Learning to Fish in Murky Waters
The Missing Link in Capacity-Building

By Stephen E. Webber and Donald E. Vandergriff

Building partner capacity has been recently recognized as a key mission set of the U.S. Armed Forces. It has received a great deal of verbal and written attention from military leaders and policymakers due

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to its centrality to ongoing operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. The recent political and strategic direction has emphasized military, diplomatic, and civil coordination with other nations worldwide.[1] A full explanation of U.S. diplomatic, development, and military approaches to capacity-building, and the evolution of the military's current role and conceptualization of these operations, would undoubtedly be relevant and useful, but remains beyond the scope of this article. Instead, we examine one critical component of

this broad mission set: the building of institutional capacity in host-nation ministries. Then we offer a scientifically and historically sound methodology for military advisors working at the ministerial level. By improving how we plan and execute our train, advise, and assist missions, and rethinking the role of the military advisor, we can more effectively enable our partners around the world.

The missing link in capacity-building is education. It is not the education of our personnel or counterparts exclusively; it is the role of mutual learning in advisory

Combat medic (right) with Charlie Company, 225th Brigade Support Battalion, 2nd Advise and Assist Brigade, 25th Infantry Division, teaches Iraqi soldiers how to splint broken leg at Forward Operating Base Warhorse, Diyala Province, Iraq, October 5, 2010 (DOD/Brandon D. Bolick)

engagements and an understanding of the importance of the education discipline to the capacity-building mission. In Afghanistan and Iraq, the United States and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) use the term *train, advise, and assist* (TAA) as a catchall that encompasses virtually all our interactions with host-nation forces. Rarely do we stop to consider the fact that this is a three-word phrase, and not a single verb (for example, "We're going to TAA our Afghan partners in institutional reform today"). But what form should this training take? Toward what end do we advise our partners, and what sort of assistance should we be offering them? All too often, our advisors focus on conducting "engagements," sitting down for lengthy meetings with host-nation counterparts. Meetings with key leaders are necessary to develop a common operating picture and to establish goals, just as time with counterparts can start to build the trusting relationships upon which all else hinges.

Unfortunately, this falls short. Except for the small talk and pleasantries required in many cultures, meetings remain highly structured and rigid. An American (or NATO) officer often sits across from his counterpart and proceeds through a script of "to-dos" and a review of manufactured milestones. As advisory assistance is almost always linked to financial and materiel support, the host-nation counterpart offers little pushback to the advisor's assertions. Both parties leave the engagement at best satisfied with the status quo and at worst disillusioned with one another and the possibility of progress. The advisor's chain of command and higher headquarters remain unsure of how to quantify progress. They focus reflexively on shallow metrics such as the number of engagements conducted per week or the submission of boilerplate reports. Despite sending men and women from across the joint force to advise foreign forces on complex issues, the U.S. military has yet to produce a strong body

of work on *how* we advise.[2] The joint force has scratched the surface by producing guidance on the basics of advising: helping troops build the communication, interpersonal, and cultural skills to interact with their counterparts. This may be doing more harm than good because we risk creating checklists and artificial scripts that oversimplify the task at hand.

Now we must consider the advisor mission in context and understand how the interaction between advisors and host-nation counterparts could be used to achieve our broader goals. To use familiar terms, what advising tactics do we employ, and how do we structure train, advise, and assist operations to achieve our strategic outcome of building capacity in host-nation institutions? In response to these vital questions, we offer an approach to capacity-building based on human interaction and learning. First, we consider the importance of institutional capacity from the standpoint of a system of human interaction. Second, we explain how

our view of the strategic goal affects the planning and execution of advisory operations, and lastly, we provide a real-world example of innovative advising tactics recently employed in Kabul, Afghanistan.

The Strategic Goal: Developing Institutional Capacity

Only recently has the U.S. military placed a proper emphasis on institutional capacity. In the initial approaches to stability operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, NATO called for the rapid creation of military and police forces to protect the populace and fight the enemy. The mixed bag of successes and failures achieved by the international community in raising the Afghan and Iraqi security forces is well documented and discussed at length by many scholars.[3] U.S. military doctrine reflects learning on the part of the military to embrace stability operations and enabling civil authority (Phases IV and V of a joint campaign) as critical to strategic success.[4]

Afghanistan in particular provides a good example. To put things simply, no matter how many Afghans stepped forward to defend their country, how well international forces trained them, or how much money and material poured into the country, the nation is unable to manage the resources at its disposal.[5] While Afghanistan, with its historic lack of governance and central authority, is a glaring case, the importance of developing the capacity to lead and manage applies to every case of security assistance or joint military training. The United States is currently working with police and military forces around the world to counter the threat of global terrorism.[6] Even in the absence of kinetic action, if U.S. advisors conduct combined tactical training in a foreign country, the relationships built and the skills communicated will not be maintained and carried on if the host nation lacks the institutions to retain them. If the United States grants a large sum of money to another nation to man, train, and equip its armed forces, these funds will not provide optimal capability if the country lacks a bureaucracy to manage a large budget, logistics, and human

resources. Recent years have illustrated the fact that paying for a nation's military or teaching valuable skills to its troops is not nearly enough to enable a partner nation's military. Advising within a country's governmental organizations is critical to any man, train, and equip effort.

The United States and NATO are currently placing military, government, and contracted advisors among the upper echelons of host-nation forces and within government departments. Prior to the deployment of advisors, we as a force must first consider the political and strategic outcomes for these institutions and how to measure success. If it is decided that advisory missions are an effective way of achieving our desired endstate, we must first consider how we intend to shape conditions. Ideally, this discussion would occur prior to the decision to deploy advisors. As we are already employing advisor efforts, we must take a step back and reconsider how they fit into the bigger picture, while changing the way we conduct them.

Our train, advise, and assist efforts at the ministerial level should shape systems that will accomplish our near-term goals of enabling host-nation partners against dynamic threats while becoming self-perpetuating in order to continue to strengthen institutions with time, ideally well after the detachment of advisors from their counterparts. Institutional capacity is a system, and systems emerge through repeated human interaction. Theories of education, management, and especially international relations tell us that human interaction causes learning, which in turn shapes the nature of repeated interaction.[7] The way people and organizations interact with one another over time creates institutions, or the rules that govern interaction.[8] We all understand this seemingly complex concept intuitively; in the United States, we refer to the "democratic institutions of our government." As military professionals, we talk a lot about "command climate and Service culture" that we can influence by the policies we enact, how we lead, and how we interact with our people.

Consider our goals for ministerial development within partner nations. We

want our partners to manage their own military forces, which requires everything from rule of law, to fiscal responsibility, to administrative effectiveness.[9] How do we even begin to consider these broad concepts? By thinking of them in terms of systems with an outward focus, not on processes with an inward focus (getting bogged down in shallow metrics, cultural constraints, control, disregard of the intangibles). We are trying to shape patterns of interaction between people so that they create the outcome we want.[10] This is far from simple, but the importance of learning and educational theory is plain to see. It must be mentioned that this learning cannot occur in a vacuum— the small part of capacity-building we address in this article is only of value if it is part of a comprehensive policy and strategic approach. Our broader diplomatic, military, and development efforts toward a certain problem-set must complement and reinforce one another in achieving the desired endstate if a train, advise, and assist effort is going to be successful. It is critical, however, to devise our train, advise, and assist operations based on an understanding of the mission that addresses the importance of learning.

Train, Advise, and Assist Operations

How do you create a system? Systems are shaped by people and how they do things. To put it simply, people + processes = systems. As stated, we cannot create a system as we wish and implement it; it must emerge over time through repeated interaction. The two parts of the equation that we can influence are people and processes. A train, advise, and assist effort must look to achieve an effect on people and an effect of processes that will without a doubt influence the systems at play. We do not, nor will we ever, have complete control of how a system develops or all of the outcomes of our actions to influence others.[11] What we can control is our approach to the people we work with and the processes we devise with them to manage their organizations.

People must come first in everything that we do. Carl von Clausewitz reminds

us never to underestimate the "human factor" in war,[12] and if we trace our strategic goals back to our national purpose, we realize that the ultimate purpose of our military efforts is the preservation of human life and human freedom. Joint special operations doctrine defines *irregular conflict* (within which many of our advisor missions fall) as a "struggle among state and non-state actors for legitimacy and influence over relevant populations."[13] We cannot coerce or bribe capacity into a host nation. Moral and ethical considerations aside, what we fund or force on a group of people will only be as effective as they are. Also, there is no exit strategy with this line of thought. The only way to influence an individual or group in the long term is through education.

Education is a vital part of an advisor's mission, and any train, advise, and assist operation should consider how we will educate our host-nation partners. Education is too often thought of as the conveying of knowledge from a teacher (who knows something) to a student (who knows nothing). This is not education (or effective training); it is simply communication between a leader and subordinate. Decades of progress in the education field have shown that this misunderstanding of education is completely ineffective in any context. To have any chance of success, the advisor must completely abandon any inclination toward this approach, as it is grounded in out-of-date learning models refuted by scholars and educators such as Dr. Robert Bjork, distinguished research professor at the University of California, Los Angeles, Department of Psychology.[14]

People learn through interaction and experience. Simply conveying information as we have in our training courses since the industrial age will never be as effective as empowering people to understand something on their own. The advisor is both a teacher who has entered a situation with goals and desired outcomes for his counterparts, but more importantly, a facilitator who allows students to apply what they already know, receiving new information and understanding it in their own way. A

tactical concept, such as marksmanship or patrolling, is best understood if students practice on their own, being allowed to make mistakes and adapt their technique. The same is true for administrative procedures or operational concepts. Anyone can learn to recite a definition, but there is no way to effectively convey how to manage a defense budget or plan a military campaign. People always learn best when they understand things in their own way, describe them in their own terms, and interact with others to inform their understanding.

In our approach to train, advise, and assist, the advisor is as much a student of his counterpart as the counterpart is of the advisor. To achieve success, advisors must proceed with abject humility knowing that they enter a host nation knowing little of how things work. An advisor may or may not have a strong background in his subject matter from previous service, but there is no better way to learn than to teach. Also, the way one person understands something will always differ in some way from how another understands it. This is true for members of the same immediate family, let alone people from different places who have been educated in different cultures. An advisor has as much (if not more) to learn from his counterpart as he does from his advisor.

It goes without saying that a foreigner who arrives among a host-nation military force will be instantly rejected if he proceeds with arrogance, trying to "teach" his ways to another group of people who have good reasons for what they do and a lifetime of learning behind them. At the very best, the advisor might receive a polite nod from a group of students who will revert to their original ways as soon as advisors leave the room. Formal meetings and key leader engagements will, without a doubt, be part of any advisor operation. During these engagements, in which international advisors and host-nation partners communicate intent, review progress, and make important decisions, the advisor should keep in mind that mutual learning is occurring. Every meeting is an opportunity to influence a counterpart, as much as it is an opportunity to learn something new about the

counterpart as an individual, his organization, and the systems currently at work within the host nation. Education with right teaching methodology, whether field exercises at the tactical level or joint working groups at the operational/strategic level, presents an opportunity for mutual learning. Here, advisors should not only know the key points that they intend to communicate, but also be careful to listen to their counterparts, allowing all participants to learn from one another. It is important to view oneself as a facilitator of learning. Frankly, an advisor is present in each country because local nationals do not know something that the advisor needs them to know. At the same time, local nationals know and understand things that their advisors could never hope to, and often intuitively know and understand the information that an advisor is trying to convey, but in their own way.[15]

The conclusion that advising techniques must change is grounded in learning theory and modern educational methods. Recent insight into the human mind demands a shift from "competency-based" learning to "outcomes-based" and "discovery" learning.[16] Competency-based learning is the norm for many Americans, as it has long been prevalent in the U.S. education system at all levels. The U.S. military has institutionalized a competency approach to learning based on the education and management philosophies of the early 20th century.[17] Based on the research of psychologists and educators such as Dr. Bjork, innovators have worked to reform education in all contexts. Whether teaching math to children in a public school or advanced tactics to Soldiers, teachers are most effective when they act as facilitators, and students learn more when they are encouraged to take ownership of the learning.[18] This blurs the traditional line between teacher and student. A new approach to military advising that properly emphasizes the importance of mutual learning requires a shift from the influence of competency-based education to engagements focused on discovery and outcomes.

Processes must be implemented in order to create systems and build

capacity. A group of individuals can learn something, and perhaps pass this knowledge on to some extent in a "train the trainer" model, but advisor engagements must focus on shaping processes nearly as much as they focus on educating individuals. In a sense, processes are the product of learning within an organization. A process is a framework for *how* things are done. The U.S. military understands process well; so much of our work and even our lives are governed by instructions on how things are to be done. Where the U.S. military is absent is in not explaining the "why" behind a process. Education explains the "why." If a system is going to become self-perpetuating, people must be given a framework for the training and education, one that will give shape and direction to their repeated interaction.

The advisor often begins her work with a process in mind. With varying degrees of success, we often seek to impose blueprints on foreign forces based on what has worked for our organizations. This is neither all good nor all bad; after all, our counterparts lack the ability to do something, and we are providing a way of doing it from our own experience. At the same time, this approach can be disastrous. People shape processes, and processes shape people as they guide their interaction. This is how a complex, adaptive system works. How and why things are done in a host nation is influenced by a myriad of factors, most of which we have no control over. Introducing a process developed by the U.S. military and expecting that it will be successfully adopted by a host nation without modification is a recipe for failure. A military force may already have processes in place that an advisor is unaware of, individuals come from different cultures and have entirely different perspectives, and our processes are often built over time and partner nations are often incapable of implementing them as they are right away.[19]

Instead, advisors must understand what processes are already in place within a host nation. How do people do things, and why? This comes with understanding the whole system and how it has developed. Is there an ineffective process in place that must be changed, an effective process that can be improved, or is the lack of a codified process what is preventing the development of capacity? Before trying to influence the rules of someone else's game, we must first learn his rules. Sometimes, published guidance is in place that the advisor can obtain, study, and use as a starting point for engagements with counterparts. Often, no such guidance exists and an advisor must learn how things are done from counterparts as they train and learn together. As training is conducted, what is learned can start to form a base from which codified doctrine can be developed. An effective advisor seeks to understand her operating environment and gently shape conditions toward the desired endstate. Ideally, the advisors will leave their counterparts with formal guidance that is somewhere between how things were done prior to their arrival and how things are done by the advisor's home country.

Case Study: Kabul, Afghanistan

Our theory of train, advise, and assist operations was shaped by real-world experience with the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces (ANDSF), particularly the Ministry of the Interior (MOI), which oversees the Afghan National Police (ANP). We sought to apply these concepts as we learned them by implementing adaptive learning as part of our train, advise, and assist operations. For our theory to be truly tested and proven, it must be given time. Also, similar methods must be applied across a range of cases and data collected. Unfortunately, capacity-building takes time and hard metrics are often scarce when it comes to irregular warfare. This case, however, is instructive because it realized qualitative results at the tactical level and has helped us to understand how similar efforts may be designed and implemented in the future.

As part of Combined Security Transition Command–Afghanistan's (CSTC–A's) Capabilities Development Directorate (CDD), our team was tasked to train, advise, and assist the Ministry of Defense (MOD) and MOI in all aspects of force management. It was our mission to help the Afghans manage their force structure: delivering the right combat and policing capability to a dynamic battlespace while developing the capacity to manage their own forces in the long term. Force management is an important discipline, as it encompasses virtually all aspects of how an organization structures itself to achieve its mission. Force management is a useful example of a critical capacity as the ability to effectively determine force structure has both immediate impact and great importance to the long-term growth and development of the organization. We were essentially helping our Afghan partners define the capabilities that are needed to defend both their people and their nation, develop their own solutions to resolve gaps in their police and military capabilities, and determine their requirements based on this analysis. The close linkage to fiscal/budget capacity and human resources systems is impossible to miss. We collaborated closely with our CSTC-A and Operation *Resolute Support* teammates advising on budget and force generation, while we focused on "spaces, not faces," that is, the authorizations for personnel and equipment, and how to determine them.[20]

Force management capacity serves as a useful starting point for a discussion of ministerial capacity, as it exemplifies a system that must endure for the Afghan MOI to effectively manage its police forces. Like many systems at the ministerial level, force management is complex, involving codified administrative processes as much as careful analysis and creative thinking on the part of groups and individuals. It is critical that Afghan force managers can properly document personnel and equipment authorizations with the help of their coalition advisors. This important task relates directly to the resources that the international community is using to resource the ANP. It also allows all components of the nation's police forces to effectively, man, train, and equip themselves.

As importantly, Afghan ministries must begin to take the lead in managing their force structure and determining future requirements. This requires far more than administrative procedure; Afghan leaders must possess the skills to analyze

their military and policing capabilities. Not only do Afghan ministries require analytical capacity, but also those tasked to lead and manage them must be critical and creative thinkers. In developing Afghan force management capacity, we are trying to build people as much as we were working to build processes.[21]

As our military and civilian advisors were working hard to bring order to the disparate records that documented the Afghan force structure, our team took its first steps toward educating Afghan force managers with an 8-week course for our counterparts titled "Force Management: The Basics." Course objectives were built on material that force management advisors had used for their counterparts, and included U.S. Army force management doctrine. Our advisors then applied adaptive learning to shape the course based on an Adaptive Course Model (ACM), a revolutionary model that has achieved success when applied to U.S. Army training. This "discovery-based" learning model is grounded in Adaptive Soldier Leader Training and Education methodology (ASLTE), designed to instill adaptability within students at all levels by engaging them as active participants in learning. Under ASLTE, ACM emphasizes outcomes over metrics by using discussion, open-ended problem-solving, wargames, and free play exercises to push students mentally and physically. These methods proved effective in the U.S. Army Reconnaissance course, and were adapted to a new context of advising at the ministerial level.[22]

Previous course slides were stripped down and used to make hardcopy handouts, leaving key points and broad concepts, discarding specific doctrinal terms and restrictive, step-by-step processes. Our host-nation interpreters, whom our team and leadership have elected to refer to as the technical advisor team, reviewed and actively contributed to the class materials. Not only did the technical advisors translate and edit, but they also reviewed course outcomes and improved the content to make it useful and relevant to their countrymen. During the course, there was no distinction between coalition advisors and host-nation translators; both were equal facilitators of learning.

ANP and ANA officers selected for the first course were distinguished in their profession, and, except for two junior officers, the majority were colonels, along with several lieutenant colonels and majors. Follow-on courses included members of mid-level and junior officers and some senior noncommissioned officers. Each session would begin with an introduction by either an Afghan or coalition general officer (key leader engagements with our counterparts and meetings with our chain of command were critical to organizing these efforts), and then our contracted advisors would begin to facilitate discussion. Class usually began with a problem, or an open-ended question: "How do I build a brigade?" Students would then work in groups to think creatively about the given problem. After collaborating, groups were asked to brief their solution to the class. This generated further discussion, during which our counterparts, many of whom had spent their whole lives at war, began to think critically and practice the cognitive skills of senior leaders and managers. Rather than using our handouts to drive the learning, we let the class drive itself, connecting students' ideas and assertions with key force management concepts as understood by the U.S. military.[23]

Student enthusiasm for the course was remarkable. These were seasoned veterans who may have begun their officer development under Russian advisors, or in the mountains opposing them. Some had been formally educated in Western schools. Others had little formal schooling. Every one of the students in surveys stated they had not experienced this type of learning, where they were involved in every aspect of the course, and not just briefed endlessly with PowerPoint slides. Students were eager to contribute, asking questions, connecting course material to their everyday experiences and challenges as officers, and respectfully challenging one another in vigorous debate. Advisors, who were optimistic about the course, had their moderate expectations far exceeded by the climate of the classes. The reason for this was clear, as one senior Afghan officer confided to his advisors: the students did not feel "talked down to" or "talked at." They were not bombarded with foreign concepts, or lectured by others on "the right way"; they led the way and learned from each other.[24]

The success of the first joint MOD-MOI class demanded the facilitation of a second course, this time for junior ANP officers only. Based on a careful after action review of the first class, CDD advisors decided to keep this class smaller and to focus on rising leaders. Now that their leadership, often set in their ways, had been exposed to adaptive learning and more advanced force management concepts, it was safe to train their subordinates who now had a better chance to apply their learning on the job with the approval of their chain of command. These students, mostly junior officers, had more formal schooling than their superiors and were even more open to improving their problem-solving skills and learning new concepts from each other and our advisor team. Group problems and exercises such as the "build a brigade" exercise generated endless discussion. At one point, a young lieutenant lectured the class on the importance of thinking strategically and holistically about problem-sets before determining solutions. His comments would not have been out of place in a U.S. War College seminar.

As these classes, supported by our coalition chain of command and our Afghan general-officer principals continued, our advisor team persisted in its day-to-day work. We still worked with advisor organizations across *Resolute Support* to facilitate the approval of new requirements, ran the funding approval process for capability enhancements, and engaged our Afghan counterparts in formal meetings. After two successful classes, much of our time became devoted to the documentation and validation of force structure authorizations, an important task for the success of our directorate and our Afghan counterparts. These conditions enabled a critical evolution in our methodology. Working together, we found ways to continue learning from our counterparts and training them. We devised ways to

Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force James A. Cody (center) attends Afghan air force senior enlisted seminar at Hamid Karzai International Airport, Afghanistan, April 6, 2016 (U.S. Air Force/Nicholas Rau)

combine educational efforts with formal workshops and engagements, using them to drive our understanding of an effective ANP force structure while empowering our counterparts to lead the process and learn from it. We began to work together to determine the requirements for the police force, while simultaneously setting conditions for our counterparts to institutionalize this knowledge.

Our coalition military and civilian advisors worked together and with other advisory organizations to analyze the task at hand and requirements for the ANP. Before communicating our thoughts to our counterparts, we allowed them to inform our understanding and tackled the problem-set together. We began to teach classes "guerrilla style," embracing the chaos and fluidity of the environment. As we were always collaborating among ourselves, we had something to discuss with our counterparts. Classes were almost spontaneous: if we could gather only a few of our counterparts together, we would set up our white board and get to work. As in the more formal classes, we would often begin by introducing

a question or problem-set related to a real-world challenge. We would then brainstorm with our counterparts, writing all their input, whether it seemed immediately useful or relevant to us, on the whiteboard. As each workshop included at least one interpreter or liaison, language barriers were not an issue. It was important, however, that students saw their input captured, validated, and used to generate further discussion.

The climate of these engagements would be foreign to most U.S. military officers. There was no program of instruction, no list of enabling objectives, no PowerPoint, and no "foot-stomping, check the block" mentality. When we began a session, we realized that we were out on a limb: with a general idea of an outcome based on problems we were trying to solve as an organization, we would let our students lead the way. Often, classes would depart from our initial concept and take an entirely different route. These "rabbit holes" were often productive, teaching us more about our counterparts and their world. A formal military course or even most classes in the

American public education system would not have enabled this kind of learning. Sometimes, it would take us three classes to accomplish what we had intended in one class (determining a specific equipping scheme, for example), but we realized that this was not only acceptable given the environment, but also necessary.

It has only been a short time since these efforts began, and they continue to evolve. A scientific evaluation of our approach is impossible now. However, the response we received from our counterparts, and the increase in our ability to perform our core functions in support of ANDSF force management, indicated that we had struck gold. It is important to note that our training activities were enabled by our culture as a team and approach to advising. Prior to and throughout these initiatives, we made it a priority to bond with our counterparts. The U.S. military has come to understand the importance of building rapport; our team embraced this philosophy and took it a step further.[25] We built professional working relationships, and often true friendships with our hosts. Prior to

and after formal engagements with general officers, we spent time in the offices of their staffs, drinking tea, practicing one another's languages, discussing family, our homes, and perhaps more than anything else, telling jokes. At times, we could gently guide these conversations to force management, at others we just appreciated them for what they were: an opportunity to meet new friends and connect with those who had readily welcomed us into their homeland.

The advisor must understand the importance of human connections and trusting relationships in enabling everything from military training to formal negotiations. Still, we must treat our relationships with counterparts as ends in themselves. Just as we bond with our fellow Servicemembers, we must bond with host-nation personnel. Like our brothers and sisters wearing the uniform of the United States, they are serving alongside us. By putting on their uniform, they risk everything to defend their homeland and their families. Only by embracing our hosts, becoming a part of their world, and fully immersing ourselves in the operating environment can we conduct effective train, advise, and assist operations.

Moving Forward

The U.S. military and our allies will continue to engage partner forces around the world in pursuit of our strategic interests. When the decision is made to build capacity within a foreign institution, we must take a methodical approach to the situation while enabling those at the operational and tactical level with the freedom to make decisions and adapt to their surroundings. Our understanding of capacity-building must be informed by the education discipline and learning theory. After considering to what end we intend to influence a foreign institution and how, we must apply the principals of learning and an effective educational methodology to our advising operations and tactics. Without a means to effectively engage counterparts, our broader strategic goals will not be realized. Engagements, even at the highest levels of command and host-nation governmen-

tal institutions, are the "tactical level" of capacity-building. The methods with which we engage our counterparts will determine whether train, advise, and assist methods are effective in building partner capacity. **JFQ**

Notes

[1] Robert Gates, "Helping Others Defend Themselves," *Foreign Affairs* 89, no. 3 (2010), 2–6; Harry Yarger, *Building Partner Capacity* (Tampa: Joint Special Operations University, 2015).

[2] This issue has received some attention from the military and has been the subject of excellent scholarship that remains to be operationalized. See also Terrence Kelly, *Security Force Assistance in Afghanistan: Identifying Lessons for Future Efforts* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2011); Austin Long, *Building Special Operations Partnerships in Afghanistan and Beyond* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2015); Todd Helmus, *Advising the Command*: *Best Practices from the Special Operations Advisory Experience in Afghanistan* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2015).

[3] T.X. Hammes, "Raising and Mentoring Security Forces in Afghanistan and Iraq," in *Lessons Encountered: Learning from the Long War*, ed. Richard D. Hooker, Jr., and Joseph J. Collins (Washington, DC: NDU Press, 2015); Obaid Younossi, *The Long March: Building an Afghan National Army* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2009); Leslie Payne, *Leveraging Observations of Security Force Assistance in Afghanistan for Global Operations* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2013).

[4] Lauren Fish, "Painting by Numbers: A History of the U.S. Military's Phasing Construct," *War on the Rocks*, November 1, 2016, available at <https://warontherocks.com/2016/11/painting-by-numbers-a-history-of-the-u-s-militarys-phasing-construct/>.

[5] Joseph J. Collins, *Understanding War in Afghanistan* (Washington, DC: NDU Press, 2011), 75–78.

[6] Gates, 2–6.

[7] Jonathan Raskin, "The Evolution of Constructivism," *The Journal of Constructivist Psychology* 21, no. 1 (2008), 16–24; Alexander Wendt, "Anarchy Is What States Make of It: The Social Construction of Power Politics," *International Organization* 46, no. 2 (April 1992), 391–425.

[8] Gary Shiffman and James Jochum, *Economic Instruments of Security Policy*: *Influencing Choices of Leaders* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 14–15.

[9] Hammes, 279, 283.

[10] See also David Kilcullen, *Out of the Mountains: The Coming Age of the Urban Guerrilla* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013). Kilcullen applies a "systems logic" approach to problems of development and conflict that shaped the authors' thinking on these matters.

[11] Ibid., 255–260.

[12] Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, ed. and trans. Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), 94.

[13] Joint Publication 3-05, *Special Operations* (Washington, DC: The Joint Staff, July 16, 2014), 28.

[14] Robert Bjork, "How We Learn Versus How We Think We Learn: Implications for the Organization of Army Training," unpublished briefing presented at Science of Learning Workshop, University of California, Los Angeles, August 1, 2006.

[15] Kilcullen, 255–260.

[16] Donald E. Vandergriff, "The Missing Link: How to Develop for Mission Command," unpublished working paper, December 17, 2016, 1–3; Phil Hill, "Competency-Based Education: An (Updated) Primer for Today's Online Market," available at <http://mfeldstein.com/cbe-an-updated-primer-for-todays-online-market/>.

[17] Vandergriff, 1–3.

[18] Paul Howe, *Leadership and Training for the Fight* (New York: Skyhorse, 2011); Bjork; Vandergriff, 1–11.

[19] Kilcullen, 255–260.

[20] See also Garrett Heath and Stephen E. Webber, "Developing Afghan Force Managers," *Army AL&T Magazine* (October–December 2016), 59–63.

[21] See also "Establishing Enduring Systems," *Defense Video Imagery Distribution System*, May 27, 2016, available at <www.dvidshub.net/news/199634/establishing-enduring-systems-afghan-leaders-shape-new-policies-cstc-workshops>.

[22] Vandergriff, 5–8; see also William R. Burns, Jr., and Waldo D. Freeman, *Developing an Adaptability Training Strategy and Policy for the DOD* (Alexandria, VA: Institute for Defense Analysis, October 2008), 1–87.

[23] See also Stephen E. Webber, "Afghan Leaders Celebrate Achievement in Force Management Course," Operation *Resolute Support*, July 2016, available at <www.rs.nato.int/article/news/afghan-leaders-celebrate-achievement-in-force-management-course.html>.

[24] Dan Grazier, "Military Reform Through Education," *Straus Military Reform Project*, (Washington, DC: Project of Government Oversight, October 18, 2015), available at <www.pogo.org/straus/issues/military-people-and-ideas/2015/military-reform-through-education.html>. Captain Dan Grazier, USMC (Ret.), now a fellow at the Straus Military Reform Project, participated in one of Donald E. Vandergriff's courses at Fort Benning, GA, and wrote this article about it.

[25] Kelly; Long; Helmus.