstacle to the development of ANSF. This most probably will result in the coalition assuming most of the risk, since missions are still ongoing, and transition based on time rather than capability. Additionally, even in cases where partnering is more integrated, incoming units may not offer this continuity following RIP/TOA. A set of metrics for evaluating partnership should expand higher command's guidance to include prescriptive tasks, as mentioned in this paper, to standardize combined ISAF and ANSF units. Once established, these tenets will be the basis of evaluating the effectiveness of coalition and host nation interoperability.

⁵ Headquarters, Department of the Army, Field Manual 3-24.2, *Tactics in Counterinsurgency* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, April 2009).

(NIU) There is a need for flexibility in any directive, which gives commanders the ability to conduct operations with discretion. This paper attempts to provide specific guidelines to standardize ANSF development towards transition, which would admittedly add the constraint of discretionary levels of partnering, while providing direction for coalition forces understandable less familiar with the concept. Partnering tends to be more mindset than skill set as stated in LTG Caldwell's *"A Call to Action: Command Philosophy"*, June 2010: *"What would you do differently today if you had to stay until your responsibilities were transitioned to a capable Afghan counterpart that you trained?"*

(NIU) Without a viable host nation military and police force, the conflict will remain a protracted struggle, as is the nature of irregular war, and only serve the side which uses longevity of the struggle in its strategy. The coalition, as the custodian for a still relatively nascent Afghan security force, should take the necessary steps to embed with their counterparts. A criterion for ANSF and coalition force partnering provides a consistent methodology throughout theater. It offers succinct metrics for partnering, improves the ANSF, and enhances the allies' mission accomplishment and force protection. The procedures discussed in this paper support a more holistic and rapid approach to transitioning the security responsibilities of Afghanistan to the ANSF.

It is the recommendation of this paper to enact these criteria in pre-deployment training and in theater. Doctrine and COMISAF Guidance leave little room for debate regarding the mindset and intent for partnering; *"Unity of effort and cooperation are not optional"* - General Petraeus (*COMISAF's Counterinsurgency Guidance*, 1 August 2010).

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