

# Criteria for Measuring U.S. Advisor Effectiveness in Afghanistan

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# Introduction

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Commanding General, I Marine Expeditionary Force, asked CNA to conduct a study on how I MEF can best form, organize, and train advisory teams to work with the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) from 2012 to 2014 and beyond. This interim report addresses the study's first task, which is to identify criteria for assessing the success of advisory teams.

## Key Findings

Our research followed two steps. First, we assessed the characteristics of Afghan army and police units that can operate relatively independently, with some advisory support. From those characteristics, we then identified six criteria that are useful for assessing the success of advisory teams. Those criteria, our key findings, are:

1. Basic combat skills, such as marksmanship, weapons handling, standing post, and simple patrolling
2. Accountability, pay, and administration, including basic recordkeeping, payroll, accounting for men and weapons
3. Logistics and maintenance, such as adequate ammunition and fuel
4. Intelligence, such as gathering and acting on information and minimizing insurgent infiltration of ANSF
5. Presence, including regular police patrols, regular visits by senior commanders to subordinates in the field
6. Public confidence, as reflected in community willingness to report crimes and insurgent activities

These yardsticks are what our initial research has shown to be critical for an Afghan National Army (ANA) or Afghan Uniformed Police (AUP) unit to be able to operate effectively and independently—a paramount goal of US and North Atlantic Treaty Organization/International Security Assistance Force (NATO/ISAF) support to the Afghan

army and police.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, these criteria are ones upon which advisors can and should seek to have an impact. In some instances, it may be possible to attribute an Afghan unit's progress *directly* to the actions of its Marine advisory team. In other cases, it may be more difficult to link ANSF performance directly to the efforts of its advisors. Whether or not causal linkages can be detected and measured, these criteria should be used to inform the manning, organization, and training of I MEF's advisor teams.

## Report outline

This report is divided into five major parts. We begin with a background section that discusses how ANSF units are assessed today. Part two describes the study's research approach. In the third section of the report, we identify the characteristics that reasonably proficient ANA and AUP units should have. In part four, we identify the six key criteria for ANSF performance that US advisors should be expected to enhance. The report concludes with a preliminary discussion of the important traits of successful advisors and a summary of the key findings.

This is an interim report. In the second phase of this project, CNA will use the six criteria to identify the best ways to compose, train, and organize ANSF advisory teams. To set the stage for that research and analysis, the fifth section of the reports preliminary findings on the professional and personal qualities that Marine advisors should possess in order to be effective.

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<sup>1</sup> According the US Department of Defense (DoD), the United States ultimately seeks to develop a "capable, respected, multi-ethnic ANSF, with competent ministries and staffs and sustaining institutions, capable of directing, planning, commanding, controlling, training and supporting the ANSF. DoD, *United States Plan for Sustaining the Afghanistan National Security Forces* (Washington, DC: DoD, June 2008), p. 4.

# Background

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What criteria should we use for measuring the success of US Marine Corps advisory teams in Afghanistan? These could include institutionally “inner-directed” yardsticks such as high esprit de corps, strong unit cohesion, and good relationships with higher headquarters and coalition partnership units. But while these characteristics are obviously desirable, they are not sufficient to ensure one’s success in Afghanistan. Ultimately, it is an output—namely, the performance of the advised ANA and AUP units—that is most important standard by which to judge advisors in Afghanistan and strengthen the way I MEF forms, organizes and trains its advisory teams.

How is this performance measured today? The Commander’s Unit Assessment Tool (CUAT) is the primary instrument for assessing the ANSF’s operational effectiveness at the corps level and below. U.S. and coalition force advisors, mentors, and trainers use the CUAT to measure unit capability and progress across several standardized critical indicators.<sup>2</sup> The CUAT includes quantitative data on personnel, equipment, and training as well as qualitative evaluations of leadership, communications, intelligence, logistics, and maintenance.<sup>3</sup>

The CUAT provides important information, particularly in terms of relatively easy-to-count aspects of the ANSF such as personnel and equipment. But the CUAT process does not provide a complete picture of the ANA and AUP. It does not assess a given unit’s ability to counter insurgent threats and other significant challenges to stability, nor does it evaluate a unit’s ability to maintain its capabilities as direct ISAF support diminishes.<sup>4</sup> In addition, the CUAT applies the same assessment criteria to the ANA and AUP. Of course, soldiers and

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<sup>2</sup> DoD, Inspector General, *Assessment of U.S. Government and Coalition Efforts to Develop the Logistics Sustainment Capability of the Afghan National Army*, DODIG-2012-028 (Washington, DC: DoD, December 9, 2011), p. 139. While recognizing that “effectiveness” and “performance” are somewhat different concepts, the terms are used interchangeably in this paper. For more on measures of effectiveness versus measures of performance, see U.S. Army and U.S. Marine Corps FM 3-24, *Counterinsurgency Field Manual* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2007), pp. 188-190.

<sup>3</sup> Assessed ANSF units are assigned one of five color-coded capabilities rankings known as Rating Definition Levels (RDLs): “independent,” (the highest), “effective with advisors,” “effective with assistance,” “developing,” and “established” (the lowest).

<sup>4</sup> I MEF, “ANSF Assessments: Executive Assessment Group (EAG) Paper, November 2011,” p. 1

policemen share some skills and capabilities, such as good order and discipline, vehicle maintenance, and weapons handling and marksmanship.<sup>5</sup> Indeed, the AUP have been widely employed in a counterinsurgency (that is, kinetic) role. But there is growing recognition that long-term security requires the AUP to transition to a public safety and crime prevention form of policing. Thus, additional metrics should be employed and supplementary data collected.<sup>6</sup>

During earlier US advisory missions, such as those in Iraq, El Salvador, and Vietnam, American officers typically judged their counterparts by the high standards of the US military. Unsurprisingly, foreign security forces often failed to meet American expectations. Today, hopes for the ANSF appear to be relatively (and realistically) modest. American advisors are alert to the pitfalls of using a US military yardstick to measure a force such as the Afghan National Army. “We understood that they’re never going to be US Marines,” explained one Marine captain who recently advised the ANA’s 215th Corps in Helmand province.<sup>7</sup>

The importance of acknowledging limits is a recurring theme in the literature and interviews. Former advisors repeatedly stress the need to focus on small-scale improvements that are likely to endure and be emulated by other units and, in doing so, contribute to long-term institutional development.<sup>8</sup> The criteria presented in this paper focus on basic ANSF capabilities. Given the importance of building security forces that will be able to operate effectively and independently as US and coalition forces reduce their presence, some of the criteria focus on relatively unglamorous functions like logistics, maintenance, and administration. That said, not all of these criteria are direct measurements of the Afghan army and police. Metrics such as trends in “actionable” intelligence tips, are among other measures of popular attitudes—obviously useful yardsticks in conflicts in which the people are ostensibly the center of gravity.

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<sup>5</sup> Terrence K. Kelly, Nora Bensahel, and Olga Olikier, *Security Force Assistance in Afghanistan: Identifying Lessons for Future Efforts* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2011), p. 84.

<sup>6</sup> According to an October 2011 DoD report to Congress, “in early 2012, the ANP CUAT report..will target ANP specific operations and will begin collecting data on community policing and rule of law capabilities.” DOD, *Report on Progress Toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan* (Washington, DC: DoD, October 2011), p. 42.

<sup>7</sup> Author’s telephone interview, January 31, 2012.

<sup>8</sup> See for example Joshua J. Potter, *American Advisors: Security Force Assistance Model in the Long War* (Ft. Leavenworth, KS: Combat Studies Institute Press, 2011), pp. 85-86.



## Research approach

To establish criteria, we had to draw on more than what is currently available in the CUAT. To formulate effective criteria, we sought to answer two fundamental questions:

1. What capabilities should any reasonably proficient ANSF units should have?
2. Which capabilities can and should US advisors be expected to enhance?

To answer these questions, we analyzed a wide set of data: personal and academic accounts of US advisor experiences; service and joint doctrine and other military publications; the professional military literature; Afghan and international press accounts; previous research studies; and original interviews with US Marine advisors and other subject-matter experts. By examining a limited set of ANA and AUP units operating in Helmand province at different times and places and under different conditions we identified the core capabilities of reasonably effective ANSF units.

Although advisor effectiveness in Afghanistan is the focus of this paper, CNA also examined military advisory missions in three earlier conflicts in Iraq, El Salvador, and Vietnam. The context, settings, and circumstances of the earlier missions obviously differ in significant ways from Afghanistan (as well as from each other). That said, these earlier wars provide a rich vein of data directly relevant to understanding contemporary advisory challenges and identifying criteria for assessing advisor team performance today.<sup>9</sup>

Iraq's relevance is probably self-evident; our inclusion of El Salvador and Vietnam requires additional explanation. In the case of Vietnam, the mission was vast in terms of time, numbers of advisors, and overall scale of U.S. commitment. U.S. military personnel began advising the Vietnamese armed forces shortly after the creation of the republic in 1955 and continued until the withdrawal of US military personnel from the country in 1973. At its height in 1970, the military field advisor program totaled more than 14,000 at the regiment, battalion, province, and district levels—more than eight divisions' worth of officers and senior noncommissioned officers (NCOs), according to one estimate.<sup>10</sup> Moreover, with the South Vietnamese conventional and local-defense forces, American advisors faced many

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<sup>9</sup> Moreover, to the extent that US military forces will be undertaking advisory missions in other countries and regions after Afghanistan, widening the aperture to include additional cases makes analytical sense.

<sup>10</sup> Robert D. Ramsey III, *Advising Indigenous Forces: American Advisors in Korea, Vietnam, and El Salvador*, Global War on Terrorism Occasional Paper 18 (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Combat Studies Institute Press, 2007), p. 32.

of the obstacles that US personnel have encountered in Afghanistan, including poor leadership, lack of motivation, and a lumbering and inadequate logistics system.

The US advisory experience in El Salvador also offers important insights into what constitutes effective advising. The number of US personnel was small compared to other cases; US Congress limited the number of advisors (then called “trainers”) to 55 at any given time. However, the advisory effort was protracted, stretching from the administration of Jimmy Carter in 1979 to that of George H.W. Bush in 1992. As in Vietnam and Afghanistan, the level of the American commitment was high: the United States committed its national prestige to the goals of building the country’s armed forces and civilian institutions of government and countering a formidable insurgency. And as in Vietnam, Iraq, and Afghanistan, US officers and senior NCOs advised military units that had poor tactical skills, inadequate leadership, and an inability to sustain themselves.

## Caveats

Before presenting the criteria, several caveats are in order. CNA began its research with an analytical “blank slate.” While many of the criteria presented below overlap with those found in the CUAT, they were derived independently by using the data discussed earlier. It is also important to note that while the army and police are grouped under the ANSF rubric, they are different institutions with distinct missions. For the ANA, the ultimate “output” might be described as combat power that achieves desired effects against insurgents and other serious armed threats and does so with some degree of military professionalism.<sup>11</sup>

Identifying the AUP’s ultimate output is more challenging. As mentioned above, the police are expected to transition from a relatively low-cost paramilitary appendage to the army to a law-enforcement service that stresses their role as civic guardians. But as criminologists have long recognized, measuring police performance presents considerable challenges and must extend beyond simple metrics such as crime rates.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Joint Center for International Security Force Assistance (JCISFA), *Commander’s Handbook for Security Force Assistance* (Ft. Leavenworth, KS: JCISFA, July 14, 2008), p. 20.

<sup>12</sup> Alfred Blumstein, “Measuring What Matters in Policing,” in U.S. Department of Justice (DoJ), *Measuring What Matters: Proceedings From the Policing Research Institute Meetings* (Washington, DC: DoJ, July 1999), pp. 5-9. According to one group of policing experts, “the police are one of the most difficult institutions to measure in any society because of the sensitive nature and inherent complexity of their work.” Ylber Bajraktari, et al., *The PRIME System: Measuring the Success of Post-Conflict Police Reform* (Princeton, NJ: Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs, January 2006), p. 13.

Any discussion of assessment criteria should also acknowledge the problem of multiple causation. In any complex human endeavor, effects typically have more than one cause.<sup>13</sup> In the case of any foreign security force, progress (or regression) is a function of multiple factors, such as the strengths and weaknesses of the adversary, the quality of army and police leadership, the state of morale, as well as the actions of the unit's advisor.

It should also be mentioned that the complexities of the environment make it difficult to draw a straight line between an advisor's actions and a unit's performance. Advising necessarily takes place in a highly demanding context of severe political, social, economic stress and insecurity. Adding to advisors' challenges is the fact that they can attempt to persuade and influence, but they cannot command them. Advisors can provide incentives to their counterparts—those who served in Vietnam, El Salvador, Iraq, and Afghanistan stress the leverage that U.S. "enablers" such as close air support (CAS) and medical evacuation (MEDEVAC) can bring to bear.<sup>14</sup> However, such leverage is not always enough to change the behavior of a host nation's military forces. In El Salvador, for example, one military scholar said advisors "found it nearly impossible to influence the ESAF's [El Salvador Armed Forces] conduct of operations; much like in Vietnam, exogenous efforts to change the local security forces encountered a distinct lack of leverage."<sup>15</sup> Ultimately, as one former Marine advisor in El Salvador concluded, "every advisor is placed in the difficult position of trying to influence the behavior of others over whom he has no authority."<sup>16</sup>

Finally, there are some circumstances that are simply beyond an advisor's ability to affect; therefore assigning success or failure to an advisory team can be a tricky undertaking. According to one multi-service manual, the outright failure of a unit receiving U.S. assistance (for example, mass desertion, the overrunning of a key position, utter collapse in the face

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<sup>13</sup> "Assuming that it is possible to determine with reasonable certainty the outcome of a particular event, it is still problematic to impute causation, because the causes of most events are diverse." Michael Childress, *The Effectiveness of U.S. Training Efforts in Internal Defense and Development: The Cases of El Salvador and Honduras* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 1995), p. 63.

<sup>14</sup> See for example Martin J. Dockery, *Lost in Translation: Vietnam: An Advisor's Story* (New York: Ballantine Books/Presidio Press, 2003), p. 40.

<sup>15</sup> David H. Ucko, *The New Counterinsurgency Era: Transforming the US Military for Modern Wars* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2009), p. 39.

<sup>16</sup> David L. Shelton, "Some Advice for the Prospective Advisor," *Marine Corps Gazette* 75, no. 10 (October 1991) (on-line, subscription required). Advisors must balance the use of enablers with the recognition that a key goal of any advisory mission is helping host nation security forces operate independently.

of the enemy) rests ultimately with the advisor.<sup>17</sup> However, the authors of a service handbook for combat advisors point out that “sometimes the advised unit suffers significant setbacks often associated with leader changes, which degrades their abilities—this is out of your control.”<sup>18</sup> A US Army Special Forces colonel who advised the Iraqi army put the matter this way:

The FSF [foreign security force] is accountable for its own actions....The US partner units should remember the FSF does not report to them or the US advisors. The US advisors will never be privy to every action the FSF conducts nor will they be able to accurately observe each engagement with the enemy or the people.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> US Army, Marine Corps, Navy, Air Force, *Advising: Multi-Service Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures for Advising Foreign Forces*, (Langley AFB, VA: Air Land Sea Application Center, September 2009), p. 22.

<sup>18</sup> Center for Army Lessons Learned (CALL), *Combat Advisor Handbook*, No. 08-21 (Ft. Leavenworth, KS: CALL, April 2008), p. 74.

<sup>19</sup> Potter, *American Advisors*, p.68.

# What capabilities should any reasonably proficient ANSF units have?

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In general terms, what characteristics should any reasonably proficient Afghan army combat or police unit possess? As the United States withdraws from Afghanistan, the Afghan army and police are expected to take over responsibility for security. Specifically, this means that Afghan police and army units need to be able to keep insurgent activity within their operating area suppressed with minimal assistance from residual US forces. In Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta's words: "Our goal all along has been to help the Afghan National Security Forces take the lead for security, and we hope that as the final transitions are made in 2013, the Afghan forces will take the lead in combat operations with ISAF in support and fully combat capable through 2014."<sup>20</sup>

But how do we recognize an army or police unit that can take responsibility for security? This is a little harder to answer. Many lists of characteristics exist, epitomized by the CUAT itself. Yet if one steps back and takes a historical look, it is not difficult to find hard examples of what an independent and capable unit might look like. For Marines, a few examples should readily come to mind. Marines have long lauded the 3<sup>rd</sup> Brigade of the 1<sup>st</sup> Iraqi Division. It controlled its own battle-space west of Fallujah from 2006 to 2008, the first Iraqi unit in Al Anbar to do so, facing month after month of heavy fighting without breaking. When Prime Minister Nuri Kamal al-Maliki launched Operation Charge of the Knights in Basrah, the brigade promptly picked itself up and drove off south, asking its advisors if they would like to come along. The advisors had not known anything until trucks were already speeding off down the highway. The brigade then helped clear out Basrah, overcoming stiff resistance. Major combat operations, initiative, the will to stand and fight, and the logistical know-how to move 500 miles south all made the brigade stand out and give us an idea of what we are trying to be achieve today in Afghanistan.

Another familiar example is the Lashkar Gah police. In 2011, the police and National Directorate of Security (NDS) took over full responsibility for the security of Lashkar Gah, the capital of Helmand, Afghanistan. While still benefiting from coalition advisory teams, they ran all their own patrols, stood post, went after insurgents, and coordinated with each oth-

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<sup>20</sup> (Secretary of Defense Leon E. Panetta, " Trip Message: NATO-Munich," February 10, 2012, [http://www.defense.gov/home/features/2011/0711\\_message1/](http://www.defense.gov/home/features/2011/0711_message1/), accessed February 22, 2012)

er. Unable to conduct massed attacks, the Taliban hit them with a spate of suicide bombings over the summer. The British Ministry of Defense reported: “Insurgent attacks in Lashkar Gah since the formal transition to Afghan responsibility in July have largely been dealt with by the AUP. The most recent, an attempted suicide attack on the main bank, caused terrible damage at the AUP checkpoint but was unable to wreak havoc on its intended target.”<sup>21</sup> The police and NDS survived the bombings, including one directly against the provincial police headquarters, and intensified their attempts to detain insurgents. They had many successes doing so. At the end of the summer, the Taliban had made no inroads into Lashkar Gah. Independent decision-making, aggressive intelligence collection and targeting of insurgent leaders, and diligent conduct of daily operations, throughout the city and sometimes far into the field characterized the Lashkar Gah police and their successes.

In this section we seek to specify what characteristics a reasonably proficient Afghan unit should have, thereby identifying a set of criteria by which to judge the ANSF criteria and, by extension, the effectiveness of advisory teams. To do so, we have examined a select group of fourteen district police forces and five army kandaks. We collected information on these units from unclassified reports, interviews, and the Afghan media. We binned the units into three groups:

1. Those that have received *positive* reporting, meaning they have been associated with detention of insurgents, successful combat actions, and independent operations. These “strong” units have been able to operate with minimal coalition assistance, such as an advisory team.
2. Those that have received *neutral* reporting, meaning that they seem to be operating, with neither acclaim nor reports of wrongdoing. These “average” units still need support, often beyond what an advisory team alone can provide.
3. Those that have received *negative* reporting, meaning they have been defeated in the field, are known not to fight insurgents, or have confirmed cases of abuse of the population. These “weak” units have trouble operating even with robust coalition support.

We classified five of the units as strong, eight as average, and five as weak. The table below shows the capabilities we found in strong, average, versus weak units.

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<sup>21</sup><http://www.mod.uk/DefenceInternet/DefenceNews/MilitaryOperations/Afghanistan10YearsOn.htm>, accessed February 22, 2012.

Table 1. Characteristics of strong versus weak Afghan units<sup>22</sup>

<b>Characteristics</b>	<b>Strong unit (5 total)</b>	<b>Average unit (8 total)</b>	<b>Weak unit (5 total)</b>
Basic infantry skills	5 of 5	8 of 8	2 of 5
Advanced tactics	4 of 5	2 of 8	0 of 5
Counter-intimidation	4 of 5	1 of 8	0 of 5
Basic administration	5 of 5	4 of 8	2 of 5
Basic logistics	5 of 5	6 of 8	2 of 5
Supply long-distance moves	3 of 5	2 of 8	0 of 5
Intelligence collection	5 of 5	8 of 8	3 of 5
Action intelligence effectively	5 of 5	2 of 8	0 of 5
Presence IVO headquarters	5 of 5	8 of 8	5 of 5
Presence throughout district	4 of 5	5 of 8	1 of 5
Basic effort to help people	5 of 5	5 of 8	3 of 5
Few cases of mistreatment	1 of 5	1 of 8	0 of 5
Presence of a natural leader	5 of 5	4 of 8	1 of 5
Full tashkil	4 of 5	2 of 8	1 of 5
Outnumber local Taliban	5 of 5	3 of 8	0 of 5

## What does a strong unit look like?

Of the strong units, the police in Lashkar Gah operated the most independently, with coalition forces not conducting their own combat operations in the immediate vicinity of the Afghans or needing to significantly reinforce the Afghans. Still, all these units have been able, frequently if not always, to complete their duties within their battle-space with minimal coalition assistance. In a place like Helmand, they are the best yardstick that we have for what we should be shooting for. We found that these strong units generally:

- Demonstrated basic combat skills and could complete certain more advanced tasks such as rudimentary fire and movement or coordination with indirect fire. All strong police units were able to effectively counter an intimidation campaign.

<sup>22</sup> Data drawn from: field reporting of I MEF CNA field representatives; US State Department political officer reporting; Helmand PRT Daily Afghan Media Updates; HMEP surveys; Gerald Meyerle and Megan Katt, *The War in Southern Afghanistan, 2001–2008*, CNA research memorandum, CRM D0020874.A1, July 2009; Mark Moyer, “3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion, 5<sup>th</sup> Marine Regiment’s Way in Sangin,” (Institute for Study of War, July 2011); <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/02/21/world/asia/21afghan.html>; Gerald Meyerle, Megan Katt, and Jim Gavrillis, “Counterinsurgency on the Ground in Afghanistan,” CNA research memorandum, CRM D0022894.A2, July 2010.

- Administered themselves effectively, keeping most of their personnel present and armed at any time.
- Re-supplied themselves, though not all could maintain full stocks of supplies or re-supply themselves in a long-distance operation.
- Collected intelligence, acted on it, and captured insurgent leaders. This was common across good police units.
- Conducted operations across the entire populated area within their district, not simply in the vicinity of their headquarters.
- Worked to solve the local populations' problems and promote the rule of law, although many were found to have mistreated the population and only one had any ability to investigate crimes/insurgent activity. Reports of corruption pertained to every unit.
- Enjoyed the leadership of a capable commander who was a natural leader; every strong unit had a commander with natural leadership traits.
- Deployed sufficient manpower to outnumber the Taliban in their area, though many lacked a full *tashkil* (table of organization and equipment).

This list should be useful not only in informing advisors about what effective ANSF units look like and what they *do not* look like. They are not perfect units. A few of the things not all could do were:

- Demonstrate advanced combat skills,
- Run an operations center,
- Keep themselves well-supplied, with full stocks,
- Treat the population well in terms of having no reports of corruption or occasional abuse.

Nevertheless, the strong units were still effective at keeping down insurgent activity.



### **Vignette: A strong Afghan unit**

The best district police force in Helmand is known to be Commander Koka's police in Musa Qala. Commander Koka has been posted there since 2008 and has gained a reputation as a bulwark of stability. Other district police chiefs hold him in high regard. A few even try to compete with him. Koka runs a disciplined police force. His men are not scared of fighting, many have been wounded. Koka himself maintains a strong relationship with the people, many of whom consider him more acceptable than the district governor. During the much-disparaged rule of Mullah Salem, Musa Qala's erstwhile district governor from 2008 to 2010, Koka retained a reputation for being fair and just. Hamish Wilson, the British civilian advisor for Musa Qala reports:

"[Koka] has transformed a police force that was predatory and utterly corrupt. Now, his two hundred men are fiercely loyal and a competent force. 'I respect my men.' He tells me. 'I never steal from them. And I punish them if they do wrong. If there is fighting I will help. If they get hurt, I will provide medical treatment.' It's true – he may be the only Police Chief in Afghanistan with a special fund solely for helping his wounded."<sup>23</sup>

A PRT-funded, statistically significant, survey found that in July 2011, 78 percent of respondents believed that the Musa Qala police could operate on their own without the support of coalition forces—this is the highest rating anywhere in Helmand.<sup>24</sup> By Western standards, the Musa Qala police would be sub-par—their investigative skills are limited, low-level corruption persists, and they are overly dependent on one strongman. By Afghan standards, however, they both keep Musa Qala secure and treat the people well.<sup>25</sup>

## **What does a weak unit look like?**

In contrast, we found that weak units had few, if any, of the characteristics of a strong unit. Such units generally:

- Lacked basic combat skills; many personnel were unable to patrol or handle weapons properly.
- Administered themselves poorly; personnel were often missing and a large portion of the force had no weapons.
- Depended on coalition forces for re-supply.

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<sup>23</sup> Hamish Wilson, Musa Qala Blog, [www.stabilisationunit.gov.uk](http://www.stabilisationunit.gov.uk), 20 October 2010.

<sup>24</sup> HMEP Survey, Wave 4, (conducted July 2011), 1 October 2011, 4-17.

<sup>25</sup> Conversation with Musa Qala police, Bastion airfield, August 2009. Conversation with Helmand district police chief, Helmand, August 2009.

- Could collect some intelligence but could not act on it.
- Conducted operations solely in the vicinity of their headquarters.
- Had bad reputations among the population for violence and criminal behavior.
- Had a weak, incompetent or feckless commander unwilling or unable to take action or care properly for his men.
- Were outnumbered by the Taliban.

**Vignette: An Afghan unit that cannot operate well, even with assistance**

The police in Sangin do not share the reputation of their counterparts in Musa Qala. Operationally, they are not aggressive. The police do not go out and try to hunt down the Taliban. Additionally, the police chief is unwilling to expand out of the district center or to try to increase their numbers, which are understrength, even though the Afghan local police program presents ample opportunity for expansion. In terms of public confidence, the police chief's key officers have been accused of high levels of corruption. Among the coalition, confidence that the police can defend Sangin on their own is very low. A PRT-funded, statistically significant, survey found that in July 2011, only 50 percent of the residents of Sangin believed the police could operate on their own without the support of coalition forces: this is one of the lowest ratings in the province.<sup>26</sup>

## Findings in the doctrinal and scholarly literature

The literature and doctrine that we reviewed supported these findings. There is a near-consensus about which capabilities an ANSF unit should have. In the case of an ANA infantry unit, these include having sufficient fuel, food, ammunition and equipment to carry out operations; tactical skills, such as patrolling and fire and maneuver at a basic level; marksmanship; the ability to clean and maintain their weapons and vehicles; and some measure of professionalism, including limited corruption and the measured use of force. A U.S. army lieutenant colonel who advised the ANA in southern and eastern Afghanistan in 2007 described the *absence* of these skills in one unit he advised:

They have to have structured requirements to keep the weapons clean. They do need to go to the range once in a while. You hear all this business about the great Afghan marksmanship. I didn't see any of it...The bad guys who probably did more actual work on their marksmanship. I think we need to work on a lot more soldier task basic fire and maneuver things down at the

<sup>26</sup> Correspondence with Sangin stability advisor, January 2012. HMEP Survey, Wave 4, (conducted July 2011), 1 October 2011, 4-17.

platoon level. That will continue to be a major emphasis for a long time to come.<sup>27</sup>

Reasonably competent Afghan police units will share many of the characteristics of capable ANA units, including adequate ammunition, marksmanship, maintenance, and minimal corruption.<sup>28</sup> Both the police and army will show evidence that they can gather and act on intelligence and have administrative procedures and regulations in place. Capable AUP will also have two other interlinked attributes: presence among the population and public confidence.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Quoted in Michael G. Brooks (ed), *Eyewitness to War*, Vol. III, *US Army Advisors in Afghanistan* (Ft. Leavenworth, KS: Combat Studies Institute Press, 2009), p. 143.

<sup>28</sup> Catherine Norman, *What Do Afghans Want From the Police? Views from Helmand Province* (Alexandria, VA: CNA, 2012), p. 33.

<sup>29</sup> Other police-specific characteristics include “successful vehicle and personnel searches, proper weapons carriage, and performance of basic police functions around the precinct.” Marine Corps Center for Lessons Learned (MCCLL), *MCCLL Newsletter* 8, no. 2 (February 2012), p. 8. However, we consider these to be included under the six broader criteria described in this paper.

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# Which capabilities can and should US advisors be expected to enhance?

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This section of the report focuses on six of the eight characteristics of a strong Afghan unit that were covered above. These are the ones our analysis suggests that advisors should be able to enhance. (Since the advisory team has little control over the quality of unit leadership or the number of Taliban we have eliminated these as criteria.) The purpose of the section is twofold. First, we provide greater information about these characteristics. Second, we provide indicators that I MEF can use in order to discern whether advisory teams are improving the ANSF. The six characteristics are relatively measurable and ones upon which US advisors can and should have an appreciable influence. They are also the ones that we will use later in this study, when we identify the most effective ways to form, organize, and train advisory teams.

As discussed in the previous section, it sometimes can be difficult to assess what influence an advisory team is having over an Afghan unit. Under each of the criterion, we suggest ways to do so. In brief, we looked for indicators that were at the extremes of ANSF performance because that was generally where advisor influence shone through. For example, a unit may patrol for a variety of reasons—for example, strong leadership, strong training, or prior experience. But a unit that can assault an insurgent position under the cover of artillery or air strikes, must be working in coordination with a rather aggressive advisory team. This kind of extremely good performance showcases the good work of an advisory team. Conversely, a unit that never leaves its post probably has an advisory team that is not up to the job; even if the unit has no strong leadership, training, or experience, the advisory team should be spurring them on to perform. Such extremely poor performance begs why the advisory team is not fixing the problem. When all else fails, the advisory team should step in.

## 1. Basic infantry skills and attributes

By *basic* skills and attributes we mean the following: an ability to handle and use weapons; basic patrolling skills; standing post; and a willingness to listen to and obey officers and NCOs.<sup>30</sup> Among former advisors and throughout military doctrine and in other primary

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<sup>30</sup> Author's telephone interview with US Marine Corps major and advisor to ANA *kandak* (battalion) in northern Helmand Province (2011-12), January 30, 2012.

and secondary sources there is a consensus that building basic infantry skills and attributes should be at the heart of any advisory effort.<sup>31</sup> If an advisor is successful in instilling these basics, recalled one Marine major who served in El Salvador, “the advisor will have made great strides towards professionalizing the host nation’s army and helping it to defeat its adversary.”<sup>32</sup> According to a British lieutenant colonel who advised the police in Helmand province during 2009, he British army and the US Marines “*know* how to create a disciplined body of men.”<sup>33</sup>

A good ANSF unit will be able to go beyond the basics—it will stand and fight against superior numbers, locate IEDs, assault insurgent positions, plan and conduct its own operations independently, and have officers who inspire their men and win their obedience by example, rather than punishment. In the case of host-nation officers, advisors single out these last two as particularly important, namely, the ability to plan and conduct operations independently and evidence that they are caring for their men and moving beyond the “officers first” mentality that permeates the ANSF.<sup>34</sup> A good police unit will also be able to effectively counter an intimidation campaign. An advisory team should be looking at inculcating these more advanced skills as well as the basics.

## **Are advisors making a difference?**

A unit could have basic infantry skills without having good advisors. Strong training, capable leadership, previous fighting experience, or even exposure to previous advisors could endow any unit with basic infantry skills. Thus, assessing the skill of an advisory team can be difficult. A variety of indicators make very poor measures of advisory success; these include the number of patrols, attacks, or detentions. Any of these could be the result of various factors. That said, we have identified certain indicators that can be traced to advisory team effectiveness:

- *ANSF do not understand how to handle weapons* – Even in a poorly trained, poorly led, poorly resourced ANSF unit, the advisory team should be able to teach the soldiers or patrolmen how to handle their weapons.

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<sup>31</sup> See for example JCISFA, “ANP Training Study: Interviews with Police Mentor Team Leaders from MP Co, 2d MarDiv,” January 2010, pp 2-4.

<sup>32</sup> David L. Shelton, “Some Advice for the Prospective Advisor,” *Marine Corps Gazette* 75, no. 10 (October 1991) (on-line subscription required).

<sup>33</sup> Author’s interview, Shrewsbury, UK, February 6, 2010. Emphasis in original.

<sup>34</sup> Author’s telephone interview with Marine captain and former ANA advisor in Garmser district, Helmand province (2011), January 31, 2012.

- *ANSF unit rarely patrols or stands post* – A good advisory unit will force the Afghans to patrol and stand post, even if no other police officer does so.
- *ANSF unit post is overrun or is defeated in combat* – A good advisory unit will not let this happen. It will have its personnel dispersed and near the Afghans in order to call in fires against an insurgent attack, no matter how large. It will prevent the Afghans from placing themselves in overly exposed positions.
- *ANSF conducts offensive operations in coordination with fires* – Such an operation requires the presence of advisors and coordination with their Afghan counterparts. It is the mark of a good advisory team. It could not occur without one.

## 2. Accountability, pay, and administration

Many ANSF units lack the infrastructure, skills, and procedures necessary to operate in a reasonably proficient and capable way. By accountability, pay, and administration, we mean that an ANSF unit can account for all its personnel, vehicles, and weapons; ensure all personnel are paid; provide all personnel with appropriate leave; and have a low rate of unaccounted-for personnel.<sup>35</sup> The ability to perform basic recordkeeping such as morning reports, weapons inventories, and leave rosters are indicators of progress and signs of growing professionalization. A team should be confronting the arduous and frustrating tasks of ensuring that an ANSF commander is accountable and that he is making sure that his men are getting their pay and leaves arranged in a timely manner. According to US Army doctrine for security force assistance, paying the police sufficiently and promptly is particularly important, as their duties and contact with civilians often expose them to opportunities for corruption:

Payroll procedures and systems are also vitally important. They must be transparent and accountable, so FSF [foreign security force] members receive their full pay and entitlements. Centralized administration of compensation through secure, automated systems minimizes the risk for corruption and manipulation.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Promoting accountability has been a key part of many US advisory efforts. For a discussion of how accountability was encouraged in South Vietnam, see Edward P. Metzner, *More Than a Soldier's War: Pacification in Vietnam* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1995), p. 114; and Richard A. Hunt, *Pacification: The American Struggle for Vietnam's Hearts and Minds* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1995), p. 59.

<sup>36</sup> Headquarters, Department of the Army, *Security Force Assistance* (FM 3-07.1) (Washington, DC: Headquarters, Department of the Army, May 2009),

Advisors who served in Afghanistan highlighted the importance of ensuring that soldiers and policemen are paid regularly and are able to send remittances home to their families.<sup>37</sup> For example, a Marine major advising the 215th Corps helped establish a rudimentary Bank of Kabul branch at Camp Dwyer in southern Helmand that allowed soldiers to send wire transfers home.<sup>38</sup> Again, having administrative and payroll systems in place and operating correctly will not guarantee a unit's success, but without these structures success is likely to prove elusive.

### **Are advisors making a difference?**

A unit could have decent administration without a good advisory team. Capable leadership could impose strong administration upon a unit; low rates of unaccounted-for soldiers or patrolmen may be due to high morale rather than poor administrative diligence on the part of Afghan officers or Marine advisors. This reality can make assessing the skill of an advisory team quite difficult. That said, in terms of basic infantry skills, we have identified indicators that can be traced to advisory team effectiveness:

- *ANSF unit is unable to field enough men to do anything except post the police headquarters* – If this is occurring, the performance of the advisory team may be low. In such a dire situation, the advisory team would be expected to convince the police chief to find more men or to get his accounting in order to ensure that everyone who is on the books is present.
- *ANSF unit has no record of weapons or the majority of soldiers/patrolmen have no weapons* – A good advisory team would prevent this from happening. It is a painful task but a good team will force the police to count their weapons.
- *ANSF unit has no record of the location of each person within the unit* – Again, a good advisory team would prevent this from happening. Keeping track of personnel can be a monthly chore, but a good advisory team can pressure the police to ensure that it is done.

## **3. Logistics and maintenance**

Any army or police force that is unable to provision its personnel, provide ammunition, and maintain its vehicles and weapons will be unable to carry out its roles, missions, and functions. From Vietnam to El Salvador to Vietnam to Iraq, U.S. advisors have recognized the critical importance of building a host-nation's logistics and its ability to "manage, operate,

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<sup>37</sup> See for example JCISFA, "ANP Training Study," p. 2.

<sup>38</sup> Author's telephone interview, February 8, 2012.



and maintain military assets.”<sup>39</sup> A basic capability for any unit is that it can resupply itself with ammunition; ensure its forces are fed and have fuel; keep enough weapons working so that units cannot be overrun by insurgents; and keep enough vehicles running to conduct basic patrolling. A good unit will: have full stocks of ammunition at all posts, have reserves of fuel, evacuate its casualties to some level of medical attention, have all weapons working and backup stocks for emergency use, and keep the vast majority of its vehicles running. A good advisory team will try to make things happen, through monitoring the Afghans every day, prodding them when something is not arriving, and occasionally calling advisors at higher headquarters when a back-up is due to issues there rather than with their own Afghan unit. The Marine captain who advised the ANA in Garmser during 2011 observed that the Afghans do have a logistics system in place—but it is cumbersome and opaque and many Afghan soldiers don’t understand it. “It’s essential to work through their system,” he said: “We would help them understand how it works and we would facilitate supply requests by tracking them at each stage and pushing the Afghans where there were delays.”<sup>40</sup>

## Are advisors making a difference?

Logistics is an area in which advisors can make a clear difference. Indeed it is often easier to see the effect that advisors make here than in other areas. The fact of the matter is that Afghan soldiers and police tend to disregard logistics. Even good commanders are known to have broken down vehicles and shallow stocks of ammunition. Consequently, effective logistics is often due to advisory efforts. A few indicators are:

- *ANSF unit is critically low on ammunition, weapons, or fuel* – A good advisory team will not allow this to happen. An advisor should have pressured the police chief to arrange with his higher headquarters the arrival of supplies. Advisors can also call their own counterparts at higher headquarters to ensure something happens.
- *Full stocks of ammunition at every post* – Ammunition is often in short supply. If it is properly distributed and plentiful, that suggests hard work on the part of an advisory team.

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<sup>39</sup> Lowell E. Howard, Jr., *Security Force Assistance Logistics: The Key to Self-Reliance?*(Ft. Leavenworth, KS: School of Advanced Military Studies United States Army Command and General Staff College, 2911), p. 12.

<sup>40</sup> Author’s telephone interview, January 31, 2012. For more on the importance of US advisors understanding Afghan systems, see Quinton Burris, “ANA’s 201st Corps Hosts ANSF Logistics Conference, NATO Training Mission Afghanistan (NMT-A),” May 13, 2011, <http://ntm-a.com/wordpress2/archives/5443> (accessed February 21, 2012).

- *Fully maintained trucks with good fuel supplies* – Afghans tend to get new equipment rather than repair old equipment. High levels of readiness signal the good work of an advisory team.
- *Police or ANA medics that are practiced and up-to-date in their training and have all their necessary supplies* – ANSF are not good at medical care. Some have personnel have taken courses, but if a unit has qualified medics ready to work, it signals that the advisory team has been training them.

## 4. Intelligence

A population that trusts the security forces is more likely to share key information about the adversary—information that in the hyper-localized environment of counterinsurgency might otherwise be unobtainable.<sup>41</sup> A unit with a basic intelligence capability would be able to: collect intelligence from the people and pass intelligence to the NDS or other Afghan agencies for action. A unit with a good intelligence capability is able to: collect intelligence from a robust network of sources, independently action that intelligence, and detain insurgent leaders.<sup>42</sup> The amount of “actionable” intelligence provided through tip lines and other means is a reasonable criterion for assessing the army and police performance and the trajectory of the counterinsurgency campaign more generally.<sup>43</sup> According to US Army doctrine, an advisor “should assist the counterpart in developing a local intelligence collection program, training intelligence personnel in their respective specialties, and utilizing trained intelligence personnel properly.”<sup>44</sup> A senior Marine NCO who served on a police mentoring team in Nowzad district in 2009 said that he pushed the AUP “to start to collect names and intel on local bad guys.”<sup>45</sup>

In the case of intelligence, the “straight line problem” is bound to be acute: it will be difficult in many circumstances to determine whether an advisor is directly responsible for pro-

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<sup>41</sup> Of course, advisors working to develop ANSF intelligence capabilities must always remain alert to the fact that “people often provide inaccurate and conflicting information to counterinsurgents.” *FM 3-24*, p. 120.

<sup>42</sup> In addition, “police efforts based on systematic surveillance and record keeping, and a reasonable level of security for the civilian population” can provide a substantial flow of information to counterinsurgents. Anthony James Joes, *Resisting Rebellion: The History and Politics of Counterinsurgency* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2004), p. 155.

<sup>43</sup> Gregory A. Daddis, *No Sure Victory: Measuring US Army Effectiveness and Progress in the Vietnam War* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), p. 234.

<sup>44</sup> *FM 3-07.1*, p. 9-4.

<sup>45</sup> Author’s interview, Camp Lejeune, NC, February 17, 2010.

gress. But given its importance, improving ANSF intelligence capabilities, particularly the collection and use of human intelligence (HUMINT), must be a major priority for any advisor.

## Are advisors making a difference?

Unlike logistics, it can be extremely hard to tell when advisors are making a difference in intelligence. Intelligence collection depends greatly on the connections of the police, the police chief in particular. No matter how good the advisor, if the police chief is not taking action, little can be done. Some indicators are poor measures of advisory success. Those include: number of ANSF intelligence reports and number of insurgents detained by ANSF. Either could be the result of multiple factors. That said, we have identified indicators that can be traced to advisory team's level of effectiveness:

- *Coalition raids conducted on the basis of ANSF intelligence* – A raid depends on effective coordination between the advisor and the ANSF, showing that efforts to advise the police have been effective. Such events are the mark of a good advisory team.
- *Informant networks* – The absence of human sources that provide the security forces with information about insurgent supporters, improvised explosive devices (IEDs) and serious crime indicates that an advisory team has failed to help its Afghan counterparts develop a critical capability.
- *Insurgent infiltration of ANSF* – Failure to establish the integrity and bona fides of personnel profoundly jeopardizes an ANSF unit's prospect for success.<sup>46</sup> Evidence of widespread subversion suggests shortfalls in an advisory team's approach to countering infiltration.

## 5. Police presence

Like the army, the Afghan police require basic skills and attributes such as good order and discipline (including showing up to work and carrying out their duties); handle weapons properly; carry out basic patrolling; and maintain vehicles and weapons. However, as mentioned in an earlier section, the AUP are expected to transition to a more "normal" form of

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<sup>46</sup> JCISFA, "Afghan National Army (ANA) Mentor Guide," March 2011, p. 3-7; and JCISFA, "ANP Training Study," p. 3. For insurgents, the police "are the first counterinsurgent organization that has to be infiltrated and neutralized." David Galula, *Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice* (New York and London: Frederick A. Praeger, Publisher, 1964), p. 31.

policing that emphasizes gaining the support of local populations “by serving and protecting it in daily life.”<sup>47</sup> Central to this requirement is maintaining a routine police presence. Former advisors to the AUP stressed the importance of getting the police out of their stations every day and into public spaces such as bazaars. According to one analyst, police patrols and other forms of engagement can contribute to “building better relationships with the community and thereby gaining a better understanding of what is occurring in the area.” In this way, the police can “provide better security to the community.”<sup>48</sup>

At the very minimum, a unit ought to be manning posts outside its headquarters and patrolling daily. A good unit should be manning posts and running patrols throughout populated areas. If the police do not have posts in a given populated area, advisors should be pressing them to set them up. Police advisors at the provincial level highlighted the need to get their counterparts out of the office and down into their districts on a regular basis. A Marine colonel who advised Helmand’s provincial police chief recalled, “During our daily meetings I’d push him to identify which districts he should be visiting. I’d facilitate those trips and make sure there was a shura on each visit to find out what was happening at the district level.”<sup>49</sup>

## **Are advisors making a difference?**

A police unit could have wide presence without having good advisors. Certain police chiefs naturally push their men out into the field. As with intelligence, this can make assessing the skill of an advisory team quite difficult. That said, we have identified indicators that can be traced to advisory team effectiveness:

- *The advisory team is spread out living with the ANSF in their posts* – This may not indicate that advisors are causing presence, but it does show that their methods are sound.
- *The police chief is not regularly seen at his lower posts* – As noted by the colonel quoted immediately above, advisors have a duty to get the police chiefs out and ensure that they are seeing their men. By doing so, they ensure that the police at those posts are doing their job. If this is not occurring, the advisory team is not doing everything that it should be.

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<sup>47</sup> David H. Bayley and Robert M. Perito, *The Police in War: Fighting Insurgency, Terrorism, and Violent Crime* (Boulder and London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2010), p. 76.

<sup>48</sup> Norman, *What Do Afghans Want From the Police?* p. 26.

<sup>49</sup> Author’s telephone interview, January 27, 2012.

- *Failure to patrol* – As discussed earlier, patrolling in important public spaces such as bazaars is a critical form of police presence. Without it, the police cannot “see” and identify potential sources of violence and instability, and cannot be “seen” by law-abiding citizens or illicit actors. The failure to patrol suggests that advisory teams are not exercising sufficient influence over AUP units.

## 6. Public confidence

Public confidence in the police is the bedrock of effective law enforcement.<sup>50</sup> How do we know if the police enjoy this trust? Public opinion surveys are one option, but they are problematical, particularly in conflict zones such as Afghanistan.<sup>51</sup> And, as we discussed earlier, police outputs are difficult to measure. Arrests and crime statistics are problematic as measures of police performance. Evidence of regular police patrolling and presence, while important, does not provide the whole picture. At a minimum, the people must feel comfortable in coming to the police to report a crime or a problem. Ideally, a positive feedback loop develops: As the local citizens come to trust the police, they provide increasing amounts of information or particularly useful information. Acting on this information, the police can identify and root out security threats. Growing confidence in the police leads the public to supply further information.

One potential way to gauge confidence levels is the public’s interaction with the police. Specifically, is the local population seeking out the police to report suspicious or criminal behavior, mediate disputes, and respond to emergencies? This is related to presence—patrolling, if done properly, will increase the chances for community-police communication. According to one Law Enforcement Professional (LEP) who has served in a number of conflict zones, confidence could also be assessed at the station level by observing how many people come in to report crimes over a given period of time<sup>52</sup>

### Are advisors making a difference?

If it is difficult to measure public confidence in the police, it is even more difficult to determine how advisors help create confidence. That said, we have identified indicators that can be traced to advisory team effectiveness:

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<sup>50</sup> See for example A. Heather Coyne, “Getting to Community Policing in Afghanistan,” [http://www.peacefare.net/?page\\_id=1045](http://www.peacefare.net/?page_id=1045) (accessed February 18, 2012).

<sup>51</sup> Martine van Bijlert, “Hope Has Returned to Afghanistan, or So They Say,” *Afghan Analysts Network*, December 1, 2010, <http://aan-afghanistan.com/index.asp?id=564> (accessed February 15, 2012.)

<sup>52</sup> Author’s telephone interview with I MEF LEP, January 27, 2012.

- *No people coming to the police headquarters or posts to report problems or otherwise interact with the police* – In extreme situations, such as this, police advisors could be forcing the police to hold shuras with the people.
- *Widespread physical abuse of population, particularly in public locations* – A good advisory team should be spending enough time with the police to make this impossible. By sticking close to them, the advisory team makes abuse more difficult.
- *Widespread predation* – Similarly, regular and close contact between the advisors and the AUP should help restrain temptations by the police to “shake down” and otherwise steal from community members.
- *Widespread unauthorized detainee releases* – A good advisory team should be monitoring the jail sufficiently to prevent this. A guard at the jail door may not stop all releases but will make them less likely to be widespread.

## What makes a good advisor?

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In addition to establishing a set of criteria for assessing advisor teams, the first phase of our research generated other findings that will be relevant in the project's next phase. Specifically, we have identified a preliminary group of professional and personnel attributes that are essential to effective advising. Finding the right personnel for an advisory team is critically important, but it is considerably more challenging than putting in place an effective advisor training program.<sup>53</sup> Any capable advisor will of course possess solid tactical and technical skills. But whether advising the police or the army, professional proficiency is not sufficient. Personal qualities such as patience and maturity are widely understood to be essential characteristics of a successful advisor. In the judgment of two former advisors to the Iraqi army, some highly regarded Marines proved to be less-effective advisors "because they lacked the patience to work within a culture that places little emphasis on qualities that we regard as being indispensable to military life."<sup>54</sup> As one Marine major who advised the ANA observed, you've got to be patient with the Afghans. No matter how upset you are, you can't let it boil over. If you are mature and professional, you will be able to advise professionally. These are qualities that come with maturity.<sup>55</sup>

There is also a consensus that building rapport with one's counterpart is critical to success. Rapport, defined as a relationship based on mutual understanding, respect, and trust, is critical if an advisor is to have any real and lasting influence. Building this rapport, according to one U.S. Army publication, requires an advisor to know and understand his counterpart "at a deeper, more personal level than American soldiers are sometimes used to in a short time."<sup>56</sup> "You've got to really learn about him," the Marine advisor to the ANA observed, "what tribe they're from, whether they are ex-Communist or ex-mujahideen." An inability to establish rapport almost certainly eliminates any prospects for influence. A US

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<sup>53</sup> Christopher E. Phelps, Michelle Ramsden Zbylut, and Jason Brunner, "Selecting and Training US Advisors," *Marine Corps Gazette* 93, no. 3 (March 2009) (on-line subscription required).

<sup>54</sup> Andrew R. Milburn and Mark C. Lombard, "Marine Foreign Military Advisors: The Road Ahead," in Robert D. Ramsey, III, *Advice for Advisors: Suggestions and Observations from Lawrence to the Present* (Ft. Leavenworth, KS: Combat Studies Institute Press, 2006), p. 112.

<sup>55</sup> Author's telephone interview, January 30, 2012.

<sup>56</sup> "Rapport Primer: Building Influence and Effective Relationships in Security Force Assistance Operations," JCISFA, n.d., p. 2.

Army lieutenant who advised a Vietnamese battalion commander recalled their dysfunctional relationship, taking full responsibility for its shortcomings:

I had little military and no combat experience; he had twenty-five years of both. He lost face with his fellow officers because of my lower rank and younger age. Yet he was expected to listen to and occasionally take my advice....Often he bridled at my suggestions....He was patient; but when he did not want to hear any more, he would stop talking to me. When he stopped talking to me, the other officers stopped.<sup>57</sup>

Finally, our research has identified another form of experience that practitioners have widely identified as being particularly important to look for in the advisor selection process. In terms of personal strengths, effective advising is based on the ability to establish rapport, to persuade, and ultimately, to influence. Advisors should view themselves as salesmen with something uniquely important and worthwhile to sell.<sup>58</sup> Given this requirement, Marines with recruiting experience may be ideal candidates for positions on advisor teams.

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<sup>57</sup> Dockery, *Lost in Translation*, pp. 37-38.

<sup>58</sup> Ramsay, *Advising Indigenous Forces*, p. 95.



## Conclusion

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As a first step in strengthening I MEF's efforts to man, organize, and train advisory units headed for Afghanistan, this report has described six criteria for assessing the ANSF units being advised. Specifically, we have developed metrics in six areas in which the actions of advisors appeared to have had a significant impact on Afghan army and police performance: 1) basic infantry skills; 2) accountability, pay and administration; 3) logistics and maintenance; 4) intelligence; 5) police presence; and 6) public confidence.

These criteria will be the cornerstone of the second phase of CNA's research. During that phase of the project, comparative case studies of ANSF units and their advisors will help identify particularly useful approaches with respect to advisor unit size, composition, length of deployment, training and other factors. Ultimately, CNA will develop insights that will help I MEF compose, train, and organize advisor teams that have the greatest chance of success in advising the ANA and ANP.

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