



UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS

II MARINE EXPEDITIONARY FORCE HEADQUARTERS GROUP (FORWARD)
UNIT 73923
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IN REPLY REFER TO:
3504
SFAAT
03 Dec 13

From: Officer in Charge, Afghan National Police Security Force
Assistance Advisor Team
To: Commanding General, Regional Command Southwest
Subj: AFGHAN NATIONAL POLICE SECURITY FORCES ASSISTANCE ADVISOR TEAM
AFTER ACTION REPORT

1. GENERAL: The Provincial Police Advisor Team (PPAT) deployed to Helmand Province in support of Operation ENDURING Freedom (OEF) 13.1/2 in December 2012. On 24 September 2013 the PPAT, Afghan National Civil Order Police (ANCOP) Advisor Team, and Afghan Border Police (ABP) Advisor Team, combined and formed the Afghan National Police Advisor Team (ANPAT) in Lashkar Gah, Helmand Province, Regional Command Southwest (RC(SW)). ANPAT 13.2 completed transfer of authority with ANPAT 14.1 on 02 December 2013.

a. Topic: Forming Advisor Teams

(1) Observation: Advising and Security Force Assistance were identified as the "Main Effort" during pre-deployment training for the PPAT, but that main effort status was rarely weighted during formation, training or equipping. Manpower "business rules" allowed billets to be filled one rank up or one rank down from the identified requirement, which invariably meant that one rank down became the accepted norm. In execution that PPAT rank structure had one Colonel, one Captain, and one SNCO (the rest were Lieutenants, Sgts and below) - to advise a Provincial Police Headquarters with Afghan Uniformed Police (AUP) generals and colonels. Nominated advisor team members were often selected by major subordinate commands from Excel spreadsheets, and were generally unscreened. Garrison leadership positions (company command and platoon leadership) remained a higher priority for the institution than assignment to advisor duty. During the five months of work-up training at home station, advisor teams were not afforded priority for drawing equipment, range assignment, or ammunition allocation (this was not the case at ATG, where advisor teams were absolutely the priority for ranges, ammunition and training aids).

(2) Recommendation: Weight the Main Effort.

b. Topic: Communications with deployed team during training.

(1) Observation: CENTRIX was the main form of communication for the deployed PPAT, but CENTRIX access from ATC was non-existent, and CENTRIX access from II MEF was extremely limited until the MRX. The outgoing and incoming teams found it difficult to communicate SOPs,

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SITREPs, trends, training recommendations, unit rosters, and situational awareness on the advised unit.

(2) Recommendation: Ensure that teams engaged in pre-deployment training have reliable and accessible communications with the teams that are currently deployed.

c. Topic: Pre-Deployment Site Surveys (PDSS) for Advisor Teams

(1) Observation: Historically, PDSS's were generally not available to advisors in Iraq or Afghanistan. The PPAT OIC was given a seat on the II MEF (FWD) staff PDSS to RC(SW), and was the first advisor OIC to be afforded that opportunity. Subsequent advisor teams have also been afforded the opportunity for PDSS, often with multiple team members.

(2) Recommendation: PDSS's are as important to an advisor team as they are to the battlespace owner. The site survey informs training, planning, SOPs and equipping. Continue to afford advisor teams the opportunity to have a PDSS.

d. Topic: Advisor Chain of Command versus Battlespace Owner Chain of Command

(1) Observation: When I deployed as the Provincial Police Advisor in al Anbar, I asked that district advisor teams be put in my chain of command. After careful consideration, the request was denied - it wasn't the right time in the campaign, advisor teams were still too dependent on BSOs for supplies and protection, and aligning effort across a commander's battlespace was more important than aligning effort within a security force pillar (whether the uniformed police, border police, or army). Shortly after deploying to RC(SW), command relationships were changed so that district police advisor teams worked for the PPAT (the same happened for brigade advisor teams and the corps advisor team). Although there were growing pains, at the time it happened it was more important to strengthen the police chain of command than to strengthen the BSO chain of command. My observation is that early in a COIN fight BSO's need the ability to unify effort in their battlespace, even if it works against developing host-nation security force chains of command. At some point in the campaign there is an inflection point where it is more important to get alignment between the seat of government, security force headquarters (in this case the ministry of interior), provincial and district headquarters. When this point occurs, creating advising team chains of command facilitates that alignment. As a side note, I believe we are at the point in the campaign where national level advisor teams in Kabul need direct linkages with provincial advisor teams, without going through the IJC and RC chains of command.

(2) Recommendation: Consider the doctrinal implications of an inflection point where advisor teams become supported commanders, rather than supporting commanders, and where direction is passed

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between advisor teams, rather than through traditional chains of command.

e. Topic: Crowded Advising Space

(1) Observation: When the PPAT arrived in Helmand, the Provincial Police Headquarters was overrun with ISAF and governance advisors all seeking to gain access to the Provincial Chief of Police and his primary staff. These organizations included the PPAT, the Operations Coordination Center Provincial (OCCP) advisor team, SOTF, EUPOL, the PRT, Task Force Helmand, the Regional Support Command, the Regional Platform, RC(SW) staff, and outside visitors from ISAF and international contributor nations in Kabul. The situation was self-inflicted, and (when they weren't overwhelmed by the volume) allowed ANSF to pick and choose who they listened to, and even allowed them to work coalition forces and agencies against each other.

(2) Recommendation: Only one team (and really only one individual on that team) can "own" an advising relationship. Whether that team is primarily military, civilian, or diplomatic, others in the advising space have to work within the boundaries established by the owner of the relationship. The primary advisor controls access to the extent that he needs to make sure messages and initiatives are aligned, he needs to minimize the amount of time that the ANSF leader is spending on ISAF (vs. ANSF) issues, and he needs to be in the room at all times when issues are discussed - the only way an issue stays relevant is if the principal advisor keeps it alive over subsequent days and weeks.

f. Topic: Combined, Joint Advisor Teams

(1) Observation: The ANP SFAAT had two UK members (one was the XO), and several army, navy and air force members inherited from the NTMA Regional Logistics Center advisor team. In a joint, combined environment like RC(SW), having a broad-based team helped reduce the friction between competing interests in the battlespace.

(2) Recommendation: Allow all the stakeholders in the battlespace to have representation on the advisor team, rather than setting up competing, stove-piped advisor teams.

g. Topic: ANSF Steady-state

(1) Observation: There are several functional processes that the AUP will rapidly transform once ISAF advisors are no longer present. One such example is fuel receipt, storage and distribution. Current U.S. law requires that fuel shipments to Helmand be receipted for and stored at an advised location. Once advisors lift-off it is likely that fuel shipments will be stored in much larger storage facilities located in the bazaar, and that fuel distribution will utilize a system very similar to Hawala money exchanges.

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(2) Recommendation: Allow ANSF to move into the "post-ISAF" posture while we are still here to help them through the process, and minimize the corruption that will otherwise be endemic.

h. Topic: Regional/Provincial "Power-Brokers"

(1) Observation: Helmand Province is riven by powerful families and personalities whose roots go back to the monarchy, the Soviet occupation, and the Taliban years. These "power-brokers" are active participants in security matters, operating both for the betterment and the detriment of the security situation; these individuals will be part of the post-mission security environment. National sensibilities across the coalition precluded RC(SW) engagement with regional power-brokers (most of whom are legitimate members of parliament or members of government councils), and caused missed opportunities to gain situational awareness. The PPAT regularly passed up opportunities to interact with power brokers, and could have generated SA with a minimal ISAF "face" at meetings and social engagements.

(2) Recommendation: Find a way to engage with regional power-brokers without upsetting contributor nation (including US) national political sensibilities. Advisor teams offer a low-profile option for engaging with unsavory local nationals.

i. Topic: Cultural Sensitivity outside the Advisor Teams

(1) Observation: Once one left the confines of the advised unit and travelled to ISAF facilities (whether in RC(SW) or Kabul), chances increased exponentially that ANSF leadership would be subject to some situation that they found insensitive or degrading - the most common being searches of high ranking ANSF and confiscation of unloaded weapons from the leader and his personal security detail, "unobtrusively" posting armed guards around waiting areas, or applying camp rules meant for TCN employees to ANSF leaders. In most instances ANSF leadership understood the competing pressures that led to cultural mis-steps, but their accompanying aides and PSDs felt that their leaders had been deeply wronged. Increased "security" arrangements at secure locations actually increased the real insider threat at less secure advising locations.

(2) Recommendation: For deployed service members on major ISAF bases, insider threat training needs to be carefully tempered by understanding ANSF rank structure and rank sensitivities.

j. Topic: Combat Advising

(1) Observation: Allowing police advisors to join their advised units on operations was often viewed as being synonymous with partnering a Marine or UK maneuver unit with ANSF (i.e. it was a "step back" from ANSF in the lead). Partnered or "combat" advising by small advisor teams is a natural progression from larger partnered

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operations between ANSF and ISAF maneuver units, increases access to ISAF enablers, and is a natural bridge from "shoulder to shoulder" operations to pure ANSF operations.

(2) Recommendation: Utilize the extensive training and inherent capabilities of advisor teams to bridge the transition from full partnered operations to pure host-nation security force operations.

2. ADMINISTRATION:

a. Topic: Lack of Administrative and Management Training

(1) Observation: Pre-deployment training at ATG and ATC rightfully focus on tactical training rather than preparing for administrative work. Foreign weapons knowledge, combat lifesaving, and radio training are essential for future advisors. However, current advisor teams conduct a pre-deployment training package similar to what Marines conducted three years ago - wide-ranging, but insufficient for teams that are primarily focused on ANSF headquarters. (Example: I have been on two advisor teams and had knowledge of the work of three others from April to December 2013. Most commands deployed have known that missions until the end of OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM would be at the brigade, zone, or corps level. But advisors received little and usually no instruction on assessment reports (RASR, CUAT, etc.), base security tools (thermal cameras), formal instructions and school administration (as at the Regional Corps Battle School).

(2) Recommendation: Anticipate what the advisor mission will look like in the months and years ahead and prepare advisors for that mission. This should include: (1) Preparation for advising from a secure location with access NIPR/SIPR/CENTRIX, (2) Familiarization with all modern tools of a watch officer (teams received little training on cameras, drones, or chat applications) (3) Familiarization with retrograde procedures (retrograde is a close second to the advisor mission, and advisors should have been better prepared to liaise with logistics units and prepare the Afghans for imminent departure).

3. INTELLIGENCE:

a. Topic: Redundancy of effort in Intelligence

(1) Observation: Within the PPHQ there are several intelligence actors mentoring the AUP. In addition, to the Afghan National Police Advisor Team (ANPAT), there is the Provincial Mentoring and Advisor Group (PMAG) Intelligence Officer (IO), the Legacy program mentors, European Police (EuPol) mentors, and the

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Operations Control Center for the Province (OCC-P) J2. Each of these groups covers down on various aspects of intelligence and investigations. The PMAG IO mentors the Intelligence and Targeting Cell, Legacy mentors the Director of Provincial Intelligence (DPI), EuPol mentors the various investigators, and the J2 works with the AUP in the OCCP. The PPAT S-2 covers down on the NDS LNO at the PPHQ and the DPI.

(2) Recommendation: Maintain a close working relationship with the PMAG and Legacy Program Mentors. It is essential for the PPAT Intelligence Advisor to be the primary mentor and overall in charge of the advisory efforts for the intelligence process for the AUP. As long as regular coordination is conducted and information is shared, the PPAT Intelligence Advisor can control the overall mentoring efforts for the AUP intelligence sections. It should be noted that since the mentor for the Provincial Chief of Police (PCoP) is a Marine from the PPAT, the Intelligence Advisor needs to have a good situational awareness of where the additional advisors are going with their mentorship. He should be informed on the issues they face and provide assistance whenever possible. Also, he should push to incorporate NDS into the DPI intelligence cycle whenever possible.

b. Topic: Afghanistan Uniformed Police Intelligence Process

(1) Observation: Prior to deployment, the ANPAT had no concept of the intelligence cycle that was in use by the AUP at the PPHQ. In order to properly advise and influence a system, it is required to have a strong understanding of how that system works. During pre-deployment training, the Intel Advisor received no overview or brief of the capabilities, limitations, or current state of Intelligence within the PPHQ.

(2) Recommendation: Proper pre-coordination with the forward counterpart is essential in order to maintain continuity of mentorship. The time it takes to get acquainted and build the necessary relationships in order to make reasonable progress with the AUP PPHQ staff is extensively long. Coming to the table with already having a strong understanding of the Afghan system and where it needs to go will decrease the amount of time it takes to become productive. It is important to keep in mind that Afghan Police Intelligence practices works, and are efficient. However in many aspects they are intangible (and police based), and as a result ISAF are uncomfortable with them.

4. OPERATIONS:

a. Topic: SFAAT Personnel

(1) Observation: During the initial phase of the SFAAT operation, the team was comprised of Marines from a variety of MOSS as

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per the 13.1 manning document. Basically, the only requirement to be part of the team was an MOS code and a specific rank. If the rank was not available, then it could be filled by a senior or junior Marine, "one up, one down". There is no screening process conducted to assess whether the Marine has the experience, maturity, or even the deployment history required to be able to successfully provide sound professional guidance or mentorship. The team was tasked to advise, assist, and mentor a Corps of Officers at the Provincial Level equivalent to a Regimental staff. The SFAAT team should be comprised of experienced Marines. A Marine expected to fulfill a specific duty, whether it is admin, communications or even logistics should have the MOS code for that requirement. Basic classes taught by ATC staff do not qualify Marines to understand the intricacies associated with the MOS.

(2) Recommendation: The SFAAT tour should be treated as a Special Duty Assignment (SDA). Prior to assuming any Special Duty in the Marine Corps, the Marine is carefully selected not only by MOS, but also maturity, time in service, time in grade and experience and or any disciplinary actions. The Marine's career path should be carefully inspected and examined to ensure the Marine is qualified to advise and support the SFAAT mission.

5. LOGISTICS:

a. Topic: Estimated Cost of Damage (ECOD) process for ANP

(1) Observation: At PPHQ LKG there are roughly 200 destroyed vehicles. This takes up valuable space that could be more efficiently used. Significant time and advising efforts were devoted to train the AUP Logistics Officer on the ECOD process. Once trained, requests were submitted in order to apply the ECOD process. However, no vehicles have been replaced or repaired.

(2) Recommendation: It is imperative that advisors at the higher logistical levels communicate with advisors at the provincial level regarding major issues such as this. The support advisors can provide to Afghan counterparts, working behind the scenes, on issues like this have the potential to push the Afghans toward success. Logistical success will also encourage leaders to believe and exercise the logistical processes set forth by MOI, and create a trust in the system.



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