'I'm Here Because We're Leaving': 18 Points for Combat Advising in Eastern Afghanistan

by CPT Spencer L. French

While many of the experiences of Team First Strike (1st Battalion, 502nd Infantry Regiment) are unique to the time, place and circumstances of advising in N2KL (north of Kabul) during Spring through late Fall 2012, some experiences are universal to advising in Afghanistan as a whole. Primarily when advising Afghans, personal relationships, either positive or negative, trump lessons-learned about effective advising techniques one might practice. The purposes of this article are to provide key points for how to build that relationship with one's Afghan partner, how to effectively communicate with one's Afghan partner and, finally, how to understand the perspective, actions and motivations of one's Afghan partner.[1]

(1) "Your relationship is your greatest asset; cultivate it." - 2/201 Afghan National Army Brigade adviser team.[2]

The adviser must first recognize that despite his position as an officer or senior noncommissioned officer in, by any standard, the most capable armed force on the planet, he enters his adviser position in a position of weakness. His ability to deliver results and contribute to overall mission accomplishment is entirely dependent on his relationship with his Afghan counterpart and with the multitude of other Afghan personalities with whom he interacts. Once established, his relationship and access to the Afghan National Security Forces can become a powerful force and contribute to not only the accomplishment of his own mission (professionalizing the ANSF) but also protecting the force as a whole.

The first step to establishing and cultivating that relationship is to be a student of Afghan history. This will be dealt with in greater detail in Point 18, but at a minimum, an adviser who does not have a basic grounding in the political/economic/cultural history of the last 35 years in Afghanistan cannot be effective. While ***The Bear Went Over the Mountain*** and ***The Other Side of the Mountain*** are both excellent starting points, the purely tactical literature is not enough to navigate through in working with the ANSF.

Similarly, while it is not cost-effective to make every adviser both a Pashto and Dari linguist, the adviser must be able to hear the difference between the two tongues. While not necessarily a cultural *faux pas*, greeting an Afghan in his preferred tongue, and saying thank you using the proper language, implies a basic appreciation for the widely divergent "backstory" of Tajik and Pashtun ANSF personalities. Saying "tashakur" (Dari) rather than "thank you" to a Pashto speaker demonstrates that one is a gifted amateur trying his best. Saying "mannana" (Pashto) instead of "thank you" to a Pashto speaker at least implies that one might be a dedicated student of Afghanistan and thus a se-

rious counterpart. Once again, recognizing the sound of the different languages and responding accordingly has nothing to do with one demonstrating one's linguistic skills; it demonstrates that the adviser knows "the nuance and difference … that one understands Afghanistan and that can help one make inroads."[3]

Likewise, use English carefully. Twelve years of war in Afghanistan has given almost every ANSF soldier/policeman at least a basic understanding of some English phrases. Even if they do not understand the words, most Afghans who have worked with North Atlantic Treaty Organization forces know the cadence of English, and many can even tell the difference between various types of English accents (British English vs. "television American English," etc.). Thus, one cannot babytalk the Afghans without them noticing the difference in cadence and realizing they are being "talked down to." Having sidebar conversations with one's English-speaking counterparts is likewise risky.[4]

With the initial communication conditions set, the first real step is to prove to one's ANSF counterpart that one does not have "any competing interests/allegiances."[5] Afghans have a generally low level of trust in institutions and persons outside the greater-family unit. Part of this is cultural, but much of it is due to the perception that over the past 35 years, the people of Afghanistan have been constantly toyed with and used by the superpowers and Pakistan (particularly Pakistani Inter-Services Intelligence), among others. Furthermore, the constant threat posed both by "legitimate" Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan personalities and the insurgent elements keep ANSF personalities generally wary and suspicious. Proving that one legitimately has no ulterior motive and is "in their [the ANSF counterpart] corner"[6] is an often overlooked portion of relationship-building. This "proof" could take the form of anything from sharing personal information to demonstrating a measurable degree of care over the well-being of the counterpart, his family or his subordinates.

Finally, "the Afghan stereotype of Americans is that we are brash and overbearing."[7] Defying expectations is critical to separating the adviser from whatever negative experiences the Afghan has had with Americans, and aligning the adviser with whatever positive experiences the Afghan has had with Americans. This can be done by saluting superior Afghan officers (implying that the adviser sees the ANSF as an allied military rather than a client military to be bullied); establishing "two-way" communication with the Afghan counterpart from the beginning ("we will teach each other and I can be an honest sounding board for your ideas"), rather than "one-way" communication ("I am here to improve your performance"); and generally taking one's time before making any major recommendations to one's Afghan counterpart.[8]

In summary, one's relationship with one's ANSF counterpart depends on trust, a trust continually reinforced by the adviser's words and actions. One's ANSF counterpart must trust that the adviser is at least somewhat knowledgeable about Afghan history and society to believe that some of the advice the adviser provides is valid within the Afghan context. One's ANSF counterpart must trust that the adviser has no ulterior motive and legitimately is seeking the betterment of the ANSF counterpart, both personally and from an institutional perspective.

Finally, one's ANSF counterpart must have trust that the adviser sees the counterpart as an "equal" and that the counterpart's experiences and thoughts are valid. Ensuring this happens falls squarely on the adviser's shoulders.

(2) "Know the Afghan rhythm." – 3/2/201 ANA Kandak adviser team (Team Regulators).

"It is especially important to know the background timing [the way another structures their actions in time], otherwise your strategy will become uncertain."[9] The adviser must understand the Afghan rhythm and, instead of fighting it, work at the same pace and rhythm.

Typically the adviser has completed at least one other combat tour. During this tour, the adviser spent nine to 15 months working 16-18 hour days (if not more), communicating instantly with email, chat and telephone. Following his tour, the adviser returned to the United States and took about one month of leave and returned to the garrison schedule for a time before making a permanent-change-of-station move for professional education or a new position.

This is not the Afghan rhythm. The ANSF are "in garrison" at the same time as being "at war." Expecting one's ANSF counterpart to match the adviser's pace from his "last tour" is unreasonable.[10] Due to the inefficiency of their personnel system, many ANSF personalities have been in the same position for multiple years; many of the higher-ranking personalities have been at war for almost 10 years straight.[11] Thus, while not excusing laziness, the adviser must recognize that many commanders and their staffs are exhausted, both mentally and physically. ANSF counterparts will periodically take multiple weeks of leave during what the adviser sees as "important combat operations." While every situation is unique, the adviser must ask himself, "Is this absence a product of legitimate laziness/dereliction of duty, or would my counterpart never get time with his family if he was around for every one of these 'vitally important' events?"

Furthermore, the Afghan daily "battle rhythm" is very different from the American daily battle rhythm. Afghan days are built around prayer, the same way the Afghan year is built around eids (religious holidays). For example, expecting one's ANSF counterpart to be available between 1 p.m. and 3 p.m. (prayer and post-prayer personal time) is unrealistic. Forcing the issue by visiting one's Afghan counterpart during that time marks the adviser as inept. It would be as if the adviser went to visit an American counterpart at 6:30 a.m. on a weekday in garrison. The American counterpart would see the adviser as inept for attempting to visit during physical-training hours. Similarly, eids (particularly Small Eid after Ramazan and Eid-al-Adha about 1½ months later) are important social and religious "battle rhythm" events. Much the way the U.S. military would experience significant stress if Christmas block leave was cancelled every year for 10 years running, expecting the ANSF not to observe these holidays and their associated leave periods in their "war-garrison" environment is unrealistic.[12]

The adviser, instead of becoming frustrated over these periods of seeming "inactivity," should embrace the Afghan rhythm, recognizing that attempting to coach change to something as basic as the religious-cultural way an Afghan structures his day is both outside the scope of the adviser's mission and impossible. Instead, the adviser should structure himself and his initiatives with an eye to the Afghan rhythm. Proposing new training, initiatives, methods and practices before the start of Ramazan, for instance, is not the correct timing.

Coaching one's Afghan counterpart on some new practices or new methods after Big Eid (Eid-al-Adha) is more in keeping with Afghan rhythm. Seeking out one's Afghan counterpart early in the morning, and making oneself available throughout the afternoon and early evening, is much more appropriate than visiting during the morning, breaking for lunch and coming back in the early afternoon.

In summary, it is very easy for the adviser to fall into the trap of associating ANSF failures with their battle rhythm. One might present a strong argument that the timing of prayers throughout the day hurts the ANSF's ability to press home its operations and to plan meetings or training sessions, and that the periodic absences of ANSF counterparts for the various eids and other family events lead to a certain degree of "attention-deficit dis-

order" on the ANSF's part. Nonetheless, the adviser's ability to affect this situation is very limited. Instead of fighting the current of the Afghan rhythm, the adviser should look to rectify other problems within his scope of control (i.e., working through the ANSF personnel system to assist in rotating out exhausted staff members instead of trying to encourage one's counterpart not to take leave during a major operation).

(3) "Visit your counterpart like an Afghan." – 7th and 1st Afghan Border Police Zone 1 Kandak adviser team (Team Cobra).

As with battle rhythm, when visiting his counterpart, the adviser must recognize that the Afghan style of conversation and culture of "visiting" is quite different from the American or Western style. All would-be ANSF advisers have heard the mantra "have three cups of tea before getting to work" or "open your conversation with talk of family," but this, while effective as a starting point, is not the full story of how Afghans typically visit and interact.

Americans, particularly military Americans, hold a meeting or conduct a visit with an agenda or a list of specific points for discussion. Upon discussing each topic and coming to some resolution, the American moves on to the next point on the agenda and repeats the process. After business is concluded and the meeting closes, Americans are comfortable shifting topics to personal, non-business talk. Americans typically begin to feel that "time is being wasted" or some "unease" if the conversation stalls, if there are audible pauses, or if progress is not being made toward resolving one of the issues on the agenda.

Afghans, on the other hand, while having an agenda or a list of things they need to accomplish, rarely if ever proceed in this fashion. Generally, they are more comfortable skipping from one topic to another, backtracking to a previous topic and allowing audible pauses in conversation to occur, while interspersing all this with personal talk. Sometimes they will change location midway through a conversation to allow the conversation to continue over lunch or tea, or simply for a change of scenery. Participants in the meeting may come, go and come back again, depending on their schedule. In the end, like American conversations or business meetings, resolution is eventually reached on each issue or it is decided to table the issue for another meeting.

The effective adviser is one who is comfortable being "uncomfortable" with the (from a Western perspective) rambling nature of Afghan conversations. In fact, being slightly "uncomfortable" and feeling like time is being "wasted" is likely a good indicator that the conversation is proceeding in a way that is comfortable for one's Afghan counterpart.[13] Unfortunately, many Americans attempt to visit Afghans in the American fashion of having an agenda and not moving on to another topic until resolution is reached on each issue in turn. This causes most Afghans to "turn off," or become disinterested or tired by the conversation.[14] Often attempting to press on a certain topic until resolution is found results in the Afghan simply agreeing or providing "what they know you want to hear" to end the uncomfortably direct conversation.

The effective adviser does not have to open with personal talk and tea (sometimes the Afghan counterpart will open with work-related topics) but embraces the flow of the conversation as the Afghan moves the conversation to another topic. The adviser should have confidence and embrace the opportunity to take conversations off on a related tangent (especially if it is a personal or non-work-related tangent), trusting that eventually the conversation will return to the main topic. The effective adviser does not "fill" pauses in the conversation too quickly if it appears the conversation has tapered off. But again, and most importantly, the effective adviser has tactical patience and is comfortable spending 80 percent of a conversation chatting about personal topics and 20 percent of the conversation revolving around work-related topics intermixed with the personal topics and storytelling.

Spending two weeks of rapport-building before working with an Afghan as one would work with an American, or starting a visit with three cups of tea then having an American-style meeting, are not effective techniques. Instead the effective adviser understands the circuitous nature of Afghan conversations, has spent time observing how his counterpart meets with other Afghans, and is generally comfortable "wasting time" with his counterpart and allowing the conversation to progress in a way that is natural for the Afghans involved.

(4) "Both in fighting and in everyday life, you should be determined though calm. … An elevated spirit and a low spirit is weak. Do not let the enemy see your spirit." - Miyamoto Musashi (16th Century master swordsman and teacher).

The effective adviser is always patient, calm and relaxed around his counterparts. He never displays a heightened emotional state, never demonstrates a lack of composure, never appears uncontrollably frustrated, and rarely if ever appears to be hurried or anxious. He is friendly, open and personable by Afghan standards of conduct. This includes body language, tone of voice, content of speech and general demeanor.

As one team leader put it, "I can't think of one instance in which I had to raise a voice or get upset; a logical explanation at an even tone worked best every time."[15] As an adviser, one's patience is tested daily. The effective adviser stays calm and understands the background and reasons behind the conversations or events that are testing his patience and never rushes to action without bettering his understanding and letting the situation develop. Many times what is petty to the adviser is greatly important to the Afghan, while conversely, what is of great importance to the adviser is petty to the Afghan.

One example is casualty reporting. From the American perspective, it is incredibly important to know the type of injury, how it was caused and what treatment the casualty has already received. Americans often are disgusted and frustrated by the seeming lack of Afghan interest in tracking casualties, and read it as a flippant disregard for human life. The lack of medical training at lower levels and rapid/capable medical-evacuation assets mean that for the Afghans, detailed casualty tracking is unfortunately relatively useless, given their inability to truly assess the casualty and care for him until he arrives by ground casualty evacuation.[16] In this case, and many others, the effective adviser is patient and mature and does not leap to conclusions or demonstrate frustration.

The effective adviser is generally positive, friendly and warm. By Afghan standards, this includes hugging, holding hands and what Americans would define as "flattery." Telling an Afghan that he is a wonderful man, that you love him and that you are in awe of his many achievements is not hyperbolic or flattery by Afghan standards.[17] Similarly, these "over the top" words, along with hugs and tearing-up of the eyes are not seen as a lack of emotional control by Afghan standards and are acceptable, whereas shouting or cursing (acceptable in some military situations) are seen as a lack of emotional control.

Finally, the effective adviser is not prideful. He does not demonstrate an undue sense of entitlement or superiority due to his nationality. Consequently, the effective adviser is as good a listener as he is a talker. He shows respect when Afghans are talking and is raptly attentive, even while waiting for a translation.[18] The effective adviser practices this emotional balance not only to inspire his ANSF counterpart's confidence but to maintain his own mental health throughout his time working with the ANSF.

(5) "Islam isn't the entire story of Afghan culture." – 2/201 ANA Kandak adviser team.

The effective adviser recognizes that while Islam is a pervasive force within Afghan culture that touches almost every part of Afghan society and daily life, it is not the entire story. For almost two decades, Afghanistan was ruled by a Marxist-Leninist government. For the better part of another decade, the country was essentially occupied by the Soviet Union. As was typical within the Eastern Bloc during the 1970s and 1980s, the best and brightest of Afghanistan received schooling in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. There they learned not only Marxist-Leninist ideology but valuable skills. And perhaps most importantly, as impressionable young men from a poor rural country, they saw the "progressive" and "modern" USSR. Many of these young men are now the senior leaders of the ANSF, and while they may have developed a more nuanced view of the USSR over the intervening years, the effective adviser cannot underestimate the effect these formative experiences had on many ANSF personalities.

Typically these "Soviet-influenced" officers are easy to identify. They are typically majors or higher in rank. Many wear a "Stalin-style" moustache and can still understand if not speak Russian. Beyond the superficial indicators of Soviet influence, some are much more substantial. For example, one ANA intelligence officer in N2KL watched Russian-language television on a daily basis. A National Directorate of Security officer explained at length to the author how he viewed the conflict in Kunar as a Marxist resource-conflict between the people of the province and a new bourgeoisie consisting of the insurgent leadership, local warlords and regional malign actors.[19] Thus, even 20 years after the fall of the Communist regime in Afghanistan, the legacy of Communist and Soviet institutions/training remain within certain sections of the ANSF. For an adviser to be effective, he needs to expand his "cultural awareness" beyond Afghan culture and Islam to include Marxist-Leninist ideology.

The Soviet influence is particularly evident in the ANSF's military culture and among many of the senior leaders in particular. In general, the Soviet-trained officers are centralized and uncomfortable delegating power to lower echelons, particularly to noncommissioned officers. They are very bureaucratic as well, interested more in things being done the "right" way.[20] For example, a Soviet-trained officer would deny a request for supplies if the form was not filled out correctly and with signatures obtained in the proper order, regardless of the urgency of the request. Furthermore, they are extremely hesitant to follow an order or take any initiative or action, for that matter, unless it is in a written order (a cipher). This is likely a way to "avoid blame" if something goes wrong. While this background does make some of these officers extremely rigid, many are very professional and doctrinally knowledgeable within their particular functional areas. The centralized system with which the Soviet-trained officers are more comfortable is also more conducive to maintaining operational security within an ANSF unit wracked with leaks and enemy collection.

There is a significant divide between these older officers and the younger Kabul Military Academy officers.[21] These new officers are trained in the Western/NATO style of military leadership. Typically they are more comfortable with subordinate leaders taking initiative, relying on their staffs and empowering NCOs. Generally, they are also more focused on problem-solving over process. Many of the Soviet-trained officers have a hard time seeing the difference between problems within their scope of control and problems out of their scope of control, and in many cases blame problems within their organization on national or ANSF-wide systemic problems. This could be due to

their "top-down" military culture that sees solutions/orders/information flowing from top to bottom.

Regardless, providing recommendations or feedback to higher headquarters is entirely out of the question for the vast majority of these Soviet-trained officers. Neither is soliciting bottom-up feedback from their subordinates seen as useful or acceptable, since they feel that they should know more than their subordinates at all times.[22] Publically, these new-generation leaders defer to their Soviet-trained and mujahedeen elders, but privately they criticize them and see them as outdated. Thus, even new Kabul Military Academy graduates are hesitant to provide input to their highers in mission planning or constructive criticism (or after-action review comments) after an operation. When their highers are not present, many of the younger leaders will perform more in the Western/NATO style.

The effective adviser recognizes that while it may be easier to work with the younger, Kabul Military Academy-trained ANSF leaders (because their military culture is more similar to the adviser's), he still must work through the older Soviet-trained officers to achieve success. To interface with them productively, he must first understand that many of these officers may still have a deep attachment to the Soviet system and way of thought that produced them. While Islam may be the guiding force in their life, Marxist-Leninist thought may continue to shape many of their opinions or remain the "lens" through which they view the world. Their military training under the Eastern Bloc system continues to inform the way they act as military leaders. To work with these older ANSF personalities effectively, the adviser is not only a student of Afghan/Islamic culture but of Eastern Bloc and Marxist-Leninist culture.

(6) "Having a relationship with you should bring honor and prestige to your Afghan counterpart, not shame or embarrassment." – 1/1/201st ANA Kandak adviser team.

The effective adviser understands that simply having an adviser assigned to him can be a point of pride for his ANSF counterpart, and that at no point should the adviser do something that would bring dishonor, shame or embarrassment to his Afghan counterpart. Having an adviser implies that the ANSF officer or senior NCO has a critical role within his organization and demonstrates to other ANSF personalities that he is deserving of respect due to the fact that he has direct access to coalition forces – and, more specifically, to the U.S. military. In addition to seeing an adviser as a status symbol, the ANSF rank-and-file believe that having an adviser confers upon the advised ANSF personality the ability to leverage CF assets, thus increasing the perceived power of the advised-ANSF officer/NCO. Thus, whether or not the advised Afghan believes he needs mentoring/advice, he is usually very positive about the increased status that having an adviser confers.

The effective adviser reinforces these feelings by ensuring that his ANSF counterpart feels like he has access and influence with the adviser and with the CF. This not only helps the advised Afghan take himself seriously, but causes other Afghans to take the advised Afghan seriously.[23] This can be done in a variety of ways, including saluting one's higher-ranking ANSF counterpart; using "commander sir (comandan sahib)/deputy sir (mu'awin sahib)," "staff primary sir (amir sahib)," "brigade command sergeant major (breedmal-e leewa)," "battalion command sergeant major (breedmal-e kandak)," "first sergeant (breedmal-e toolay)," etc., when appropriate; and generally treating one's ANSF counterpart like one would an American officer/NCO of similar rank.[24] While the effective adviser never allows himself to be bullied into "working for" his ANSF counterpart, he does ensure that both his ANSF counterpart and other ANSF personalities understand that he both respects and is dedicated to assisting his ANSF counterpart.

The effective adviser is also continually on guard against actions/situations that could bring dishonor or shame to his ANSF counterpart. This includes never publically criticizing his ANSF counterpart (this will be dealt with in more detail in further points) or publically implying that the ANSF counterpart does not have influence or access to you. While some ANSF personalities may attempt to "ambush" their adviser publically (i.e., "reminding" the adviser during a public meeting that he promised something he never promised), special care must be taken not to imply the ANSF has low influence with the adviser when denying their requests. Sometimes this can mean the adviser must publically accept responsibility for making a mistake or for being unclear, rather than publically saying the counterpart is incorrect.

Most importantly, the effective adviser never publically insinuates, implies or gives the impression that he controls his Afghan counterpart or forces him into action/inaction. The simplest way to accomplish this is by being at one's most aggressive or persistent in private with one's Afghan counterpart, but at one's most passive or quiet in public settings. Large meetings with multiple personalities are the incorrect setting for the adviser to encourage his counterpart toward a course of action, because ideally the adviser has discussed the issues with his counterpart privately beforehand. In general, though, the effective adviser understands that when Afghans are publically shown to be weak, to be under the influence of others, or without the "power" of access to or influence with others, they lose standing vis-à-vis their peers. The effective adviser is never a source of such loss of standing or face.

While force-protection standards should never be compromised, the effective adviser takes the time to understand the procedures in place and what steps can be taken with the CF base-security personnel. For instance, does the base allow ANSF to carry weapons? Drive on the base? Move unescorted? Enter morale, welfare, recreation/USO facilities? Discussing these issues before they arise with the ANSF counterpart can reduce the number of "loss of face" situations and thereby reduce the degree to which the ANSF counterpart feels that having an adviser brings him shame.

The effective adviser also works in advance to reduce the intrusiveness of force-protection procedures for trusted ANSF personalities. This could mean getting badges, passes or vehicle registrations for one's trusted ANSF counterpart, providing photos of one's ANSF counterpart to entry-control points, or simply ensuring that one's ANSF counterpart knows to call his adviser if he needs access to the CF base at any time. Afghans recognize the "double standard" applied to their access to CF facilities as compared to CF access to ANSF facilities.[25] While most understand the reason behind the "double standard," reducing it when feasible can bring honor to one's Afghan counterpart and improve one's relationship with one's Afghan counterpart.

Finally, the effective adviser observes and is cognizant of the preceding because he understands that Afghans typically avoid situations that cause them to lose face. If one's ANSF counterpart associates interacting with his adviser with losing face, he will minimize his exposure to losing face by limiting his interactions with his adviser or not being open with his adviser.

(7) "Their failure is not your failure. Accept ANSF failure." – 3/2/201st ANA Kandak adviser team.

The effective adviser accepts ANSF failure. He allows ANSF organizations to fail rather than forcing them to succeed, and acknowledges that ANSF failure does not necessarily mean his own failure. While this may seem counterintuitive, it is precisely what defines an "adviser" rather than a "patron-client" relationship. Furthermore, almost all learning models agree that progress does not take place unless there is trial and error. Mak-

ing failure impossible for one's ANSF counterpart not only stunts his growth but actually reverses the process of making ANSF organizations independent by inserting the adviser into the ANSF organization as a key component to success.[26]

ANSF personalities recognize that due to robust digital-communication capabilities and vast resources, CF – particularly the U.S. military – are, from a relative perspective, vastly more efficient than the ANSF are in accomplishing virtually any task. Thus, as a resource/labor-maximizing organization, the ANSF will regularly allow itself to approach the point its CF partners see as "failure" if it believes its CF partners will not allow such failure to occur.[27] After some 10 years of working with CF, ANSF personalities generally understand where CF "red lines" are and are willing to allow CF to solve ANSF problems for them. Some believe that due to the perceived "patron-client" relationship between the United States and Afghanistan, this is perfectly acceptable. Only by ignoring those "red lines" and allowing ANSF entities to fail can an adviser force the ANSF to exercise its less efficient systems, grow as an organization and become more efficient over time.

Unfortunately, this translates in some cases with accepting the possibility of temporary damage to the relationship with one's ANSF counterpart. The adviser must be capable of articulating to his highers why he is allowing the ANSF to fail and inculcate in his subordinates the same degree of acceptance of ANSF failure. As an advising organization, it must be understood by all that as ANSF organizations approach independence, there are no red lines for when CF advisers must force ANSF success.

By far the best way to mitigate catastrophic ANSF failure and reduce the likelihood of damage to one's relationship with the advised ANSF organization without forcing success is to set clear timelines for when advisers will stop taking certain actions or performing certain functions for the ANSF organization. In one example, an adviser team's decision to allow an ANA kandak to fail in the short-term resulted in multiple long-term improvements to the kandak's warfighting capabilities. Since the adviser team had advertised in advance the date past which it would no longer be requesting air assets for the kandak, the damage to the relationship between the kandak and the adviser team was minimal, despite the ANA taking casualties.[28]

However, accepting ANSF failure does not mean excusing oneself from advising or "washing one's hands" of the consequences of ANSF actions. If an adviser can foresee a potential pitfall or danger, he should never hesitate to inform his ANSF counterpart of the potential danger. Ideally, an adviser should attempt to assist the ANSF in avoiding failure by helping his ANSF counterpart think through the consequences of his courses of action beforehand. After failure, the adviser should assist his ANSF counterpart in managing the aftermath of the failure, rebuilding/repairing/healing the organization after the failure and learning from the failure.

At its heart, accepting ANSF failure means not associating ANSF battlefield failure with CF adviser failure. The effective adviser understands that it is neither his responsibility nor place to become a key component in forcing ANSF success. If the adviser is essentially the linchpin in preventing ANSF from failing a task, he is out of place. The effective adviser doesn't want ANSF success more than his ANSF counterpart.

(8) "They will come to you expecting supplies and material support because that is what has been happening traditionally. … Don't be afraid to say 'no.'" – 7th and 1st ABP Zone 1 adviser team.

The effective adviser recognizes that over the last 10 years, the ANSF has received supplemental supplies, equipment and even real property from their CF counterparts, leading them to expect the same level of support from their advisers. ANSF leaders continue to view the relationship between ISAF (and particularly the U.S. military) and the ANSF as a "patron-client" relationship. Under this system, it is expected that the patron (the U.S. military) will provide protection, services and life support, and ensure the general well-being of the client (the ANSF). In return, the client will be generally obedient to the patron and reciprocate with support.[29]

CF at all levels do not view the relationship in the same way, and the United States in particular is uncomfortable with the colonial overtones of being a "patron." U.S. personnel see the relationship as a partnership, one in which both sides can share resources and support one another, but one in which there is no expectation that one side will provide for the other. Unfortunately, the experience of the last 10 years, during which the United States materially assisted the ANSF in establishing themselves, has convinced the ANSF that they are in a "patron-client" relationship with the U.S. military and that they are entitled to receive supplies/materials from their U.S. advisers.[30] This can greatly frustrate the adviser, who often has little ability to provide the ANSF with the supplies they desire and also feels that he is being "used" by the ANSF. Thus, the effective adviser prepares himself both for ANSF expectations and to say "no" in a variety of forceful but respectful ways.

To get to the point where he can begin to say "no" to ANSF requests and help them stand on their own, the effective adviser starts where the outgoing CF unit he has replaced left him.[31] Immediately changing the level of support after relief in place/transfer of authority leads to direct organizational setbacks as the ANSF experiences supply shortfalls they were not expecting; animosity on the part of the Afghans who see the new CF adviser team as intentionally undermining the ANSF; and the general view that the new advisers have nothing to provide the ANSF (either materially or intellectually). Ideally, the preceding CF adviser team would have followed the campaign plan to wean the ANSF off U.S. systems, and the new adviser team only needs to continue along that path at progressively lower levels of support. If this is not the case, the adviser team must start by generally saying "yes" to the ANSF before it can begin saying "no."

The effective adviser team starts by laying out precise timelines for the ANSF for when various categories of support will be discontinued. This campaign plan for lowering the levels of direct CF support to the ANSF unit should have ANSF "buy in." Ideally, the ANSF leadership should know the reasons and has been part of the process of deciding the exact date the adviser team will not provide or assist in securing a particular category of support. If the senior ANSF leadership is part of the process, the effective adviser can leverage the ANSF leadership to promote the plan and accompanying positive information-operations messaging to the rest of the ANSF organization, thus better enabling the adviser to say "no" to lower-level ANSF personnel after the cutoff date passes.[32] While securing ANSF key leader buy-in can appear a difficult task, generally ANSF leadership understand and respond positively to the argument that CF forces are drawing down. Emphasizing that CF presence below the ANSF corps/regional level will rapidly become less prevalent can help the ANSF senior leadership understand they must become more self-sustaining now or face significant shortfalls in the mid-term future.[33]

Nevertheless, for the strategy of creating a campaign plan for decreasing levels of support to be effective, the adviser team must ensure that the decreasing levels of support are relatively similar across ANSF formations. For example, if an adviser team is advising an ANA kandak that is co-located with an ABP kandak, the levels of support provided to the ANA and the ABP should not be drastically different.[34] This necessitates regular

cross-talk on the issue of support to ANSF on the part of co-located, neighboring and higher-headquarters adviser teams.

After the campaign-plan date for discontinuing support passes, the effective adviser remains firm in saying "no" to the ANSF. Yet the effective adviser also employs a number of techniques to assist the ANSF in solving their own support issues; in defusing some residual animosity from refusing to support the ANSF; and in convincing the ANSF of the need to solve their own problems. First, the adviser can directly assist the ANSF by helping them work through their own problem. This could be as simple as helping the ANSF in filling out their Ministry of Defence-14 supply-request form and forwarding a copy to the higher-headquarters adviser team to ensure that it is not lost, or calling other adviser teams to assist the ANSF in locating a particular item they require. This can be highly effective if combined with a straightforward explanation for why the ANSF are not being supplied/assisted by the CF in the manner requested any longer. Remaining firm, treating the ANSF like equals with a reasonable explanation, but offering to help them work through their own system, is most likely to gain the adviser the respect rather than the animosity of his ANSF counterpart.

In the event of some lingering animosity or feelings of "betrayal," the adviser can defuse some of the feelings by acknowledging that the ANSF are not receiving everything they want or need but pointing out that this is not uncommon in the U.S. Army as well. Informing the ANSF about U.S. Army supply shortages in garrison often leads to an eye-opening moment for ANSF leaders, in which they realize that the United States does not have infinite supplies.[35] This conversation can be continued by pointing out shortages suffered by the adviser team itself, and how if the adviser team were to give the ANSF items out of hide, it would result in further shortages for the adviser team.[36] For example, one adviser team's personnel, along with members of the battlespace integrator, slept in tents to free up space for ANSF personnel to sleep in hard-stand buildings. By illustrating these points to the ANSF, the adviser can demonstrate that requesting supplies from CF is not a "victimless crime"; in fact, it cuts into a limited stock of supplies.

Finally, the adviser can begin to help the ANSF see the necessity and the desirability of solving their own supply or support issues by influencing them to take pride in their independence. By directly linking their decreasing level of support to their increasing level of professionalism and playing on their pride in that status as a "first rate" or "professional" organization, the adviser can help the ANSF take pride in working through their own systems.[37]

In summary, the effective adviser is comfortable saying "no" to his ANSF counterpart, having already prepared the battlefield by providing the counterpart with a clear timeline for decreasing levels of support. By treating his ANSF counterpart as an equal and providing realistic explanations for the decreasing levels of support, the effective adviser can say "no" and still maintain his relationship with his counterpart, bringing the ANSF closer to self-sufficiency.

(9) "Offset the cost of having you around. …" – 7th and 1st ABP Zone 1 Kandak adviser team.

The effective adviser understands that while it is essential to the long-term viability of the ANSF to wean the ANSF off CF logistical support, advisers consume ANSF resources themselves, and it is not only unfair but unwise not to compensate the ANSF accordingly. Adviser teams are, often without their knowledge, large consumers of ANSF resources. These resources include primarily food and security, but also may include luxury items and vehicles, not to mention time.

For instance, when adviser teams at remote locations eat with their Afghan counterparts, they consume foodstuffs that are carefully rationed due to the weakness of the ANSF logistical system. This can directly translate to an ANSF soldier not getting his daily ration of two eggs because feeding the "honored guests" is seen as more important. Thus, "if all you're offering is advice, you start to become a drain."[38] While at larger installations closer to ANSF logistical hubs, the effect is less extreme, but the principle remains that CF advisers should ensure they offset their costs.

Most commonly, CF advisers will request copies of documents from the ANSF. CF advisers should ensure to offset the "cost of doing business" with paper, ink, etc. While it is important to force the ANSF to exercise their own logistical system, advisers will seem out of touch if all they provide is advice while expecting the ANSF to provide products/items.

(10) "The guy in charge is not necessarily the loudest guy in the room." – 2/201 ANA Brigade adviser team.

When meeting with unfamiliar Afghans or judging the relationships between unfamiliar and familiar Afghans, the effective adviser always remembers that "the most influential person in the room might not be the highest ranking nor the most talkative."[39] For advisers who have Operation Iraqi Freedom/Operation New Dawn experience, this may require some adjustment given the respect/deference accorded to more "authoritarian" Iraqi leaders.[40]

At the risk of over-generalizing, Afghans are masters of influencing and persuading, and often go about it more quietly than Americans. While an influential American likely sits at the head of the table, chairs a meeting and makes a decision, an influential Afghan may sit off to the side, speak little and communicate through proxies. Doing so allows the influential Afghan to orchestrate a conversation and decision, rather than become a target for retaliation (physical/verbal/etc.). This phenomenon, well documented particularly in rural civilian Afghan society, is less common in the ANSF but still observable.

For instance, the 2/201 ANA Brigade NDS officer proposed having an "intelligence shura" to the 2/201 ANA Brigade intelligence advisers. The NDS officer, with some limited input from the advisers, planned out quite specifically whom he wanted to have in attendance, what he wanted to discuss and what requirements he wanted to place on lower-echelon intelligence officers during the brigade intelligence shura. During the shura, the NDS officer sat to the side while the brigade S-2 parroted word for word what the NDS officer had discussed with the advisers. Multiple kandak NDS officers voiced their support for the brigade S-2's statements. During the entire meeting, the brigade NDS officer said nothing except to briefly agree with the brigade S-2 and thank the participants for attending. It was obvious to the advisers that the brigade NDS officer had engineered the meeting, using the brigade S-2 and kandak NDS officers as proxies. He was the most influential individual in the room, but had the advisers not met with him a week prior, they would have assumed the brigade S-2 was the most influential individual in the room.[41]

Understanding who has influence over whom has great benefit to an adviser. With this information, the adviser can leverage influential individuals to assist the adviser in changing the behavior of a counterpart or in negotiating an end to an administrative or organizational dispute. As stated, like any military organization, rank confers a certain degree of influence. The quietly

Continued on Page 34

influential NDS officer mentioned was actually the highest-ranking individual in the room, although he was not chairing the meeting.

Personal connections, family status, service history and personal reputation all play a part in determining influence level as well. Some may have influence only over certain sections of Afghan society or the ANSF; some may be universally respected. Should the adviser be able to identify and leverage key influential personalities, it will greatly enhance the adviser's ability to improve ANSF performance.

(11) "They're really not that different. … They're country folks and use the same parables we do to explain things." – 7th and 1st ABP Zone 1 Kandak adviser team.

The effective adviser is a storyteller who uses parables and stories to convey his point. Much is made of the differences between American and Afghan communication and learning styles, but Afghans, like Americans, are more likely to remember or take something away from a conversation if they can form a personal connection with the message or messenger. The U.S. military relies heavily upon lessons-learned documents, written accounts or vignettes from combat, etc. – these tools are simply professionally written and edited stories. The marginal difference lies in that perhaps Afghans are slightly more accepting of the use of stories or parables in a professional setting as a form of communication. The effective adviser leverages this to his advantage in getting his point across.

The first step in using parables and stories is to learn some of the Afghan sayings from one's interpreter. While some sayings have slightly different Afghan equivalents (i.e., "You can't take hair from your beard and make a moustache" is the rough equivalent for "You can't mix apples and oranges"), many – like the story of the "Boy Who Cried Wolf" – are held exactly in common.[42] Communicating through Afghan sayings and parables will not only expedite the process of explaining a concept in an intelligible way but will gain the adviser his counterpart's respect.

Secondly, the effective adviser is ready to improvise by creating stories or parables of his own that fit the situation or concept the adviser is trying to describe. When describing how to accomplish a certain task, it is significantly more effective for the adviser to describe how he accomplished or failed to accomplish this task in the past, rather than describe step by step how this task should be or could be accomplished. Creating a story with the adviser as the protagonist creates a personal connection between the Afghan counterpart and the situation or task being described.

These stories need not be entirely factually or historically accurate. There is nothing wrong with fabricating a believable story or parable to get one's point across.[43] Primarily, though, the stories should signal that the adviser is open and has experienced the same difficulty/situation the Afghan is facing; thus believability and genuineness is key.

Finally, encouraging Afghans to exchange their own war stories or life experiences is an effective tool for helping them work through an issue or learn a new skill. For example, when teaching a class to Afghan soldiers on counter-improvised-explosive-device techniques, encouraging the soldiers to describe their own experiences with IEDs can lead to a meaningful discussion on IED defeat, which the Afghan soldiers are more likely to remember than a stock CIED class.[44] Generally speaking, exchanging war stories, especially if the adviser and the Afghan counterpart have combat experience in the same region of Afghanistan, is one of the best techniques for trust-building and advising throughout one's rotation.

(12) "Know how to communicate like an Afghan. … This means knowing how to actually use an interpreter." – 3/2/201st ANA Kandak adviser team.

The effective adviser understands that to communicate clearly to his Afghan counterpart, he must know how to correctly use an interpreter. Much of using interpreters comes with practice, but to use an interpreter correctly, one must both ensure the interpreter understands what the adviser is trying to express and that the Afghan counterpart is receiving from the interpreter what the adviser is intending to say.

Ensuring the interpreter understands the adviser is best accomplished by briefing the interpreter on the purpose of the meeting before meeting with one's Afghan counterpart. This includes going over any relevant terms, key phrases or numbers, as well as the general tone and purpose of the meeting.[45] Trying to explain a concept or a word to an interpreter during the meeting often will break the natural flow of the conversation. While not necessarily catastrophic, and obviously not entirely avoidable, it is advisable to brief the interpreter beforehand. This can also be accomplished by matching interpreters with knowledge of a particular specialized lexicon to particular meetings. For example, a local-national linguist who previously served with the ANA as an artilleryman would be likely to perform well in meetings that deal with fires.

Ensuring the Afghan counterpart is receiving what the adviser is trying to say is more difficult. This involves the adviser understanding both how his interpreter translates (whether he speaks generally word for word or conveys the concept), and how Afghans themselves speak. English has a vast and technical vocabulary with a great number of synonyms, each conveying different nuances. Dari and Pashto both have a much smaller and less technical vocabulary. For example, the English words "reconnaissance" and "intelligence" are expressed in Dari using the same word, *kashf*.

Thus, especially when using technical terms or English styles of speaking that rely on some of this nuance (like dry humor or downplaying for effect), it does not translate as intended in Dari or Pashto.[46] Exaggerating (by English standards) is often necessary as well to overcome some of the differences between English and Dari/Pashto and convey one's true message to one's Afghan counterpart.[47]

Similarly, indicating meaning by providing context can ensure that the interpreter is conveying an understandable message in Dari/Pashto.[48] For example, "intelligence drives operations" could be given context by saying "intelligence we have gained by doing things like talking to our sources drives operations." Thus, the effective adviser thinks about what he is trying to say before speaking, using context, exaggeration and his knowledge of Afghan speech patterns to give his interpreter a message that will be clear when translated into Dari/Pashto.

As stated, using an interpreter effectively requires experience with interpreters and knowledge of the specific interpreter's capabilities. Briefing the interpreter beforehand and understanding the differences between American military English and Dari/Pashto can assist the effective adviser in communicating to the interpreter and conveying a clear message to his Afghan counterpart.

(13) "Sometimes it comes down to convincing them to do what they don't want to do." – 2/1/201st ANA Kandak adviser team.

While the effective adviser understands that compelling behavior is not the same as advising, sometimes an adviser must convince the ANSF to accomplish a certain task or undertake a certain activity. Circumstances like security during CF retrograde operations in particular require the ANSF's assistance, and it often falls on the adviser to convince the ANSF to behave in a particular CF-desired fashion. While in many cases the ANSF recognize that assisting CF is in their long-term best interest, some may be unwilling at first, particularly if they do not see what their organization is receiving "in return" for their compliance. Thus, the effective adviser employs a number of strategies to convince the ANSF to comply, none of which include tricking, threatening or extorting the ANSF.

Throughout, the effective adviser attempts to ensure that the final decision is an Afghan one. This means helping the ANSF leader develop the idea/compromise/plan so that when the ANSF leader executes what CF is asking him to do, the way he accomplishes it is "his" idea.[49] The first and most simple method is to lay out the "pros" and "cons" of complying for the involved ANSF organization. This will help ANSF personalities understand how the adviser sees the issue and vice versa. Often there is information one party has that changes the calculus for the other.[50]

Secondly, if the pros-and-cons comparison indicates the ANSF is giving up more than they are receiving from participating in the operation or completing the task, the adviser can seek to offset the cost for the ANSF. As discussed previously, this can be done by providing materials (sandbags to build an observation post the ANSF is being requested to construct on short notice for route security) or even personnel (while not a maneuver force, adviser teams have on occasion manned ANSF OPs to free up ANSF combat power for offensive operations).[51]

Finally, if the preceding methods have not worked, the adviser can try a personal appeal by telling the ANSF leader that the adviser's higher-headquarters is pressuring the adviser, or simply ask for a favor based on the strength of the relationship.[52] While many advisers may be uncomfortable with the idea of putting stress on the relationship in this manner, or even uncomfortable with the idea of personal appeals in the first place, this strategy is quite effective, given a healthy relationship between the adviser and the ANSF leader. While at the risk of over-generalizing, Afghans are more comfortable with "favors" and "personal appeals" in a work-context than Americans. Thus, what an American adviser might see as an inappropriately forward request that mixes work with personal connections, the Afghan counterpart might see as a perfectly normal request that he feels required to carefully consider for the sake of the relationship.

Thus, the effective adviser recognizes that fundamentally, convincing the ANSF to behave in a certain way is tied directly to the strong personal relationships between advisers and the ANSF. If an adviser "knows his audience," has created a relationship built on respect with his counterpart, and on occasion has done small "favors" for his ANSF counterpart, the adviser is much more likely to be able to convince the ANSF to behave in the particular way CF desires.

(14) "They just have to decide if they're going with the old Soviet style (no NCO empowerment) or the American style (NCO empowerment). … They can't be somewhere in between." –7th and 1st ABP Zone 1 Kandak adviser team.

The effective adviser recognizes that most ANSF organizations are currently struggling with defining the role of NCOs within their ranks. The effective adviser, especially if he is an NCO himself, understands that it is of critical importance the adviser assist the ANSF in defining the roles and responsibilities of the NCO within the organization, whether this

means embracing the old "Soviet model" or the new "NATO model."

Currently, in most ANSF organizations, NCOs are higher-paid privates. Officers do not rely on them as repositories of experience and organizational knowledge. They are not delegated authority to accomplish tasks and are not empowered with the ability to take initiative within officer-defined guidelines. This is closer to the "Soviet model" level of NCO empowerment. Many ANSF officers are more comfortable with this model because empowering NCOs would force these officers to be accountable for what their subordinates did or did not do without direct officer oversight.[53] Given that the trust of the NCO corps is lacking across the ANSF, this is seen as unadvisable. Some of the lack of faith in the NCO corps is justified, given that most combat-arms NCOs are functionally illiterate and have a much lower educational level than their officers. Yet, some of the readily apparent inflexibility of the ANSF can be traced directly back to the lack of NCO empowerment.

Some commanders are more inclined toward the "NATO model" of NCO empowerment. Many commanders see the benefits of moving their organizations towards the "NATO model" but are unsure of how to guide their organization in that direction.[54] Regardless, the issue of NCO empowerment comes back to the organizational commander at every level, and the adviser must assist the commander in guiding his organization towards the level of NCO empowerment dictated by the ANSF organization's higher headquarters.[55] The current state of non-uniform levels of NCO empowerment within ANSF organizations is unsustainable, and it is the responsibility of the effective adviser to help guide ANSF organizations at all levels towards one model or the other, and assist the ANSF organization in enforcing these guidelines with subordinate organizations.

(15) "Criticize privately but praise publically." – 2/1/201st ANA Kandak adviser team.

The effective adviser always criticizes his Afghan counterpart privately but praises him publically, while simultaneously remaining humble throughout. While shame plays perhaps an even greater role in Afghan culture than in American culture, the concept of "public praise/private criticism" is not alien to the U.S. military. Publically criticizing a superior is almost never acceptable, and publically criticizing a subordinate is a strong rebuke. The main difference between Afghan and U.S. military cultures is that the Afghan military culture is even more polarized – public praise or criticism is stronger in Afghan military culture than in U.S. military culture. The effective adviser leverages this for his advantage while understanding the implications when Afghans criticize or praise one another.

If an adviser wishes to praise his counterpart to positively reinforce good performance, doing it privately is not as effective as doing it publically.[56] Almost universally, CF opinions are respected, and when an adviser praises an Afghan, it reflects particularly well on that Afghan. Since CF opinions are held in high regard, when criticizing, the adviser should understand what CF criticism can do to an ANSF officer or NCO. In one case, after being publically criticized by advisers, an ANA officer went to the trouble of collecting every certificate of appreciation or training that he had ever received and presented this paperwork to the adviser team in an attempt to convince them to reverse their opinion of him.[57]

When criticizing, even in a private setting, the effective adviser is humble but honest.[58] An adviser is not fulfilling his responsibilities if he is not able to constructively criticize his counterpart and help the counterpart learn from his failings. Thus, the effective adviser knows how to criticize without offending. First, the effective adviser does not begin to criticize his counterpart until he has developed a relationship with his counterpart.[59] Much like in American military culture, one is unlikely to take the opinion of a newly met individual seriously and may even become offended.

Second, an adviser can attempt to highlight the failings of the counterpart indirectly by drawing the attention of the counterpart to failings the counterpart and a third party share.[60] For example, the adviser could say "look at 2nd Kandak, they're doing 'X' and it is not working at all," implying that "X" is incorrect and drawing the attention of the counterpart to "X," which he happens to be doing as well. By speaking through context and inference, the adviser can criticize without shaming or embarrassing his counterpart.

Alternately, the adviser can use a more direct route by periodically giving the counterpart a task-based counseling using measures of performance from the counterpart's chain of command.[61] Doing this not only helps the adviser understand how well the counterpart is performing from the Afghan perspective (rather than the adviser perspective) but limits the embarrassment experienced by the counterpart. Since the adviser is helping the counterpart understand his success/failure as judged by a third party, the adviser and the counterpart can move to correct the failures and reinforce the success as "teammates."

In summary, the effective adviser is capable of providing constructive criticism to his counterpart either directly or indirectly, but always in private. Likewise, he leverages public praise to reinforce success or highlight models for others to emulate. Throughout, the adviser is humble and respectful, ensuring the ANSF does not lose respect for themselves or feel shame due to the adviser's comments.

(16) "Very few actually feel like they need your help." – 1/1/201st ANA Kandak adviser team.

The effective adviser understands that to a certain degree, his Afghan counterpart feels he does not need the adviser's help. Many senior ANSF officers and NCOs have been at war off and on for the last three decades. Even the younger generation of ANSF leaders have experienced conflict on a day-to-day basis since childhood. Except on rare occasions, the ANSF leader has more combat experience, is higher ranking and has more time serving within his warfighting function than the adviser. Thus, in most cases, while the ANSF leader may feel that his ANSF organization requires CF assistance, he may personally feel he does not need the assistance of his adviser in improving his own performance.

Thus, given that the ANSF counterpart does not feel he needs assistance in improving his performance, what does he expect to receive from his adviser? Some expect to use their advisers to raise issues/problems to their ANSF highers the counterpart feels uncomfortable raising himself. Some expect their adviser to provide them with material assistance – be it supplies, equipment, air support, etc.[62] There are even some who attempt to convince their advisers they need extensive assistance so as to lessen their own workload (assuming their adviser is willing to not see them fail).[63]

Most are convinced, due to their pride and extensive combat experience, that they do not require advice, mentorship or training from their junior American mentor.[64] Knowing this is the starting mindset of his counterpart can help the effective adviser begin to become value-added for his ANSF counterpart. Simply starting by earning the trust of the ANSF counterpart and becoming a "sounding board" for his ideas, or being available to provide an opinion when asked, is an excellent way to demonstrate the adviser has something to

add to the discussion. Playing "devil's advocate" for one's ANSF leader can also be useful to the ANSF leader who believes he does not need advising, since ANSF personnel rarely provide that for one another. Furthermore, asking the ANSF leader to teach the adviser is an excellent avenue for guiding the ANSF leader to discuss his thoughts on warfighting with the adviser, thus opening the ANSF counterpart to discussions on best practices.[65]

While a strongly entrenched senior ANSF leader may never believe he personally requires advising or improvement in his performance, taking some of the preceding routes may assist the adviser in subtly helping the ANSF leader improve. Furthermore, by becoming a trusted "sounding board" or friend, the ANSF leader will be more likely to take more straightforward advice later in the relationship based on the friendship alone.

In summary, most ANSF counterparts believe they do not need advising (at least the way CF envisions advising), and by recognizing this from the outset, the adviser can take action to subtly improve ANSF performance rather than coming across as "out of touch" by the more senior and combat-experienced ANSF leadership.

(17) "Don't let the insider threat put up barriers between you and your counterpart. Draw your counterparts in close. Make them be your host. Tell them you feel safe because *they* are securing *you*." – 7th and 1st ABP Zone 1 Kandak adviser team.

The effective adviser, while accepting that insider threats are real and seeking to mitigate them, does not let the insider threat either separate him from his counterpart or prevent him from accomplishing his mission. This means understanding both as an organization and as an individual that "risk is what right looks like,"[66] because the insider threat risk can never entirely be mitigated, and attempting to do so only inhibits mission accomplishment. Instead, the effective adviser embraces the fact that his security is not entirely in his own hands, and he must rely on his Afghan counterparts to take some responsibility for securing him and his team. Essentially, creating distance or standoff between advisers and the ANSF, rather than eliminating barriers and building collective security solutions, is the incorrect method for dealing with the insider threat.

First, it is the responsibility of the adviser team to mitigate some of the insider threat by not allowing "unforced errors." It is the responsibility of each adviser to ensure he doesn't create any personal vendettas or grievances between himself and any Afghan.[67] Minor disputes, misunderstandings or arguments should be promptly resolved so the involved Afghan feels he has satisfaction. Cultural or religious *faux pas* should not be allowed to linger, and advisers should take care to address any of these issues as soon as they come to their attention. While some advisers may feel it unnecessary or even insulting to have to apologize for acceptable stateside behavior, it is vital to do so to avoid allowing personal issues to fester.

Second, advisers should assist the ANSF in solving some of the root causes of insider attacks.[68] ANSF leadership are equally at risk for insider attacks and thus are usually amenable to working with advisers to address root causes of insider attacks when they are identified. Some root causes include soldiers not being paid on time; soldiers not being allowed to go on leave regularly/being stationed at remote sites without being relieved for long periods; soldiers not regularly being fed/watered; and the remains of ANSF fallen not being processed in a timely manner. While none of these factors might be the deciding factor that causes an ANSF service member to kill, they are contributing factors that create environments that breed intra-ANSF and possibly anti-CF violence.

Third, advisers should cultivate "informers" within the ANSF organization with which they work.[69] By being friendly and open with all ANSF personnel encountered, and taking the time to converse with and develop a relationship with large numbers of ANSF personnel, the adviser can develop a network of personnel who see the adviser as a human being rather than a generic ISAF soldier. This regularly results in the ANSF service member actively seeking out the adviser to alert him to danger.[70] Simply put, as with counterinsurgency operations, the more an element knows the people of an area and has good relations with them, the more the local population is willing to assist the element in securing itself. ANSF service members, in addition to the adviser team's direct counterparts, are the "local population."

Fourth, advisers should take an ANSF-inclusive systematic approach to identifying potential insider-threat perpetrators before they attack.[71] By working with the CF BSI S-2 section and the ANSF element S-2 and NDS sections, the adviser team can serve as a conduit of information as well as an intelligence customer. Soldiers going on leave to insurgency-dominated areas are particularly susceptible to insurgency efforts to "co-opt" the service member and influence them to conduct an insider attack. Helping the ANSF synchronize their counter-intelligence, personnel-management and force-protection efforts to prevent/mitigate occurrences like the "post-leave insider attack" not only assists in professionalizing the ANSF but also improves security for the adviser team.

Finally, advisers should not make themselves a fixed target when visiting their ANSF counterparts, changing their weapon and equipment load, number of personnel moving together, and arrival and departure times.[72] Identifying a designated shooter or "guardian angel" is also prudent, yet this designated shooter should not be overt. The designated shooter should not be clothed differently from the rest of the team, nor should the designated shooter be in an obviously aggressive posture. The designated shooter should sit facing entry points and should not be engaged whatsoever in the dialogue going on.

Having an overt or aggressively postured designated shooter brings only marginal (if any) added security but adds a layer of tension to the proceedings, degrading the advisers' ability to accomplish their mission.[73] An effective adviser team trains continually throughout its deployment on how to engage targets in confined areas, areas with large numbers of civilians or after having to quickly draw one's weapon.[74] Effective training for the designated shooter will make him effective at securing the team without the designated shooter having to be in a rapport-degrading aggressive stance during adviser-counterpart interactions.

In the event of an insider attack or high-profile international incident (i.e., 2012's "Innocence of Muslims" inflammatory video release), the effective adviser team does not disengage from its counterparts; the team pulls them in closer. Often, after insider attacks, even if they take place in a different ANSF organization or province, adviser teams are pressured to pull back from their Afghan counterparts. This is precisely the worst time to do so. The adviser team should visit its counterparts and observe the ANSF organization. The adviser team likely has the best idea of what "normal" looks like, and to secure itself and other CF personnel, it is the responsibility of the adviser team to see if the situation remains normal with the ANSF organization or if the environment may

have changed, possibly indicating unrest or sympathetic insider attacks.[75]

Furthermore, the ANSF counterparts must be reassured that the attack or international incident has not changed the relationship between the adviser and the counterpart. Instead of ignoring the issue, advisers should address it openly, relying upon higher-headquarters-approved messaging and one's own knowledge of one's Afghan counterpart. It is also the adviser team's responsibility to leverage the ANSF leadership to ensure that this CF messaging reaches the service member level of the ANSF organization.

In the event the ANSF leadership advises the adviser team not to visit, the adviser team can accomplish some of the above goals (maintaining the relationship, determining the threat level and correctly messaging the situation) by inviting the ANSF to visit the adviser team at the CF facility.

In summary, the effective adviser team, while taking steps to mitigate risk on its own, invites the ANSF to act as its host and secure the team. This means working together to identify potential risks before they directly or indirectly cause casualties. Yet the adviser team recognizes and is comfortable with the fact that not all risk can ever be entirely mitigated. If a trustworthy and familiar Afghan service member suddenly decides to kill an American, tells no one, secretly obtains a firearm and is able to get close to the team, there is very little that can be done except ensure he is only able to get one shot off before he is killed. If an adviser team has taken all the preceding steps, is engaged in collective security with the ANSF and is only open to trading "man for man"[76] in a random killing, the adviser team has successfully mitigated risk.

(18) "Know the ethnic-political history of your Afghan counterpart because this impacts how he will interact with you and other Afghans." -2/201 ANA Brigade adviser team.

In addition to being a student of Afghan history, generally defined, the effective adviser is a student of the personal experience of his counterpart and his counterpart's colleagues with Afghan history. A Westerner will never entirely understand the complex ethno-political milieu that is an Afghan kandak or brigade staff; however, by understanding the history and background of key players, and how those backgrounds relate to one another within the context of post-Taliban Afghan society, one can minimize the risk of sparking intra-ANSF personality conflict, leverage the correct leadership personalities to influence other ANSF personalities and, to a certain degree, understand the motivations of one's own and other ANSF counterparts.

While it is obviously a generalization to say there are only three dimensions to analyzing the background of an ANSF personality, the following three dimensions are relatively easy for the adviser to identify, are simple to comprehend and, in many if not most cases, best help the adviser approximate the way other Afghans view the ANSF personality. The model described is less a scientific tool than a simple rule of thumb for advisers.

The first dimension is "ethnicity." What is the ethnic background and birthplace of the ANSF personality? While the differences among members even of the same ethnic group hailing from the same district in Afghanistan can be vast, for the most part they share some defining characteristics (accents, dress, history and reputation) recognizable by other Afghans. The more fidelity an adviser has on the exact background of ANSF personalities, the better, but in general understanding basic ethnic and regional background is enough.

The second dimension is "with which side the ANSF personality fought during the jihad against the Soviets." Did the ANSF counterpart fight with the mujahideen or with the Soviets? Did he receive any training in Pakistan or in the USSR? What was his position within the Communist regime or the mujahideen? Again, if the adviser can determine with which mujahideen party or Communist regime units the ANSF counterpart served, the better, but generally knowing with which side the counterpart fought is sufficient.

The third dimension is "where the ANSF personality spent the years of the Taliban regime and what he did." Did the ANSF personality stay in Afghanistan as a civilian? Did he stay in Afghanistan and actively resist the Taliban? Did the ANSF personality flee to Pakistan or another country? Or, in the more rare occasion, did he work with the Taliban regime in Afghanistan?

One can analyze an ANSF personality and how other ANSF personalities view the first personality using these dimensions. Generally speaking, and all things being equal, ethnic groups will self-segregate for linguistic, cultural and historical reasons. Similarly, ex-Democratic Republic of Afghanistan officers will have more affinity toward other ex-DRA officers over persons with a mujahideen background. Those who stayed in Afghanistan and resisted the warlords and the Taliban or suffered as civilians under their tenure will naturally gravitate toward those with similar experiences, over those who fled Afghanistan and vice versa.

Persons who share none of the three dimensions are very likely to be antagonistic toward one another. Persons who share all three are highly likely to view each other positively. Surprisingly, often it appears that common allegiance during the jihad is the determining dimension when it comes to how Afghans view one another, trumped only by common ethnic subgroup (tribal or familial) affiliation.[77]

Understanding these three simple dimensions to Afghan officers can help the adviser in a variety of ways. First, by analyzing the ANSF organization using these dimensions, the adviser can map the social network of the organization with which he works. By mapping the social network, he can more effectively influence individuals within the network by using individuals the individual respects.

Second, understanding the dynamics of the social network can help the adviser navigate its interpersonal rivalries and pitfalls. This isn't to say there are no rivalries or personality conflicts within a group of Afghans with a similar background. Yet, by understanding the potential historical reasons behind inter-organizational conflicts, advisers can better apply resources to correct staff friction rather than vainly attempting to resolve long-standing historical-personal conflicts.

Thus, the effective adviser takes time to understand and map the personal history of ANSF personalities with whom he works. Armed with this understanding, the effective adviser can apply influence and pressure more diplomatically.

The observations made by the combat advisers of 1st Battalion, 502nd Infantry, should be familiar to those who have read the historical literature on advising, particularly the works of T.E. Lawrence. While the observations may differ in the details due to the vast differences between 21st Century Afghan culture and 20th Century Hijaz-Arab culture, both identify that the key to advising lies in fostering a healthy relationship with one's counterpart.

Crafting this relationship is not the product of "cultural awareness" but of social intelligence. Socially-intelligent ad-

visers are honest, respectful, humble, calm, observant, adaptive and consequently effective advisers. Knowing the history and culture of Afghanistan is critical, but acting consistently in ways that reflect social intelligence is the deciding factor in being an effective adviser.

Yet even the most socially-intelligent adviser cannot be effective on his own. The most effective advisers are part of teams that work together, building relationships, leveraging them in concert and communicating to the ANSF with a synchronized and consistent message to assist the ANSF in developing their own ways to affect organizational change. Every member of a team must be a relationship-builder rather than a compeller of action, capable of communicating that he is there because we are leaving.

CPT Spencer French is the assistant intelligence officer with 1st Battalion, 502nd Infantry Regiment, 2nd BCT, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), at Fort Campbell, KY, where he also served as an assistant intelligence officer. He also served in B Company, 2nd Brigade Special Troops Battalion, 2nd BCT, 101st Airborne; as signals-intelligence platoon leader; and battalion intelligence officer. The Bronze Star recipient (one oak-leaf cluster) served two tours in Afghanistan. His military schooling includes Air Assault School, Campaign-Continuity Language Operators Course (Dari), Antiterrorism Officer Basic Course, Military Intelligence Officer Basic Course, Unmanned Aircraft Systems Unit Commander and Staff Officer Course, Basic Officer Leadership Course II, Officer Candidate School and basic combat training. He holds a bachelor's of science degree from Georgetown University in international politics.

Notes

[1] Between September and December 2012, the author conducted about 20 hours of interviews with 85 combat advisers with 1st Battalion, 502nd Infantry Regiment; three United Kingdom civilian intelligence trainers; and two UK civilian Afghan cultural advisers/linguists. These advisers, trainers and linguists had worked at the kandak (battalion) and brigade level in Nangarhar, Nuristan, Kunar, Laghman and Kapisa provinces for at least five months as of the time of their interviews. Some, including the UK civilian intelligence trainers, had worked in Afghanistan for more than four years. The UK civilian cultural advisers/linguists had been born and raised in Afghanistan. CPT French annotated trends (i.e., if more than two teams made a similar observation). The 18 points that comprise this article are a summary of the most commonly mentioned and salient trends described in the interviews.

[2] Team First Strike deployed to the N2KL region, part of Regional Command-East, under Team Strike (2/101st Airborne Air Assault), Task Force Mountain Warrior (4-4 IBCT) and Combined Joint Task Force-1 in April 2012 with the mission of advising and assisting the ANA and ABP. The 1-502 Battalion team advised the 2/201st ANA Brigade at Jalalabad Garrison in Nangarhar Province and at FOB Joyce, Kunar Province. Team First Strike and Team Strike's mission as a whole was unique in that 2/101 deployed advisers exclusively to N2KL while 4-4 IBCT conducted the battlespace-owner mission. Given that future BCTs will deploy advisers organic to the deploying BSI brigade, Team First Strike and Team Strike have accumulated lessons-learned and experiences unlikely to be duplicated during the rest of Operation Enduring Freedom-Afghanistan.

[3] Author's interview with Company A, 1-502 Infantry, 2nd BCT, 101st Airborne (Air Assault) (Team Hardrock), Nov. 2, 2012, FOB Tagab, Kapisa Province, Afghanistan. A/1-502 advised 1/1/201st ANA Kandak at COP Kalagush, Laghman Province, and then 2/3/201rd ANA Kandak at FOB Tagab.

[4] Author's interview with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1-502 Infantry, 2nd BCT, 101st Airborne (Air Assault) (Team Regu-

lators), Oct. 26, 2012, FOB Bostick, Kunar Province, Afghanistan. HHC/1-502 advised 3/2/201 ANA Kandak and 3/1/ANA Kandak at FOB Bostick.

[5] Author's interview with Company C, 1-502 Infantry, 2nd BCT, 101st Airborne (Air Assault) (Team Cobra), Oct. 22, 2012, FOB Fenty, Nangarhar Province, Afghanistan. C/1-502 advised 7th and 1st ABP Zone 1 Kandak at FOB Bostick, Kunar Province.

[6] Author's interview with Team Cobra.

[7] Author's interview with Company B, 1-502 Infantry, 2nd BCT, 101st Airborne (Air Assault) (Team Bulldog), Oct. 18, 2012, COP Mehtar Lam, Laghman Province, Afghanistan. B/1-502 advised 2/1/201st ANA Kandak at FOB Mehtar Lam.

[8] Author's interview with Team Bulldog.

[9] Musashi, Miyamoto, ***The Book of Five Rings***, Boston: Shambhala Publications, Oct. 19, 2010 (originally written about 1645; other publishers are available).

[10] Author's interview with Team Cobra.

[11] Author's interview with Headquarters 1-502 Infantry, 2nd BCT, 101st Airborne (Air Assault) (Team Talon), Nov. 5-26, 2012, FOB Joyce.

[12] Author's interview with Team Regulators.

[13] Author's interview with Team Talon.

[14] Author's interview with Team Cobra.

[15] Ibid.

[16] Author's interview with Team Hardrock.

[17] Author's interview with Team Cobra.

[18] Author's interview with Company D, 1-502 Infantry, 2nd BCT, 101st Airborne (Air Assault) (Team Wardog), Oct. 24, 2012, COP Monti, Kunar Province, Afghanistan. D/1-502 advised 2/ABP Zone 1 Kandak at COP Monti.

[19] Author's interview with Team Talon.

[20] Author's interview with Team Hardrock.

[21] Ibid.

[22] Author's interview with Team Talon.

[23] Author's interview with Team Hardrock.

[24] Author's interview with Team Talon.

[25] Author's interview with Team Hardrock.

[26] Author's interview with Team Regulators.

[27] Author's interview with Team Talon.

[28] Author's interview with Team Hardrock.

[29] Author's interview with Team Talon.

[30] Author's interview with Team Cobra.

[31] Author's interview with Team Hardrock.

[32] Ibid.

[33] Author's interview with Team Cobra.

[34] Ibid.

[35] Ibid.

[36] Ibid.

[37] Author's interview with Team Hardrock.

[38] Author's interview with Team Cobra.

[39] Author's interview with Team Wardog.

[40] Author's interview with Team Bulldog.

[41] Author's interview with Team Talon.

[42] Author's interview with Team Hardrock.

[43] Author's interview with Team Cobra.

[44] Author's interview with Team Bulldog.

[45] Author's interview with Team Regulators.

[46] Author's interview with Team Hardrock.

[47] Ibid.

[48] Author's interview with Team Talon.

[49] Author's interview with Team Hardrock.

[50] Author's interview with Team Cobra.

[51] Ibid.

[52] Ibid.

[53] Author's interview with Team Wardog.

[54] Author's interview with Team Talon.

[55] Author's interview with Team Hardrock.

[56] Author's interview with Team Bulldog.

[57] Author's interview with Team Talon.

[58] Author's interview with Team Bulldog.

[59] Ibid.

[60] Author's interview with Team Hardrock.

[61] Author's interview with Team Bulldog.

[62] Author's interview with Team Hardrock.

[63] Author's interview with Team Cobra.

[64] Author's interview with Team Hardrock.

[65] Author's interview with Team Talon.

[66] Author's interview with Team Hardrock.

[67] Author's interview with Team Cobra.

[68] Ibid.

[69] Author's interview with Team Bulldog.

[70] Author's interview with Team Talon.

[71] Author's interview with Team Hardrock.

[72] Author's interview with Team Bulldog.

[73] Author's interview with Team Hardrock.

[74] Author's interview with Team Wardog.

[75] Author's interview with Team Hardrock.

[76] Author's interview with Team Cobra.

[77] Author's interview with Team Talon. Note: This information is not the result of an empirical study but the result of a series of observations.

Acronym Quick-Scan

ANA – Afghan National Army
ANSF – Afghan National Security Forces
APB –Afghan Border Police
BCT – brigade combat team
BSI – battlespace integrator
BSO – battlespace owner
CF – coalition forces
CIED – counter-improvised explosive device
COP – combat outpost
DRA – Democratic Republic of Afghanistan
FOB – forward operating base
HHC – headquarters and headquarters company
IBCT – infantry brigade combat team
IED – improvised explosive device
ISAF – International Security Assistance Force
N2KL – north of Kabul
NATO – North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NCO – noncommissioned officer
NDS – National Directorate of Security
OP – observation post
UK – United Kingdom
USSR - Union of Soviet Socialist Republics