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14. ABSTRACT

Each society has a specific system of values that constitute the core element of its distinctive culture. Every institution within any society must fit in with the particular society's values in order to be effective and tenable. As a result, certain Western institutions and principles cannot be applied to cultures with very different core values. Afghan society's core values result in a distinctive culture characterized by a high degree of authoritarianism and traditionalism, a large number of diverse collectivities within, and a very low literacy level.

The NATO Training Mission in Afghanistan approached the creation of the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) from an strictly Western point of view, according to what coalition officers thought Afghans needed rather than what Afghans were able to handle. The resulting capability gaps within ANSF are a consequence of this unrealistic end state, which results from a lack of a cultural approach during the problem framing phase at the strategic level. Understanding the critical effects of Afghan cultural singularities could have helped acknowledge the convenience of a less complex and sophisticated ANSF, more suitable to the Afghan mindset and resources, and less dependent on external support and sustainment.

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The Cultural Dimension of Building a Military:
Lessons Learned from Afghanistan's Training Mission

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OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF MILITARY STUDIES

AUTHOR:
Major Miguel Hernández (Spanish Marine Corps)

AY 14-15

Mentor and Oral Defense Committee Member: Paul D. Gelpi, Ph.D. Professor of Military
History.
Approved: _____
Date: 19 March 2015

Oral Defense Committee Member: Eric Y. Shibuya, Ph.D. Associate Professor of Strategic
Studies.
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Executive Summary

Title: The Cultural Dimension of Building a Military: Lessons Learned from Afghanistan's Training Mission

Author: Major Miguel Hernández, Spanish Marine Corps.

Thesis: Culture must constitute the cornerstone that drives the ends, ways, and means in any Security Force Assistance operation. Such an approach should be based on a deep understanding of key aspects of culture, such as the degree of traditionalism and authoritarianism, the societal structure, and the literacy level. Otherwise, the outcome is likely to result in unstable Defense and Security Organizations which, without the sustained support of the Coalition partners, will have high probabilities of collapse and failure.

Discussion: Each society has a specific system of values that constitute the core element of its distinctive culture. Every institution within any society must fit in with the particular society's values in order to be effective and tenable. As a result, certain Western institutions and principles cannot be applied to cultures with very different core values. Afghan society's core values result in a distinctive culture characterized by a high degree of authoritarianism and traditionalism, a large number of diverse collectivities within, and a very low literacy level.

The force structure of the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) that has been built shows the dominant U.S. preference for mass and technology. Coalition leaders, influenced by their Western ethnocentrism, designed the ANSF according to what they sincerely thought Afghans needed rather than what Afghans were actually able to handle. As a result, most of the capability gaps identified in the ANSF are a consequence of the incompatibility of a technological and complex organization with the Afghan cultural singularities.

The high degree of authoritarianism in Afghan culture results in a higher tendency towards corruption, or in a different concept of leadership as it is understood in Western societies, while its deep traditionalism draws the rejection of any Western influence and of too high technological assets. Afghan's high collectivism results in a weak national identity that suggests a balanced ethnic distribution throughout the ANSF, as well as in a need to make compatible the demands of the military service with the familiar and tribal duties. Lastly, a common and extended problem is the lack of technical and skilled personnel needed to operate and sustain much of the equipment, which ends in its misuse or loss, as well as to manage the complex bureaucratic and logistic systems.

Understanding the critical effects of these cultural aspects could have helped acknowledge the convenience of a less complex and sophisticated ANSF, more suitable to the Afghan mindset and resources, and therefore less dependent on external support and sustainment.

Conclusion: The existing capability gaps within ANSF are a consequence of an unrealistic end state resulting from an incomplete approach during the problem framing phase at the strategic level that leaves out the cultural singularities of the Afghan society. When building the local security forces of a foreign nation it is paramount to consider and analyze these singularities in order to make sure that the organization and means provided fit with the local mindset.

DISCLAIMER

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Preface

The idea of carrying out this research project came first to my mind after my experiencing of the military-building efforts performed by the International Community during my deployment as a member of the Force Integration Branch (CJ7/A7) of the NATO Training Mission in Afghanistan between December 2010 and June 2011. While being involved with the process of fielding the Afghan Units, one of the things that first struck me was the complexity of their new organization as well as the quantity and modernity of the equipment they were being provided with; it was not very different from those of the Western nations. So it soon started to take shape in my mind that perhaps the coalition had designed a too complex organization with too highly sophisticated equipment. To make things worse, the Afghan Units were to be fielded in a very short period of time and with human resources that came from a largely illiterate population. As an additional challenge, many of the problems that the NTM-A members faced when trying to comply with the fielding schedule were that their Afghan counterparts were not following the process because they just didn't understand it. The problems were not posed only by translation or literacy issues, but also, and probably mainly, because we were building a Western type institution within a society that had nothing to do with Western culture.

The "Western-led" international community has so far approached the creation of local security forces in post-conflict areas without considering the cultural singularities of the local societies and, what is more important, their cultural differences with the Western mindset. The intent of this essay is to demonstrate the importance of the role that the local culture plays in every military-building endeavor and how, without this perspective, the outcomes of these activities are ineffective and have high probabilities of failure. It is indeed revealing that very few of the sources I have found during my

research do mention, though very slightly, the implications of the Afghan culture on the training mission beyond the low literacy level. Conversely, the bulk of the existing literature focuses on other existing flaws such as inter-agency miscoordination, a lack of supervision over Afghan performance, or a lack of training and mentoring teams, which suggests that perhaps the United States and the International Community still haven't learned the true lesson of this recent experience.

Interestingly, the core idea that this essay aims to emphasize was already reflected in the former U.S. Army Field Manual FM 3-24 (MCWP 3-33.5), dated on December 2006, in a vignette that reads as follows:

> *"Building a Military: Sustainment Failure. By 1969, pressure was on for U.S. forces in Vietnam to turn the war over to the host nation in a process now known as Vietnamization. While assisting South Vietnamese military forces, the United States armed and equipped them with modern small arms, communications, and transportation equipment... In short, the American way of war was not indigenously sustainable and was incompatible with the Vietnamese material culture and economic capabilities. South Vietnam's predominately agrarian-based economy could not sustain the high-technology equipment and computer-based systems established by U.S. forces and contractors. Consequently, the South Vietnamese military transformation was artificial and superficial... After U.S. forces left and most U.S. support ended, the logistic shortcomings of the supposedly modern South Vietnamese military contributed to its rapid disintegration when the North Vietnamese advanced in 1975."*[1]

In words of U.S. Army Major Robert Roughsedge, with whom I had the honor of serving in Afghanistan, the astonishing parallelism between the Vietnamese and the Afghan experiences should make us think that this lesson should be unfortunately labeled as "lesson ignored" rather than "lesson learned." Perhaps along this line, the most recent version of this Field Manual, dated May 2014, does not include this vignette any more. It does make, however, a timid mention of the cultural aspect discussed in this essay when it establishes that "To the extent possible, host-nation

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[1] Headquarters Department of the Army, *Counterinsurgency*, FM 3-24/MCWP 3-33.5 (Washington, DC: Department of the Army, December 15, 2006), 8-10.

forces are built following host-nation doctrine or otherwise following the host nation's traditional organization and approach."[2] The Spanish philosopher George Santayana said that "those who do not remember the past are condemned to repeat it".[3] Hopefully, for the next time this essay will help to prevent decision makers from committing the same errors.

Although this essay is related mainly to the efforts of the NATO Training Mission in Afghanistan in building the Afghan National Army, its findings and conclusions apply also not only to the Afghan National Police, since the aims and building processes have been alike for both security forces, but also to any military building endeavor to be carried out in the future, for there always will be cultural differences that will impact decisively in the outcomes of such activities.

I want to thank Dr. Paul D. Gelpi, from the department of War Studies of the Marine Corps University (MCU), for his time and helpful advice, as well as Dr. Eric Y. Shibuya, from the department of Security Studies, for his comments and feedback. I would also like to expand my gratitude to the willing personnel of the MCU Leadership and Communication Skills Center for their untiring and valuable aid. Special thanks must go to my friend Bob Roughsedge, who has provided me a lot of insightful approaches and ideas that have helped me improve this paper. Finally, I dedicate this work to my wife, María, and to my children Miguel, David, Blanca, and Ana, for their love and patience.

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[2] Headquarters Department of the Army, *Insurgencies and Counterinsurgencies*, FM 3-24/MCWP 3-33.5 (Washington, DC: Department of the Army, June 2, 2014), 11-3.
[3] George Santayana, *The life of Reason* volume 1, *Reason in Common Sense* (New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1905): 284

INTRODUCTION

Since the end of World War II, the United States has engaged in security cooperation and development activities worldwide. Current US military doctrine designates these endeavors as Security Force Assistance activities, oriented to "support and augment the development of the capacity and capability of foreign security forces" within the framework of a wider Foreign Internal Defense effort.[1] The scope of these activities ranges from low-scale training and partnering activities with developing countries to complex endeavors aimed to completely rebuild the local security forces in post-conflict scenarios. All of these missions are influenced by the singularities of each Host Nation, which range from the post-World War II occupations of Germany and Japan to the counterinsurgency efforts of Iraq and Afghanistan. The case of Afghanistan is paradigmatic not only because of its topicality but also because of its intricate nature derived from the convergence of challenging factors: a resilient insurgency, the collapse of national institutions, and the cultural singularities of Afghan society. Due to the absence or ineffectiveness of the most fundamental institutions (to start, the lack of a regular and national Army with a formal military structure) and to the lack of widespread literacy, the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) had in reality to be built from the very beginning.[2]

Since the first battalion of the Afghan National Army (ANA) started its training in May 2002, the United States (and as of 2009, NATO) has carried out a huge military and economic effort in building the ANSF. Nevertheless, even after all these efforts, the latest reports about the performance of the ANSF still recognize several capability gaps that may prevent them from accomplishing their mission and put at risk their sustainability.[3] There is a lot of literature that points out several factors that may have contributed to these not so ideal results in the development of the ANSF, such as the

lack of interagency coordination from the Coalition side, the destabilization produced by the insurgency (and even by some of the neighboring countries), and the low literacy level within the Afghan society. However, very few studies address as a possible error the approach with which the International Community, and mainly the Western nations, have faced this endeavor. Indeed, the United States and other Western nations that have led the development of the ANSF have used Western armies as a model without taking into account the fact that those models may not be effective in such a different cultural framework.[4] A close look at the development and performance of the ANSF during the build-up process shows how Afghans are struggling with an organization that does not quite fit with their cultural mindset, which suggests that the challenges for fielding the Afghan forces do not derive from a lack of resources or commitment but from a wrong approach in framing the problem and defining the desired end state. The key lesson learned from the recent experience of Afghanistan's Training Mission is that culture must constitute the cornerstone that drives the ends, ways, and means in any Security Force Assistance operation. This approach should be based on a deep understanding of key cultural aspects such as the degree of traditionalism and authoritarianism, the societal structure, and the literacy level. Otherwise, the outcome is likely to result in unstable Defense and Security Organizations that, without the sustained support of the Coalition partners, will have high probabilities of collapse and failure.

Understanding the cultural singularities of the Afghan society is paramount to reliably depicting the scenario where the United States and NATO have conducted their military-building effort. With that in mind, a review of the performance and achievements obtained when building the ANSF will facilitate connecting the results with the cultural framework, identifying the main cultural features behind those results. Lastly, a deep analysis of these cultural features and their direct impact on the

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effectiveness of the ANSF will provide some hints to be applied in future endeavors of the same kind in order to mitigate the cultural challenges.

UNDERSTANDING CULTURAL DIFFERENCES AMONG SOCIETIES

Despite increasing globalization and interdependence among nations, there are still different systems of values within the different societies that constitute the core element of each distinctive culture.[5] Every society's institutions (from family to the political system) are developed by its own culture or societal norms, which shape and influence their structure and functioning. In close societies this link is so deep that, if the institutions are changed through external influence, the societal values that led to their establishment will continue molding them until they are slowly molded back again to their distinctive culture.[6] Hence, the only way of effectively influencing the institutions of a given society is to first influence its system of values. The system of values of any particular society has its origins in and is continuously shaped by specific environmental or ecological factors, some of which are more likely to be influenced than others (i.e., it is much easier to influence the economy, technology, or hygiene of a given society than other aspects such as its history, demography, or geographical environment). Therefore, in order to perform lasting changes in a society's institutions, the main effort must be oriented to those environmental or ecological factors that can be altered.[7] Understanding this in nation-building is critical; if the international community aims to rebuild (or to deeply re-model) institutions such as the Local Security Forces or the government's ministries, the first thing it needs to do is to determine if those changes do or do not fit in the local culture. If they do not, those changes could be maintained in the long term only after also shaping the society's system of values through related ecological factors, usually economy and technology, so that they can assimilate the intended institutional changes. In the meantime, the international

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community should decide between implementing less ambitious changes or implementing the intended changes but maintaining a long term advisory structure to support the local officials until the changes are deeply rooted in the institutions.

One of the reasons why there is a systematic lack of this approach is probably an embedded ethnocentrism in Western society. Ethnocentrism is a tendency to believe that one's own group or society is better than the others, and usually implies framing a problem exclusively from one's own cultural point of view, creating a cultural bias.[8] The key to avoiding ethnocentrism is to comprehend the cultural differences among societies. In order to do so, social psychologist Geert Hofstede employs five cultural dimensions: Power Distance, Uncertainty Avoidance, Individualism, Masculinity, and Long Term Orientation. The Power Distance Index (PDI) relates to the degree of inequality in power between individuals or groups that interact within a society and which is accepted by them as a social standard; people in cultures with a high PDI are more likely to accept authoritarian values and leaders while in other cultures with a lower PDI the society is more egalitarian.[9] The Uncertainty Avoidance Index (UAI) refers to the extent to which the members of a culture feel threatened by unknown situations; individuals in societies with high UAI are more reluctant to change or experience new situations, which is reflected in a major degree of alienation toward the government and the dominance of a more traditional and intransigent religion.[10] People from individualistic cultures have a stronger self-concept, live in nuclear families, and tend to be more universalist, while people from collectivistic cultures feel a stronger identification with the social groups, aggregating into larger collectivities such us extended families or tribal units. Individualism increases in urban-industrial societies and with economic development, while in agricultural societies the degree of collectivism is much higher, resulting in intergroup conflicts and in a political system

dominated by interest groups.[11] Every society can also be categorized as masculine or feminine according to the dominant gender role (whether male assertiveness or female nurturance); masculine cultures usually have a higher rate of illiteracy, are less tolerant of immigrants, and have a deep-rooted religious tradition.[12] Lastly, another difference among cultures resides in the expectation of being rewarded in the short or in the long term; people in short term orientation societies enjoy leisure and focus on the present while long term orientation societies exercise thrift and look to the future.[13] The aforementioned ecological factors mold the core values of a society through different combinations of these dimensions, resulting in completely different cultures.

It is due to these differences that certain Western political axioms cannot be implemented in many non-Western countries, such as the idea that the rest of the world can be democratized by directly implementing Western-oriented institutions and policies, or the belief that free market capitalism and the concepts of human rights can be universal.[14] Thus, when the wealthy countries approach any development assistance to poor countries from ethnocentric perspectives -which lead them to build similar institutions, establish similar priorities, or implement similar methods to those applied in the donor country- the result is likely to be highly ineffective in those societies with very different cultural values, for the real driving force that leads to development is in the mindset of the local society, not in the goods received from the donors. So according to cultural differences there may be different ways towards effective development. China is a paradigmatic example of a nation that has achieved great economic growth in a non-Western mindset society through the implementation of a pragmatic and non-Western economic model.[15] Perhaps a donor country may see the way in which the assisted nation allocates the resources it is providing as inappropriate, ineffective, or even immoral,[16] but enforcing Western values or models is likely to prove even less

effective due to the rejection not from the target country, but from the society's own core system of values. This aspect, which will be stronger in high UAI and PDI societies, is reflected in certain reactions to external influence like that of an Afghan newspaper which stated on April 2013 that the West was trying to influence Afghan cultural structure in order to undermine Islamic beliefs.[17]

The aforementioned concepts in regards to the cultural differences among nations and societies provide a solid reference to understand the singularities of Afghan culture.

MAIN FEATURES OF AFGHAN CULTURE

Afghan culture promotes a very high PDI between leading and subordinate subjects, influencing deeply the societal structure. From childhood, Afghans are exposed to a system where fathers and teachers have absolute power in both the family and school. This eventually translates also to the working environment, where the subordinates do value close supervision positively. As a result, Afghans will not respect a weak ruler, father, or boss.[18] The decision making process in Afghanistan is very autocratic and/or consultative instead of the democratic and more persuasive decision making in Western culture.[19] Consultations are carried out when the issues affect the community, usually through councils like *shuras* or *jirgas,* which are indeed a common feature of tribal societies. Conversely, in the workplace or in organizations somewhat hierarchical it is more common for leaders and bosses to implement an autocratic style of management.[20] Afghan subordinates will follow rules only if the person in charge is authoritarian and has power (connections) enough to enforce them. It is not the rule that matters for them, but the person who is to enforce them.[21]

Afghanistan has also a high UAI, which has two direct consequences: firstly, Afghans will usually trust older people in their judgment while distrusting the younger people; secondly, Afghan citizens are not likely to protest decisions, feeling powerless to change the established dynamics in the workplace and society.[22] The ways in which societies cope with uncertainty are law, technology, and religion. However, since in Afghanistan there is neither much technology nor rule of law, Afghans rely deeply on Religion: nothing happens without the will of God (hence their traditional *Insha'Allah* -God willing-), making them somewhat resigned and even more important, exonerating them when things go bad.[23]

Another feature of Afghan culture is the high degree of collectivism in its society that deeply affects the relations among Afghans, resulting in such stronger ties and loyalties at the local level that hamper the very concept of Afghanistan as a nation. As opposed to the standard Western nuclear families, Afghan extended families[24] are very endogamous and constitute the center of Afghan life, setting up the basis for most social and economic transactions. Immediately above the families, the tribe constitutes the next level of collectivity and provides the first level for local governance.[25] In an environment characterized by the absence of the rule of law (due to the combination of high PDI and high collectivism), the average people can only rely on their families and other collectivities within their own society for protection. These collectivities are not only family or ethnic related, but also sectarian (Sunni vs Shi'a), regional, and ideological (Islamists vs Secularists).[26] As a result of such a variety of divergent collectivities, there has never been any real national identity embedded in the average Afghan mindset, where Kabul represented more a key to power than the interests of the whole country.[27] Nationalism in Afghanistan was a colonially-constructed idea, spread during the first decades of the 20th century by the central government and by a few

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Kabul elites, but that did not permeate through the rest of Afghan society.[28] The Musahiban dynasty that ruled afterwards until 1978 achieved a certain level of stability because of a tacit agreement by which there was a share of power between the central and the local governments, which did not help to build a national identity away from Kabul. Furthermore, the local governments were at the end the ones that actually established law and order. Conversely, the follow-on Soviet-backed regimes probably did not consider the consequences of the deep collectivism of Afghan society, and tried to implement a top down order system with little success.[29] This constituted the ignition point of three decades of conflict and chaos under an ineffective central government, which fostered even more the role of the local and tribal rulers.

As for the rest of Hofstede's cultural dimensions, Islamic fundamentalism and local traditions make Afghanistan a high masculine country,[30] while it could arguably be labeled as a Low Term Orientation country if we consider Pakistan's scores in Hofstede's surveys.[31]

These results are really meaningful since they show how Afghan culture is just diametrically opposed to the standards of Western countries, and this is mainly due to the singular ecological factors mentioned earlier. An example that illustrates the specific and unique environment that influences Afghan culture is that for the elections of August 2009, one of the main problems of the electoral staff was how to find three thousand donkeys as soon as possible in order to distribute the electoral materials to the mountain villages, for there wasn't any other way of accessing them.[32] In addition to this, there is another aspect that is closely related to Afghan culture, constituting both a cause and a consequence, which is literacy. For it is important to note that Afghanistan is one of the countries with one of the lowest literacy rates of the world, with a 43 percent of literate males in 2009 according to the CIA World Factbook.[33] All in all,

aspects like the high degree of authoritarian and traditionalist values within its culture, the uniqueness of its societal structure, and its low literacy level, along with a deep-rooted Islamic ideology are likely to prove Afghanistan incompatible with the development of democracy, at least as it is understood in the western countries. Afghanistan is therefore probably the less suitable candidate for a western-oriented nation and military-building.[34]

THE INTERNATIONAL APPROACH IN AFGHANISTAN: NTM-A/CSTC-A

Both NATO Training Mission in Afghanistan (NTM-A) and the US Combined Security Transition Command in Afghanistan (CSTC-A) have built the ANSF under Western models without taking into account the cultural mindset of the Afghan society, establishing unrealistic objectives and milestones based more on the operational needs than on the human resources at hand. As a result, current assessments recognize that the brand new ANSF present several capability gaps that will require farther coalition assistance in the mid-term.

Origins, Objectives, and Milestones

The security vacuum created in Afghanistan after the collapse of the Taliban regime in October 2001 triggered the security sector reform process launched in Geneva in May 2002, where the United States was to assume the lead-donor nation role for the military reform.[35] The fielding of the first ANA infantry kandak (battalion) in July 2002, was followed by a progressive fielding of another fifteen kandaks that were all assigned to the Central ANA Corps (later renamed as Capital Division) by March 2004. From 2003 to 2007 the training programs changed several times, switching from quality to quantity and vice versa, according to the security threats and financial constraints of each moment. In 2008 the initial force structure objective of 70,000 was raised to

134,000 by means of focusing on light infantry units at the expense of specialized units, and in January 2010 it was raised again to 171,600, the end state that was to be achieved by October 2011.[36] Taking into account that in November 2009 the actual ANA numbers where around 97,000, this rush in the ANA development meant that in two years (NOV09-OCT11) NTM-A/CSTC-A had to field almost the same quantity of troops that it fielded between 2002 and 2009, but with a higher degree of specialization (instead of plain infantry, these troops were to be allocated to enablers like engineers, artillery, signals, intel, etc.). Obviously, this goal shows a huge lack of vision and understanding of the cultural environment by the Western decision makers, for the odds of recruiting so many literate Afghans in such a small period of time were really low. Far from reorienting this approach, the U.S. Congress authorized in mid-2011 the last increase of the ANA force structure, establishing a new cap of 195,000 military to be achieved by December 2013 that included other enablers (i.e., a new mobile strike force with armored vehicles). The intended end state for the ANA Force Structure build-up depicts what some scholars see as the dominant features of the U.S. strategic culture, namely the preference for massing large numbers of troops and an overwhelming reliance on technology.[37]

In addition to this disorientation, there are two other aspects that hampered the performance of the NTM-A/CSTC-A even more. The 2003 war in Iraq produced a significant shift in the focus and allocation of resources from Afghanistan to Iraq.[38] The other challenge was the lack of commitment of the coalition in providing trainers in high enough quantity and quality (at the beginning of 2010 only 23% of the required trainers were available).[39] This problem was indeed acknowledged by both NATO and Minister of Defense Wardak, who agreed that it would delay the achievement of a self-sufficient ANSF.[40]

Results and Assessments

Several reports recognize that the outcomes of NTM-A/CSTC-A efforts are far from the desired end state. Though the ANA does seem to be efficient at the lowest tactical levels, it tends to fail at higher levels of the organization as literacy becomes more and more important.[41] Furthermore, the ANSF do suffer a variety of shortfalls in areas like logistics and sustainment, air support, intelligence, C-IED, or communications, among others.[42] Indeed many analysts argue that the dependence of the Afghan Ministry of Defense (MoD) and Ministry of Interior (MoI) on international support and advisors will continue through the near future, so that they can continue carrying out such core tasks as planning, financial and personnel management, logistics and sustainment, and other areas that require technically skilled personnel.[43] The problems arising from this lack of skilled personnel were also echoed in reports about the accountability of the ANSF that warned about their inability to safeguard and account for weapons and other material due to the high levels of illiteracy, corruption, and unclear guidance from the Afghan Ministries,[44] resulting in a high risk of loss and theft of weapons and material. Indeed, some of the main problems were related to the impossibility of training ANA personnel in the use of depot information systems due to lack of basic math skills.[45] All in all, logistics and sustainment poses a problem across all levels of the ANA due to the lack of trained maintenance technicians and logistics managers.[46]

Nevertheless, not all the outcomes are negative. An analysis of the performance of the first ANA infantry units, fielded between 2003 and 2006, suggested that in the tactical level Afghan soldiers proved themselves effective in counterinsurgency tactics, techniques, and procedures under coalition training.[47] So again, this assessment is consistent with the idea that the complication in building the ANSF comes with

technology, literacy, and organizational structure. An example of how Afghans have struggled to assimilate the modern-style Afghan National Army is the fact that when the first artillery units were fielded, many of the ANA Brigade and Corps Commanders did not use them as intended, assigning instead their personnel and equipment to infantry kandaks in order to minimize their shortfalls.[48]

Identifying the Problem

The Afghan experience has proved that the real challenge of building from zero a huge National Security Force Structure (Army and Police), with a wide array of specialized enablers, and a certain level of technology is not only to find the necessary local human resources in quantity and quality, but also and most importantly to implement an organization that fits with the cultural mindset of the local society. The problem here is not the performance of NTM-A/CSTC-A when carrying out its assigned tasks (the operational and tactical levels); rather, it is at the strategic level in the problem framing phase where no one has considered any of the cultural factors that influence the local environment and resource availability, which determine the success or failure of the mission. These factors must be taken into account during the problem framing phase in the strategic level in order to establish an achievable goal and end state within the intended timeline. This is not a new idea: a 2010 report from the Center for Strategic & International Studies pointed out that the goals for Afghan development were "unrealistic in timing and scope," and that the expectations were moving towards "Afghanistan good enough" instead of "Afghanistan unachievable."[49]

The 2006 U.S. National Security Strategy formalized the mission-shift from defeating al Qaeda to nation-building and democracy promotion in Afghanistan. However, the approach with which this new strategy was implemented was too military-

centric, which reveals a critical misunderstanding of the singularities of the regional culture and environment.[50] Tasked with the mission of designing and building the Afghan National Security Forces, the coalition officers wound up taking their own national military organizations and equipment as a model, using it as the building block for discussion.[51] Those coalition officers have designed the ANSF based on what they thought Afghans needed according to what they would use themselves, instead of on what Afghans can really handle.[52] Thus, the ANSF have been created according to Western concepts that do not fit in the Afghan cultural mindset. The struggle of the ANSF in functioning at the operational and institutional levels is caused by this Western ethnocentrism that still doesn't realize the cultural differences among Western and Afghan societies.

The issue originates in the problem framing phase at the strategic level, where the first step in defining an End State must be acknowledging the Initial State. By so doing, the defined End State will be more realistic in accordance with the time and resources available. This is the real meaning of "Afghan good enough," which should be a source of pride for Afghans since what it really means is that they can accomplish the task with less means.[53] According to this, a more efficient approach would have been to develop the ANSF within the acknowledged constraints of an Afghan social system that though archaic, is undeniably resilient.[54] Acknowledging these constraints in a foreign culture requires what is called by scholars cross-cultural competence, encompassing not only the awareness of one's own culture and an understanding of the existing cultural differences, but also a motivation to learn about that foreign culture and to engage with it.[55]

Taking into account the distinctive features obtained from the analysis of Afghan Culture, the main considerations when determining the strategic end state for the ANSF

build-up should be its autocratic and traditionalist values, the collectivism inherent to its social structure, and the low literacy level (which although in part a consequence of the first two aspects is by itself important enough to be addressed separately).

AUTOCRATIC AND TRADITIONALIST VALUES

The degree of autocratic and traditionalist values is deeply related to the aforementioned dimensions of Power Distance and Uncertainty Avoidance, respectively. As stated before, in Afghanistan these indexes are very high, which brings along significant implications, namely a preference for close supervision and for powerful and autocratic rulers or commanders, a high reliance on the elder, a resigned attitude in the workplace and society, and a strong and traditional religious sense. The practical consequences of these features are diverse. First, there are high odds of corruption cases among Afghans who hold powerful positions; this implies also that the connections with powerful people are usually considered more important than one individual's knowledge or expertise.[56] In addition, the respect due to the elder also hampers putting younger employees in charge. This situation makes the figure of the assistant essential. Assigning a skillful officer as an assistant to an incompetent senior officer within the MoD or MoI organization will prevent delays or inactions that otherwise may result in serious trouble in the lowest echelons. For example, it took some time for the coalition officers of the A7 branch[57] in NTM-A to discover that the GSG3 (General Staff, Operations branch) of the Afghan MOD was not issuing many of the orders required to implement the Fielding Plan of the ANA units because the document that NTM-A delivered for guidance was too complex for them to understand. Indeed, the level of detail and coordination required in that document made it also very difficult for any coalition officer to understand it as well. This problem, though related also to the literacy level of many of the senior officers, had a lot to do with the

aforementioned trend towards assigning powerful positions to elder and connected senior officers no matter their actual skills to do the job. The solution here was to focus on the second in charge of the GSG3, who was a sharp and literate young Major who displayed real interest and understanding of the fielding process. This event took place approximately in the beginning of the year 2011, two years after the creation of NTM-A and five years after that of CSTC-A, which shows the absence of cultural understanding on the coalition side.

Going down to the fielded ANSF Units, the autocratic character of Afghan culture has a critical implication, being that the entire ethos of leadership in Western countries will be hard to implement within the ANSF in the short term.[58] The larger the difference in power between Afghan leaders and their subordinates, the more comfortable the former will feel, what hinders deeply western leadership concepts like that of the fostering of leadership within the subordinates, the leader's continuous preoccupation about his subordinates' welfare, etc. But the most important aspect of this implication is how it affects the Afghan concept of Non Commissioned Officers (NCO). Afghan officers are reluctant to empower their NCO because in their mindset they think that they are engaging a zero-sum transaction, that they will lose the authority they are delegating on their subordinates.[59] In these situations the results are likely to be very ineffective, with uncoordinated and sometimes contradictory levels of Command (NCO & Officers), and demotivated NCO. Considering this cultural singularity, perhaps a more effective implementation would have been to constitute an Afghan NCO Corps with a minor, or even without any leadership role, focusing just on their technical specialization as it had been implemented in other National Security Forces before (i.e. the Soviet and Chinese Armies).[60]

Afghans, as a traditionalist and high UAI society, may be excessively conservative before a new idea or concept.[61] Assigning high technology equipment to the military or police units within the ANSF is likely to cause a heavy stress called acculturative stress, typical in those individuals from traditional cultures subject to a sudden and high degree of modernization and innovation.[62] So when providing all the new and advanced equipment to the ANSF members, even though they may have a literacy level high enough to learn how to use it, it is probable that they won't use it unless encouraged to do so. This aspect has also to be taken into account when designing the organization and future equipment of the new units to be fielded. Assigning a great number of resources and technology to a society that has lived its entire existence without so much relative opulence, that is reluctant to assimilate any sudden innovations, and that has embedded a strong autocratic mindset may easily favor the rise of rampant corruption and misuse of those resources at all levels. In this sense, the U.S. Government Accountability Office reported in 2009 that the theft and unauthorized resale of weapons was a common practice in several regions.[63] Furthermore, opinion polls conducted in December 2009 and May 2010 reflected the refusal of Afghans to accept Western and democratic values. According to these polls, the preference for democracy fell from 32% to 23% while the preference for a strong leader rose from 23% to 30%, and there was still a plurality (45%) that preferred an Islamic state; in addition, 55% of Afghans said they would prefer not to work in the same place with a Westerner.[64] These polls are another reflection of the high UAI and PDI of Afghan culture.

Assimilation of Western values in societies such as the Afghan will take long, if that ever happens, and the steps will be small and moderate. One example is the Shia family law approved by President Karzai's administration on 2009, which text, though

yet incomprehensible to Western culture, was a step forward compared to the past, when things were decided by custom rather than by law.[65] All in all, when providing any acceptable level of technology and modernity to the local NSF, certain cultures will have more difficulty in assimilating this change than others. Key aspects to consider must be the level of authoritarianism (this is, how the outcomes are subject to the whims of single powerful persons), and of traditionalism (what is new, is dangerous).

COLLECTIVISM AND SOCIETAL STRUCTURE

Afghan societal structure reflects the high degree of collectivism in Afghan culture. The latter not only influences the former, but it is also reinforced by it. This feature has been modeled and strengthened through a history full of war and conflict, not to mention the last thirty years. For the average Afghan, aged less than thirty (life expectancy in Afghanistan was 44.7 years in 2010),[66] has always lived within a conflict environment, which has reinforced the solidarity within certain collectivities while weakening the levels of trust beyond them, fostering a zero-sum mindset among the upper echelons of the administration.[67] The main collectivities above the family and the tribe within Afghan society are ethnics, sectarians and regionals. Many of the conflicts among collectivities are also fostered by the above mentioned high uncertainty avoidance index of the Afghan mindset: what is new (or different), is bad. The broad ethnic plurality in Afghan society, with the leading role of the Pashtun majority has prevented the minority ethnic groups from feeling as a part of the Afghan nation, an aspect that is likely to increase within Shi'as minorities and provinces far from Kabul. These broad differences were also deep-rooted within the military establishment. Indeed, until the first kandak of the ANA was trained by mid-2002, there had not been any attempt to create a plural and national Afghan Army. Among the Pashtun, each family contributed to its tribe with men and weapons to constitute the Lashkar, which

was a sort of traditional tribal militia. Instead of to the Central Government, the Lashkar owed its allegiance to local warlords. During the 1980s and also under the Taliban rule, the Afghan Army was comprised by several of these local and tribal militias with varying degrees of loyalties and professional skills, lacking any formal military structure and any real allegiance to the state.[68] Furthermore, even the coalition forces relied heavily on warlords' private militias during the early stages of the war, which weakened even more the central government while strengthening the influence of the various warlords.[69] According to this, the building of the ANSF has been arguably the first attempt to create a plural and diverse Afghan institution disseminated along the whole country. One of the consequences, as in the case of the government itself, is the increase of corruption cases, where the person in charge of allocating certain resources tends to favor his own ethnic group or region. Indeed ethnic loyalties within the military and police have regularly been a serious problem for the Afghan central government. Likewise, Afghan government officials such as ministers tend to favor their specific ethnic group, likely filling most of their ministries' positions with people from their same ethnicity or region.[70] As a result, all the Afghan institutional structure appears to be clannish and too regionalist, from high officials such as the former Afghan Vice President to the local Army and Police Commanders.[71]

Traditionally, and in contrast to the ethnic distribution, the majority of officers and commanders in the Afghan military and police were Pashtuns, whereas the majority of conscript and ranks were non-Pashtuns.[72] Likewise, the pre-2003 Iraqi officer corps was 80% Sunni, while the remaining 20% were mostly Shi'a, also in contrast to the composition of Iraqi society, with a majority of Arab Shi'a.[73] The National Security Forces of countries with such a variety of collectivities should reflect that reality in a way as balanced as possible. Although some scholars point out as a solution the creation

of that balance only at the higher levels of the military hierarchy,[74] this could eventually cause great differences in the promotion opportunities among ethnics or other collectivities, resulting in unrest and demotivation within the ranks. Therefore the most suitable solution would arguably be to implement that balance as early as in the recruiting stage, as well as through the NCO and Officer Corps. Despite the fact that the collectivism phenomena and its incidence over the nation as a whole can be approached from a more decentralized form of government,[75] the National Security Forces must constitute the symbol of the nation's unity, hence they cannot be decentralized. This, rather than a matter of a possible Western ethnocentrism, is more about the very survivability of the nation itself (a close example is the Continental Army during the American Revolutionary War). And this has been indeed the aim of the International Community when building the ANSF, with an ethnic distribution target across the ANA and ANP (44% Pashtuns, 25% Tajiks, 10% Hazaras, 8% Uzbeks and 13% others)[76] very well balanced and in compliance with the actual demographic numbers according to the CIA World Factbook 2014.

Another aspect related to the social structure that affects the ANSF is the rate of soldiers absent without leave (AWOL). Since men are expected to contribute actively in the basic economic and social units of the Afghan social structure (namely, family and tribe), on many occasions the requirements of the service in the ANA or ANP during long periods of time in distant regions prevent the soldiers from complying with their familiar and tribal duties. Thus, an important number of cases in the AWOL rate are due to soldiers that extend their leave in time so they can finish with those duties, usually rejoining their units as soon as they can.[77] This is a reality that must be acknowledged and its solution has a lot to do with the exercise of leadership among the mid-grade Commanders, which as has been already discussed, is challenged by such an autocratic

society. Since neither this aspect of the Afghan social structure nor the autocratic command style of their leaders are likely to be changed, the effort must be placed on the management system. From preventing the displacement of the recruits when possible, to facilitating conciliation measures to those who serve far from their homes, there are a wide array of measures that can be implemented at an institutional level, so the Afghan recruits would no longer be at the whim of their immediate Commander.

LITERACY

From an overall perspective, the international effort in building the ANSF along the last decade is characterized by a struggle between the ethnocentric expectation that technology is the only key to achieving high-level capabilities and the reality of a population with one of the lowest degrees of literacy.[78] In addition, due to the last decades of war and the low life expectancy, very few Afghans can recall living under efficient national institutions, which makes it even more difficult for them to assimilate complex management systems. As a result, the mostly illiterate members of the ANSF find themselves struggling with a sort of simplified versions of the U.S. military personnel and logistics management systems that the coalition has implemented throughout all the ANA and ANP. So at the end of the day, instead of making things easier, the Afghan Units wind up hampered by systems that are too complicated for their end users.[79] In order to mitigate this problem, there is a mandatory literacy training program for all ANA and ANP recruits which had the goal of achieving by the end of 2014 a 100% of ANSF member with literacy level 1, and a 50% with literacy level 3, but it is not likely that this goal has been achieved.[80] Notwithstanding the good or not so good efforts done when implementing this initiative, the reality is that it could arguably be an unnecessary one. Having all the soldiers of an Army literate enough to read and write short words and count up to one thousand (literacy level 1) is not bad, as neither is

having the half of them being able also to read and write short paragraphs and perform basic multiplications and divisions (literacy level 3). However, this won't provide the basics to train maintenance technicians or skillful operators for the technological equipment the ANSF is receiving. Instead of focusing on the smart and bright recruits so they can receive further education and complex training, NTM-A/CSTC-A has focused on achieving a plain and uniform low literacy level across all ranks, perhaps useless before the equipment those soldiers are to use.[81] An added problem is that since they earn more money outside the Army or the Police, the few ANSF members that are successfully trained with specialized skills are hardly retained within the Afghan Forces.[82]

In a scenario like that of Afghanistan, where the building of the local security forces takes place while fighting an insurgency, and with the aforementioned low literacy level it is paramount to find a suitable halfway solution between assigning a type of equipment not too advanced and complex for the local standards, but with a minimum of capabilities to ensure military superiority over the insurgency. So as stated before the first step is to acknowledge what is the initial state, what equipment should the training coalition provide that could be useful in an Afghan context. Most Afghans don't know how to drive, but still the ANA Table of Distribution and Allowances of a standard light infantry battalion showed a requirement for 109 drivers out of a workforce of 799.[83] And indeed, the ANA did received the required vehicles. The most immediate consequence was that soon the ANA had a higher fatality rate from motor vehicle accidents than any other cause, including the enemy. A second order effect is that those vehicles not only needed drivers, but also mechanics (which require a certain literacy level), parts for their maintenance, and a supply management system manned by soldiers that also will require a minimum literacy level. The more vehicles, the more

mechanics and parts, and therefore the more complex will become the logistic management system.[84] All in all, the ANSF requires a higher number of literate soldiers than what it is available in order to fulfill the requirements of a Western oriented military structure and organization. Lastly, a third order effect is the eventual misuse of the equipment that is not used for its original purpose because of the lack of qualified operators. As an example of this misuse, during a videoconference in late December 2010, one of the Regional Support Commands representatives denounced that after receiving a large number of HMMWV (High Mobility Multipurpose Wheeled Vehicle), the members of an Afghan Unit had removed all the batteries from the vehicles so that they could use them as external batteries in their homes. So again the first question must be not what will the ANSF need but what can it really handle with its own resources.

Another measure to mitigate the literacy problem may be the externalization of certain services, mainly advanced logistic support. For even after reducing the level of ambition in technology and complexity of the equipment issued, the requirements to build a reliable operating and sustaining cycle for that equipment will arguably exceed the ability of the ANSF. Furthermore, if many of the high literacy level Western armies do use contractor logistic support and field service representatives working with their mechanics many years after the fielding of new equipment, then the Afghans will need at least the same, perhaps even more, level of support.[85]

CONCLUSION

By the end of 2014 Afghan National Security Forces assumed full responsibility for the security of their country and ISAF's mission[86] ended. However, many of the last reports still recognize key capability gaps within the ANSF, and indeed recent news underscore not only an increase of the fighting in certain regions since the withdrawal of

U.S. forces from Afghanistan, but also a higher rate of ANA casualties than in previous years.[87] Most of the studies and analyses that have tried to identify the causes for the inefficient results of NTM-A in building the ANSF point to recurrent problems such us the lack of interagency coordination, insufficient will from the contributing nations to provide the required trainers or resources, or the low literacy level of the Afghan population. While these may be direct causes, only a few reports have noted that the goals may have also been somewhat unrealistic, which according to this essay would actually constitute a major root-cause. First step in solving any problem is recognizing there is one. Second is identifying what the problem is. The facts analyzed in this paper show that the real problem is that Afghans are struggling to assimilate a Western and modern-style defense organization that doesn't fit at all with the cultural mindset of their own society. Though there is a lot of literature about the benefits of understanding the local culture when conducting stability and counterinsurgency operations at the tactical and operational levels, it is very hard to find any essay that addresses the need to avoid ethnocentrism also at the strategic level. Considering the problem that has just been identified, it is obvious that its root cause is not in the performance of the assigned tasks to accomplish the mission but in the mission analysis itself, and more concretely, in the defined end state. Indeed, the failure to consider the cultural differences and singularities of the Afghan society during the Problem Framing phase in the strategic level has led to an end state that cannot be handled by the Afghans themselves, the ANSF relying too much in technology and with a too complex western organization.

Different societies have different core values that influence their behavior. When implementing changes in an institution of a given society, the first thing that needs to be done is to analyze if those changes fit in that society's culture. If they do not, as is clearly the case of Afghanistan, among the options are reducing the scope of those

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changes, trying to enforce them with close long-term supervision and support, or a combination of both. So when approaching an operation in a different cultural environment within a Foreign Internal Defense framework, the strategic level should frame the problem paying special attention to key cultural features that depict the cultural differences with the local society. These features are the degree of authoritarianism and traditionalism, the societal structure and its degree of collectivism, and the literacy level of that society. Getting familiar with these aspects in Afghan culture facilitates the understanding of some of the problems found when building the ANSF. The need for a closer supervision, a different understanding of leadership, the convenience of assigning a more technical role to the NCO Corps, and the advisability of reducing the level of technology in the equipment provided could have been conclusions of an analysis of the level of authoritarianism and traditionalism of the Afghan culture. Other aspects such as the expediency of a balanced ethnic distribution across the ANSF from the recruiting stage, and of implementing measures at an institutional level to facilitate the conciliation with the familiar and tribal duties, could have also been drawn from an analysis of the societal structure and the degree of collectivism within the Afghan society. Finally, a rationalization in the educational effort, the externalization of specific technical services, and again the reduction of the level of technology, could also be conclusions obtained after an analysis of the literacy level. Processing all these issues as inputs during the Problem Framing phase at the strategic level would have arguably suggested the convenience of a less complex and sophisticated ANSF, more suitable to the Afghan mindset and resources, and therefore less dependent on external support and sustainment.

All in all, before getting involved in Security Force Assistance activities, the Western nations must acknowledge the critical importance of framing the problem at the

strategic level on the basis of the cultural singularities of the country that is to receive the assistance. This analysis, which will drive the definition of the desired end state as well as the ways and means to be employed, must focus on core values like authoritarianism, tradition, and collectivism, including also other practical aspects like the social structure and the level of literacy within that society.

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[13] Geert Hofstede, *Cultures Consequences. Comparing values, behaviors, institutions and organizations across nations* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc., 2001), 360.

[14] Geert Hofstede, *Cultures Consequences. Comparing values, behaviors, institutions and organizations across nations* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc., 2001), 432-433.

[15] China's economic development since 1979 has been based on a different economic model that mixes governmental interventionism with decentralization and free market policies through a gradual implementation of economic reforms that sought to identify which policies were effective and which were not (See Wayne M. Morrison, *China's Economic Rise: History, Trends, Challenges, and Implications for the United States*, CRS Report for Congress RL33534 (Washington D.C.: Congressional Research Service, October 9, 2014), 3, 25, https://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/row/RL33534.pdf).

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[63] U.S. Government Accountability Office, *Report to Congressional Committees: AFGHANISTAN SECURITY. Lack of systematic tracking raises significant accountability concerns about weapons provided to Afghan National Security Forces* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Accountability Office, January 2009), 23.

[64] Anthony H. Cordesman, *The Afghan War - Part Three: Implementing the New Strategy* (Washington D.C.: Center for Strategic & International Studies, September 2010), 16, 19.

[65] Fernando Gentilini, *Afghan Lessons. Culture, Diplomacy, and Counterinsurgency* (Washington D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2013), 129.

[66] Anthony H. Cordesman, *The Afghan War - Part Three: Implementing the New Strategy* (Washington D.C.: Center for Strategic & International Studies, September 2010), 28.

[67] William Maley, "Afghanistan: Reconstruction challenges and dilemmas" *Civil-Military Working Papers 8/2010* (Queanbeyan, Australia: Asia Pacific Civil-Military Center of Excellence, 2011), 2.

[68] Seth G. Jones, *Counterinsurgency in Afghanistan* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2008), 34-35.

[69] Seth G. Jones, *Counterinsurgency in Afghanistan* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2008), 79.
Terrence K. Kelly, Nora Bensahel, and Olga Oliker, *Security Force Assistance in Afghanistan. Identifying lessons for future efforts* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2011), 18

[70] Ehsan M. Entezar, *Afghanistan 101. Understanding Afghan Culture* (Bloomington, IN: Xlibris Corporation, 2010), 86-86, 94.

[71] Fernando Gentilini, *Afghan Lessons. Culture, Diplomacy, and Counterinsurgency* (Washington D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2013), p.47.
Seth G. Jones, *Counterinsurgency in Afghanistan* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2008), xii.

[72] Ehsan M. Entezar, *Afghanistan 101. Understanding Afghan Culture* (Bloomington, IN: Xlibris Corporation, 2010), 84.

[73] Florence Gaub, *Rebuilding Armed Forces: Learning from Iraq and Lebanon* (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, May 2011), 3.

[74] Florence Gaub, *Rebuilding Armed Forces: Learning from Iraq and Lebanon* (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, May 2011), 28.

[75] Dr. Ehsan M. Entezar considers that some form of Federalism (including the redrawing of provincial boundaries) would be needed to improve security and advance towards making Afghanistan a true nation-state (see Entezar, *Afghanistan 101. Understanding Afghan Culture*, 105). Also, Professor William Maley asserts that societies ethnically and socially fragmented like the Afghan should avoid a type of government that is highly centralized (see W. Maley, *Afghanistan: Reconstruction challenges and dilemma*s, Asia Pacific Civil-Military Center of Excellence, 2).

[76] U.S. Department of Defense, *Report to Congress: Progress toward security and stability in Afghanistan* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Defense, April 2014), 38, 50.

[77] Keith W. Norris, "The Afghan National Army. Has capacity building become culture building?" *Military Review* 92 no. 6 (November-December 2012): 36.

http://usacac.army.mil/CAC2/MilitaryReview/Archives/English/MilitaryReview_20121231_art007.pdf.

[78] Terrence K. Kelly, Nora Bensahel, and Olga Oliker, *Security Force Assistance in Afghanistan. Identifying lessons for future efforts* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2011), 4.

[79] Terrence K. Kelly, Nora Bensahel, and Olga Oliker, *Security Force Assistance in Afghanistan. Identifying lessons for future efforts* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2011), 76-77.

[80] Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction, *SIGAR 14-30 Audit Report* (Arlington, VA: Office of the SIGAR, January 2014), 7. http://www.sigar.mil/pdf/audits/SIGAR_14-30-AR.pdf.

[81] Robert Roughsedge, "Get off the Treadmill" (unpublished manuscript, October 7, 2014), Microsoft Word File.

[82] Jonathan Schroden et al., *Independent assessment of the Afghan National Security Forces* (Alexandria, VA: CNA Center for Strategic Studies, January 2014), 153.

[83] Numbers drawn from Tashkil 1389 (171.6K), published on December 2010 on the NTM-A NIPRNET (Microsoft Excel File). The Tashkil was a document issued by NTM-A which included the Table of Organization and Equipment, and the Table of Distribution and Allowances of the entire ANA. It depicted in detail the personnel, equipment and training requirements for each position of the workforce of every ANA Unit.

[84] Robert Roughsedge, "Get off the Treadmill" (unpublished manuscript, October 7, 2014), Microsoft Word File.

[85] Robert Roughsedge, "Enhancing the ANSF. Securing the Transition" (unpublished manuscript, October 7, 2014), Microsoft Word File.

[86] The International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) was created in accordance with the Bonn Conference in December 2001, to assist the newly established Afghan Transitional Authority and to create a secure environment in and around Kabul in support of the reconstruction of Afghanistan (http://www.rs.nato.int/history.html).

[87] Joseph Goldstein and Rod Nordland, "Taliban Overrun an Afghan Army Base," *New York Times*, November 30, 2014, http://search.proquest.com/docview/ 1628710623?accountid=14746.

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http://www.marinecorpstimes.com/story/military/2015/01/04/amid-fighting-afghan-army-new-commander/21056953/.

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