

Strategy Research Project

Empowered Advisers in Security Force Assistance

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Abstract

Due to recent failures in security force assistance, the U.S. should revise its approach to advising. To gain influence with counterparts, U.S. military doctrine instructs advisers to focus on building relationships and establishing rapport. The idea is to use “commitment” and not “compliance” influencing. However, commitment will only work in certain cases where the right conditions exist. Often, U.S. interests do not fully align with partner states. Advisers need influencing tools that give them compliance-type leverage. These include the power to reward and coerce. Even without formally having these tools, many American advisers report using improvised compliance techniques with on hand resources in Iraq and Afghanistan. The U.S. can learn from the British use of Indian soldiers during the Raj and the U.S. Korean Military Advisory Group during the Korean War. In both these cases, commitment and compliance were used effectively. In the future, U.S. leaders must deliberately establish security force assistance structures that empower advisers with similar leverage.

Empowered Advisers in Security Force Assistance

Major Brian Schoellhorn, brigade operations adviser to the 12th Iraqi Army (IA) Division in Kirkuk, had just completed a major cordon and search operation using Iraqi soldiers as the main effort with American soldiers in support. It had been a successful maneuver for a few reasons.¹ It was complex and large-scale, and the Iraqis had both planned and led it. U.S. Army advisers were always prodding the Iraqis to put together comprehensive offensive operations, and the 12th had done it. Success. The operation itself had real battlefield gains too. Iraqi soldiers had found contraband, caught a few persons of interest, and gathered useful intelligence. Now Schoellhorn wanted to build on this progress by increasing offensive operations.

He negotiated with his Iraqi counterpart, “Sir, your stationary checkpoints are useful, but they’re not doing enough. Insurgents know the location of every checkpoint and avoid them. Let’s reduce the number of checkpoints but start rotating them randomly. This will give us more soldiers to use for patrols and searches.” The Iraqi commander was polite but unimpressed. He wanted the checkpoints left as they were.

Major Schoellhorn was roughly halfway through his one-year deployment to Iraq. He arrived in early 2009 as part of a Stability Transition Team (the most recent name for a team of U.S. Army advisers) after training at the Joint Readiness Training Center (JRTC). He found the training totally inadequate. The trainers had no experience with advising. They focused mostly on relationship-building and counter-guerilla operations and randomly cited non-applicable TE Lawrence quotes.

Since arriving at the 12th Division, his record of success with the IA was mixed but improving. Initially, the IA did not take his advice, but he had recently figured out some successful techniques. Schoellhorn used his access to logistical resources as a

bargaining chip to gain Iraqi compliance. When that was not enough, he took some risk and issued vague threats to cut off funds, which he had no power to do. These techniques, and diligent negotiations, had produced the successful cordon and search.

Schoellhorn calculated that, with the number of tangible resources he had available plus more dubious threats, he had enough clout to make some changes around the margins. But removing soldiers from checkpoints to do offensive operations was pushing the limits of his influence. He was sure such operations would deliver positive results. This was *his* idea—it was not part of a higher plan. Schoellhorn had seen lots of PowerPoint slides with colorful arrows, but nothing that resembled a plan. Nevertheless, he was committed to convincing the IA to modify checkpoint operations.

Nearly sixty years earlier, in South Korea, Lieutenant Colonel Stewart Yeo was serving as an adviser to the 12th Republic of Korea (ROK) Division commander.² Yeo was in the middle of planning a defense around hills 854 and 812, on the far eastern side of the United Nations' line. The 12th had just captured a North Korean soldier who alerted them to a forthcoming attack. Yeo and his team worked hand in hand with their South Korean counterparts on the defense and integration of U.S. assets.

Yeo had joined the ROK Army (ROKA) two months before. After serving as a senior artilleryman in the U.S. 45th "Thunderbird" Division, army headquarters reassigned him to the Korean Military Advisory Group (KMAG) as an adviser. Initially unhappy to leave his American division, Yeo quickly came to admire his South Korean allies and developed a close bond with them.

After reporting to adviser headquarters at Daegu in November 1952, KMAG gave Yeo an orientation tour of ROKA basic training and the tank school, which KMAG

personnel supervised.³ Senior officers explained the expectations of an adviser, and Yeo realized it would be tough. He was responsible for requisitioning and delivering supplies, training ROKA soldiers to use U.S. equipment, teaching American combat doctrine, guiding a ROKA commander, and liaising with the American chain of command.⁴

KMAG issued Yeo a “Ten Commandments” for advisers, which directed him to advise forcefully and ensure his advice was acted upon—but not command the unit. He was informed that he would be blamed for his counterpart’s failures and that being a pure adviser was not enough; his role would essentially be that of a commander, but he could not issue orders personally.⁵ As such, he would have command responsibility without command authority.⁶ KMAG instructed Yeo to build rapport with his counterpart and maintain a good relationship.⁷ This meant a couple of cultural considerations in particular: show the Korean that he was valued and respected and be careful not to cause him to lose face in front of his men. “What can I do if the Korean ignores me,” Yeo wondered. KMAG officers told him that Korean defiance was rare, but he had many ways to bring pressure, including refusal to requisition supplies and referral to higher ROKA authorities.⁸

Since then, Yeo had worked with Brigadier General Chun Keun Yoon, with whom he had a terrific relationship. Together, they had moved the division 100 miles to secretly relieve an American unit at the front, directly opposite a Chinese division.⁹ In their sector, the most mountainous part of Korea, they immediately had to fight-off vicious Chinese attacks. Now, based on the information from this recently captured prisoner, they would, together, defend their position again.

Schoellhorn versus Yeo

The difference between Major Schoellhorn and Lieutenant Colonel Yeo was empowerment. Yeo had leverage he could use, if needed, to force his counterpart to take his advice. K MAG leaders told him, distinctly, to make sure the Korean unit followed American guidance.¹⁰ On the other hand, Schoellhorn's superiors gave him no leverage and so he creatively found ways to influence Iraqi officers. The U.S. Army expected both to guide foreign units to military success, only Schoellhorn had fewer tools at his disposal.

Security Force Assistance

Advising foreign armies continues to be a critical part of American security doctrine. Known as Security Force Assistance (SFA), the U.S. military performs a range of these missions, from simple friendship exercises in peacetime to building foreign armies during active combat.¹¹ Generally speaking, the goal of SFA is to further American interests by strengthening allies. However, some of the most intensive efforts to build capable foreign security forces (FSFs) have not produced satisfactory results despite enormous investments of time, people, and money. The main reason for the lack of success is the military's approach to SFA, which relies solely on influencing FSFs through personal relationships. Advisers do not have leverage to compel FSFs to follow their advice and act in American interests. Given the enormous investments in SFA, U.S. advisers should have more influence over FSFs.

The benefits of SFA are obvious. Training foreign soldiers to fight their own wars is less costly to the U.S. than direct involvement, both politically and financially.¹² The politically charged term "boots on the ground" only refers to American boots. Politicians in the United States rarely complain when foreign soldiers fight bloody wars for

American interests. It always costs more to ship American soldiers, who are among the most expensive in the world, to a distant land and then support them logistically.¹³ Instead, the U.S. can invest in a foreign army, where human capital costs much less and no transoceanic move is required. Thus, for a significantly lower price, the U.S. can get local boots on the ground. What is more, because of language and cultural knowledge, indigenous soldiers have advantages in fighting insurgents compared to foreign soldiers, despite lower training levels and less expensive equipment. There are also long-term benefits. When the U.S. invests in SFA, the FSFs remain permanently to protect the friendly government, versus American soldiers who depart as quickly as possible to save money or reduce political liability.

An excellent example of successful SFA is the German East Africa campaign during World War I. A German colonel, Paul von Lettow-Vorbeck, used a local force of German-trained, African auxiliary troops known as Askari (Arabic for “soldier”) to fight the British. Brilliant, charismatic, and resourceful, Lettow-Vorbeck won battles against British and Indian regulars, despite being hopelessly outnumbered. Ultimately, the allies deployed 350,000 troops to destroy the German-Askari guerillas, who numbered less than 10,000. By war’s end, Lettow-Vorbeck had not been defeated, and he surrendered only after learning that Germany signed the armistice. The Germans dramatically helped their cause with a minuscule investment.¹⁴

The U.S. military recognizes the advantages that come from SFA, even though it has long had difficulty finding effective ways to implement it.¹⁵ General Joseph Dunford has emphasized the need for foreign military integration, and the Army Operating Concept lists security force assistance as one of the primary options available to joint

force commanders.¹⁶ Furthermore, the U.S. Army has taken an important, groundbreaking step by creating Security Force Assistance Brigades (SFABs) that will focus exclusively on SFA.¹⁷ The first SFAB formed in 2017, completed training in January 2018, and deployed to Afghanistan in February.¹⁸ A second brigade is being formed now.

To make advising missions more effective, the United States military should establish an SFA structure that empowers advisers with leverage. Advisers are the link between American goals and the FSF. If American military advice is followed, FSF competence is more likely to improve and their operations are more likely to support U.S. interests. Influence can be achieved through two methods: developing commitment or forcing compliance. Commitment is done using persuasion and leads to fundamental, long-lasting changes in values and attitudes, permanently altering FSF behavior. Compliance, on the other hand, comes from coercion or incentive (these are leverage) and will only work as long as the coercer can directly observe behavior. American military doctrine advocates the commitment method, making good relationships and rapport the basis for influencing. Accordingly, in both Iraq and Afghanistan, the U.S. military pushed advisers to use this approach and did not empower them with leverage. Leverage is a form of hard power where advisers can give or take away resources, punish or reward, or exercise legitimate authority.¹⁹

U.S. military doctrine does not address leverage as an influencing tool even though FSF leaders and U.S. advisers will not always have shared goals or aligned interests.²⁰ The more divergent the interests between the two, the less likely commitment-based influencing will be enough to effect change. In “Small Footprint,

Small Payoff,” Stephen Biddle, Julia Macdonald, and Ryan Baker argue that SFA has a poor success record because the patron state and the host nation routinely have interests that are significantly misaligned.²¹ They compare the relationship to the principal-agent problem. To save money, a principal hires an agent to do work for him or her. While the principal’s interest is to pay the least possible for the most work, the agent’s interest is to do the least work for the most money—interest misalignment. Within SFA, the U.S. (the principal) wants to further American security goals, typically in politically unstable states, by using the FSF (the agent). This means building an FSF that is a capable, loyal federal army that will maintain domestic stability and defend the state against foreign threats. However, FSF leaders are usually more concerned with domestic infighting. Their goals are the political supremacy of their ethnic or sectarian group and their own physical survival. To this end, while interests between the U.S. and an FSF partner may converge to a degree, they will eventually diverge. When this occurs, the U.S. adviser needs leverage that will cause the FSF counterpart to follow American advice and act in U.S. interests.

Since American military doctrine relies on relationships to influence a counterpart, success will be limited when interests are not aligned and may not be enough even when they are. Typical FSF leaders are rational actors who prioritize self-interest. A good relationship is rarely enough to cause people to act against their own interests in a significant way. Perhaps it will work around the margins or with certain extraordinary individuals, but it will not consistently cause FSF leaders to pursue American goals if different from their own.

SFA has worked before and can work again. Many patron states have effectively used FSFs to achieve their own foreign policy goals. However, in most of the successful cases, the patron state had leverage with the FSF. When the U.S. makes a sizeable financial investment in SFA missions, it should also have leverage. To effect this, American military leaders must carefully design SFA structures to empower advisers. Compliance methods are unlikely to always be needed or appropriate. But advisers need enough leverage to have meaningful influence with FSFs when important U.S. interests are involved or the situation is violent, as illustrated by Figure 1.²² At the low end, in a peaceful environment where U.S. interests are not vitally important,

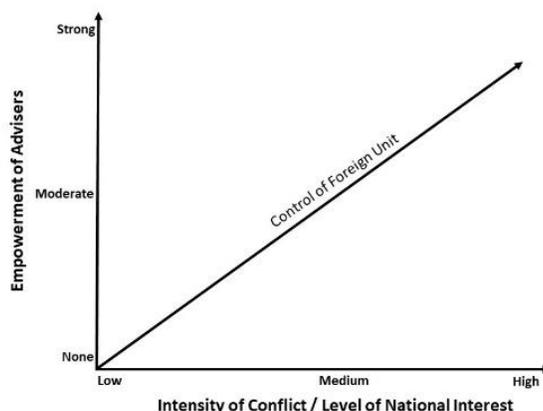


Figure 1. SFA Empowerment and National Interests²²

advisers need little to no empowerment. At the top, however, advisers should have the same ability to compel as LTC Yeo in Korea.

Biddle et al make a compelling case on the limits of SFA. The patron state and the FSF (the principal and the agent) often have misaligned interests. Even if interests converge over a common enemy, they will eventually diverge. All the same, the patron must have leverage regardless of interest alignment. To better understand these issues, consider three historical examples: British India, the Korean War, and Iraq/Afghanistan.

The British Indian Army

For 200 hundred years, the British used Indian soldiers to maintain India as a colonial possession. Very few British soldiers were ever garrisoned in India. In fact, the British even deployed Indian soldiers to help them fight in Europe, Africa, and the Middle East. The violent mutiny against British rule in 1857 was more about the Bengal Army's political grievances and its loss of privileges than it was about British rule in general, and the mutiny was put down by the Punjabi Army.²³ For the most part, the Indian Army of the Raj was highly competent and fiercely loyal. It had characteristics of a mercenary army, paid well enough to control their fellow countrymen on behalf of foreigners.²⁴ But historians have shown that it was not a mercenary army. Indians fought for much more than material benefits.²⁵ The example of the Indian Army is the principal-agent problem with a twist: the agent was ostensibly working against his own country's interests, which should have meant a significant divergence of interests. The British overcame the problem of interest misalignment through clever management.

The French were the first colonial power to train Indian troops in a meaningful way in the 1740s. French-trained forces easily defeated British irregular Indian troops.²⁶ Until then, all the European powers on the subcontinent had employed Indian soldiers, but they had not properly trained or equipped them. Colonial powers considered the Indians too primitive to learn sophisticated European fighting methods. The French were first to show that this was incorrect, applying the adage that there are no bad soldiers, only bad officers. The British quickly followed their example. The British and French trained and equipped Indians for the same reasons American leaders want to use SFA today—it was much cheaper to use local soldiers to fight in India. Europeans

were paid much higher salaries, took months to travel from Europe, did not want to remain in India for long, and were vulnerable to local diseases.

Under the dynamic leadership of Robert Clive, a mixed force of well-trained sepoys and British regulars won key battles and eventually secured India for the British.²⁷ The British then needed a large standing army to defend Indian borders and maintain domestic control. They institutionalized use of sepoy troops by commissioning Indian officers and creating an established army with official organizational tables.²⁸ The question for the British was how to train and arm a professional army of hundreds of thousands of Indians and maintain their loyalty. They worried that, as Clive later said, “We shall in the end teach the natives to beat us.”²⁹

The British ultimately used both commitment and compliance to maintain Indian Army loyalty. They paid well and regularly, gave excellent health care, and awarded life-long pensions.³⁰ The British made the idea of army service appealing as well. Warrior status, fancy uniforms, and unit pride made young Indian men want to join.³¹ Perhaps most importantly, regiments were raised along ethnic lines to keep Indians from rebelling against the British. This divide and conquer approach kept Indians more afraid of each other.³² Throughout all 200 years, British officers commanded sepoy units with Indian soldiers and officers serving under them. The British method overcame the principal-agent problem and the obvious interest divergence. Good pay, unit esprit de corps, and ethnic divisions enabled the British to use an FSF for their own national interests.

KMAG and the ROKA

Following World War II, the United States sent trainers to South Korea to organize indigenous security forces. Initially, the Provisional Military Advisory Group

(PMAG) oversaw training that was focused on defeating communist subversion, which it successfully did.³³ The PMAG did not train the new ROKA to fight a conventional war. PMAG was eventually re-designated as the United States Military Advisory Group to the Republic of Korea (KMAG). After the communist invasion, KMAG began rebuilding the ROKA to defeat the North Korean army.

Several re-trained ROKA units were sent into battle at the end of 1950 and some fought adequately. However, in April 1951, the 6th ROKA Division completely collapsed at Sachang-ri.³⁴ This debacle was followed in May by an even bigger collapse at Hyon-ri, where the ROKA III Corps disintegrated.³⁵ General James Van Fleet, commander of the U.S. Eighth Army, determined that KMAG had not properly prepared the ROKA. The army had expanded on paper only, and its officers did not understand how to fight modern war. U.S. commanders had no confidence in ROKA capabilities.

Van Fleet immediately implemented changes. He re-tooled KMAG by assigning a new commander (Brigadier General Cornelius E. Ryan), expanding its size, and assigning better quality officers. Van Fleet gave Ryan more power and more latitude, which Ryan used to seize control over the ROKA.³⁶ Ryan focused his reform efforts on three areas: basic training, collective training of field units, and advice and liaison during combat operations.³⁷ Ryan's KMAG officers supervised all training efforts and sent more and better advisers to Korean tactical units.³⁸ Advisers became involved in every aspect of the ROKA, including organization, administration, and officer selection. Ryan empowered tactical advisers with enough leverage to control Korean units. He emphasized that U.S. advisers had no official command authority, but they ran the ROKA. His goal was for the ROKA to fight better immediately and eventually be self-

sufficient. The regenerated ROKA fought again in 1952 and 1953, and their performance was exemplary. General Van Fleet and other senior American leaders earnestly praised the ROKA after several hard-earned successes against the Chinese.³⁹

In the case of the Korean War, the United States and South Korea faced a powerful common enemy that reduced principal-agent interest misalignment. Important national interests played a central role in this SFA mission. The war was existential for the ROK and a central part of American containment of communism. Biddle et al examine the case of Korea and conclude this unusually close alignment of interests primarily caused the SFA effort to succeed.⁴⁰ But this is not entirely the case. U.S. and ROK interests were aligned from the moment North Korea invaded, but the South Koreans did not fight effectively until after the KMAG was reformed and took control of the ROKA using compliance methods. The change was not closer interest alignment, but KMAG's direct control. The U.S. devoted enormous resources to training the ROKA, but it was KMAG's change in approach that made the training effective.

Iraq and Afghanistan

Despite enormous investments, SFA efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan have mostly failed.⁴¹ The SFA structures in both places did not give advisers leverage. Leaders actively discouraged compliance in favor of relationships and commitment influencing.⁴² In practice, however, advisers developed their own leverage. Compared to KMAG, SFA in both Iraq and Afghanistan got significantly more funding and more advisers.⁴³ But because advisers had no hard power, neither effort was as successful as in Korea.

In Iraq, the U.S. military initially had de facto control over Iraqi Security Forces (ISF). Starting with the Iraqi Civil Defense Corps (ICDC), which American authorities formed a few months after the invasion, early ISF relied on the U.S. military for

everything, including logistics, weapons, infrastructure, and pay.⁴⁴ The U.S. did not assign adviser teams to these units but partnered them with nearby American tactical units. According to maneuver commanders, the ICDC was very useful.⁴⁵ Without local assistance, Americans struggled with civil unrest and battling insurgents. ICDC soldiers were neither well trained nor well equipped but spoke the language and knew the culture, making them extremely valuable to Americans. Also, because the ICDC believed their jobs to be completely dependent on the U.S. military, they took all their direction from partnered American commanders.⁴⁶ Colonel Sean Kuester, then a company commander, had a partnered ICDC company he employed as needed. He used them extensively for static site security and civil disturbances. They took orders from him as if he were their commander.⁴⁷

During the first few years in Iraq, some U.S. units were training their partner Iraqi units well. However, there was no coordinated, comprehensive plan similar to the 1951 KMAC design, where U.S. advisers supervised training and embedded during operations.⁴⁸ Many U.S. soldiers complained that Iraqi forces lacked basic soldier skills and discipline. This manifested itself in the often referred to “death blossoms” (meaning they fired wildly in all directions) when Iraqi soldiers engaged enemy fighters.⁴⁹

The situation in Iraq changed as time went on. All Iraqi Army forces were consolidated into the Iraqi Army proper and controlled by the Iraqi Ministry of Defense (MOD).⁵⁰ Unlike in Korea, Americans gave military aid directly to the MOD, which then issued equipment and paid soldiers through the Iraqi chain of command. Tactical advisers were not involved.⁵¹ The military was in a rush to establish competent Iraqi units based on guidance from President George Bush: “As Iraqis stand up, we will stand

down.”⁵² To develop the Iraqi Army quickly, American leaders wanted the MOD to control all administration and logistic systems. The goal was an Iraqi Army that functioned independently of U.S. advisers.

U.S. advisers lost influence as the Iraqi chain of command assumed control over its forces.⁵³ The military sent specially-formed adviser teams to embed with Iraqi Army units. But after several rotations, they had less and less influence on the Iraqis. For the most part, the Iraqi Army cooperated well with U.S. forces throughout the conflict.⁵⁴ However, the reliance on relationships limited influence. American officers adjusted in two ways: they did not ask Iraqis to make far-reaching changes and used innovative ways to create leverage.⁵⁵ According to Brigadier General Ross Coffman, then a lieutenant colonel, Americans only made requests that were agreeable to their Iraqi counterparts. With more leverage, Coffman would have made significant changes to IA training and operations. This was generally the case with most maneuver commanders and advisers during this period. They wanted to preserve relationships, so they did not ask for too much. Colonel Steven Barry, then a major, wanted to increase Iraqi offensive patrols, inspect IA maintenance systems, and audit their supply areas. The Iraqis would never agree to these initiatives, so he did not suggest them. Forcing Iraqi leaders to say no might damage the relationship.⁵⁶

To increase their influence, both American advisers and commanders used inventive ways to create leverage. Maneuver commanders had far more supplies and assets than advisers, so they had more success influencing Iraqis.⁵⁷ This undercuts doctrine because it was advisers who were with their counterparts on a daily basis and had closer relationships. Maneuver commanders did not see Iraqi leaders as often, but

because they had supplies and combat enablers, they had more influence. Some advisers used MOD-directed, IA milestones as leverage. The adviser would tell his counterpart what he had to do to meet MOD goals and how advisers could help. Others used the adviser chain of command to pressure counterparts. This was limited since the Iraqi leadership had similar interests up and down the chain. As a company commander, Lieutenant Colonel Teddy Kleisner found a clever way to influence the Iraqi Police (IP), who had fewer shared interests with U.S. forces compared to the IA. He held a weekly claims court for Iraqi civilians where he adjudicated claims against U.S. forces. The Iraqi police arranged and managed the meeting so that they got credit from the locals. In return, the IPs agreed to security initiatives.⁵⁸

In Afghanistan, the SFA approach and structure was similar. Leaders expected advisers to use relationships and rapport to gain influence. Most also bartered, trading resources like HESCO barriers for Afghan concessions.⁵⁹ Other American advisers made themselves valuable by coordinating for U.S. combat enablers to support Afghan operations.⁶⁰ Brigadier General Walrath described using a technique he called “advising upwards” to gain clout with his counterparts. He was a colonel advising a corps, and he often worked with higher U.S. advisers to rescind unreasonable MOD orders. His counterpart was always grateful for this help. Walrath had a very fruitful relationship, and his advice was normally followed.⁶¹

Afghan special operations forces (SOF) were advised differently from regular Afghan Army units. American SOF handpicked, equipped, trained, and directly paid (three times the normal salary) Afghan SOF.⁶² Any soldier deemed unfit could be immediately dismissed. This Afghan unit was fiercely loyal to the U.S. and highly

effective in combat. American operations officers gave them orders through an Afghan chain of command that rubber-stamped every mission. Practically speaking, Afghan SOF were under U.S. command.

In both Afghanistan and Iraq, American advisers had limited influence, especially compared to the British Indian Army and the KMAG. American units directly resourced early Iraqi security forces and had total control over them. But advisers lost influence as Iraqis became more independent. Advisers found commitment influencing inadequate to make meaningful change and searched for ways to gain leverage (compliance influencing), either through supplies or other creative methods.⁶³ U.S. aid went to the MOD and then came down through FSF channels, not through advisers. Advisers had none of their own resources to offer except military know-how and support from American enablers. With so little to offer, advisers could not consistently influence counterparts to work toward U.S. goals. Afghan SOF was the exception. Americans funded them directly and had their complete loyalty. Colonel Eric Strong said that some advisers had excellent rapport in both Iraq and Afghanistan, but counterparts ultimately wanted to know, “what things can you bring me?”⁶⁴

Current Doctrine

The American military has made relationships and commitment influencing the foundation of advising foreign forces. This method, in contrast to compliance, has a better chance to be permanent. However, American leaders should reexamine how well this method influences people in impoverished countries who are struggling for survival. The addition of hard power tools would give advisers leverage to use if commitment is inadequate.

The *Commander's Handbook for Security Force Assistance* captures the essence of adviser doctrine concisely with the slogan: "It's the relationship, stupid."⁶⁵ The goal is to gain commitment and not force compliance.⁶⁶ The commitment method attempts to change values and attitudes to produce longer lasting changes. Forming close, trust-based relationships with counterparts is essential to gaining commitment. As such, manuals focus on three main elements of relationship-building: establishing rapport, cross-cultural influencing, and negotiating. Field Manual 3-07.10, *Advising*, defines the key components of rapport as understanding, respect, trust, and being culturally open.⁶⁷ Advisers are told to be enthusiastic, learn the local language, and respect the counterpart's age and rank. Quality of rapport can be measured by how well advisers "can influence their counterpart to take the desired action."⁶⁸ To influence a counterpart, army doctrine recommends learning the cultural values and beliefs held by the host nation people. It also suggests psychologist Robert B. Cialdini's six principles of persuasion as relevant to "virtually any culture and any group."⁶⁹ To negotiate well, the recommendation is to consider cultural perceptions, time and environment, and negotiating style.⁷⁰

In contrast, the compliance method of influencing is based on authority or coercion and useful for short-term requirements. Incentives and disincentives are used to change behavior. However, this will work only as long as the behavior can be monitored and can "cause irreparable damage to the relationship."⁷¹ Military doctrine firmly dismisses coercion and compliance as useful methods of influencing a counterpart, and "they should be used only in extreme circumstances."⁷²

Pre-deployment training for advisers has focused almost entirely on commitment influencing.⁷³ Advisers are taught cultural niceties and phrases in the local language, and they practice negotiation. Former advisers talked to trainees about their own experiences and give tips on relationships. Additionally, advisers have access to numerous articles written by former advisers, which stress the same themes.⁷⁴

However, current doctrine is inadequate and the U.S. military should revise it to give advisers more options. It does not use the appropriate psychological approach to understand the fundamentals of influencing, nor does it sufficiently address what should happen when interest divergence occurs. Rapport and negotiation skills are unlikely to be enough to bridge significantly diverged interests between adviser and counterpart. Military doctrine is right to emphasize the importance of relationships, and advisers must consider them essential. When commitment can work, it is ideal. However, affection is not routinely enough to motivate people to act against their interests. Take Cialdini six influencing principles which he developed for his best-selling book, *Influence: The Psychology of Persuasion*.⁷⁵ Cialdini gives excellent tips on how to influence people and military advisers should study and apply his principles when appropriate. But there will be limits to this method. Cialdini is primarily a consumer researcher, and, in developing his philosophy, he studied used car salesmen, advertisers, telemarketers, and charities—people who try to influence consumers.⁷⁶ This can certainly be useful, but it is markedly different from influencing an FSF counterpart. Donating to one charity over another or buying one product instead of another is a different psychological calculation than asking a counterpart to risk his position in an unstable country where physical survival is not certain. Moreover,

behavioral scientists do the vast majority of their studies on Westerners, which may not give the military what it needs.⁷⁷ The military must carefully consider the psychological method it uses.

Furthermore, the discussion on negotiation is misguided. It fails to address the most fundamental part of a negotiation: bargaining power. The goal of a negotiation is for both parties to get something. The manuals tell advisers how to plan a negotiation using reliable strategies, but does not mention bargaining power. Power relationships in a negotiation are either symmetrical or asymmetrical. In the latter, the weaker side has more difficulty winning concessions. Unempowered advisers are in a perpetually weak position; a counterpart may not make meaningful concessions in exchange for only friendship.

Advising claims that “no amount of resources or firepower can compensate for a lack of relationship between an advisor and the FSF counterpart.”⁷⁸ This statement goes too far. In both Iraq and Afghanistan, there were limits to relying only on relationships and rapport. Without formal authority or genuine leverage, advisers bargained with their counterparts, either by supplying them, coordinating for enabler support, using MOD milestones, or creatively using the chain of command (all compliance-based techniques). Offering military expertise can be valuable, but after several rotations of advisers, its value decreases. Maneuver commanders normally had more influence than advisers because they had more resources.⁷⁹ While advisers had closer relationships with their counterparts, they had substantially less influence.⁸⁰

The military should rewrite doctrine using a different psychological approach. Americans operate at the top of Maslow’s hierarchy of needs, while people in unstable

states normally operate at the bottom. In these volatile environments, basic human needs, particularly security, are threatened. When U.S. and FSF interests diverge, U.S. advisers may be asking counterparts to work toward American interests, which could threaten their lives, their property, or their livelihood. FSF concerns are likely to be focused on basic human needs—the bottom of Maslow’s hierarchy. They often see a domestic political struggle as a fight for their sect’s supremacy or complete ruin. In 2003, Lieutenant General Edward Cardon met a friendly sheik in Fallujah who was willing to assist Americans. The sheik told Cardon that Iraq had been occupied by foreign powers many times, and the foreign powers had always left. So, he told Cardon, when the Americans leave, he had to be on the right side.⁸¹ The sheik’s primary concern was different from the American goal of a multi-ethnic, democratic Iraq—he wanted to survive.

In reconsidering its approach to advising, the military should examine the limits of commitment influencing. Self-interest matters, especially to people struggling to maintain basic needs. It is harder for them to take risks because, if things go wrong, consequences can be dire. As humans take care of basic needs and move up Maslow’s hierarchy, they tend to become more altruistic. Dr. Joe Magee argues that economists make better policy than psychologists because they understand the fundamental role of self-interest.⁸² Rational choice theory claims that humans calculate the likely costs and benefits of every decision they make before choosing what is in their best interest.⁸³ There are plenty of examples of humans not working in their best interests. However, generally speaking, people struggling to meet basic needs are more likely to behave rationally and act in their best interest, since the wrong calculation can be catastrophic.

The compliance method of influencing is reliable, albeit less likely to effect long-lasting change. Nevertheless, advisers may need to use compliance, especially when interests have diverged. For example, an American adviser may want to make a move that strengthens the federal army over the counterpart's ethnic sect. This puts the counterpart in a difficult position (the same position as Lieutenant General Cardon's sheik), and he is likely to ignore the suggestion. In this case, compliance or coercion may be required. Moreover, whether through compliance or commitment, army operating procedures often become permanent once established. The modern Indian Army is still based on the British military model.⁸⁴

Hence, the U.S. military should examine how to give compliance powers to advisers. According to renowned psychologists, John French and Bertram Raven, there are five types of power:⁸⁵

- | | | |
|------------|---|---|
| Commitment | { | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Expert - from knowledge and skill.• Referent - from credibility or respect. |
| Compliance | { | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Legitimate - from an authoritative role.• Reward - from having resources or the ability to compensate.• Coercive - from force or ability to punish. |

While current military doctrine does not examine the types of power specifically, the commitment method uses only the first two. Advisers need the remaining three, all compliance powers, to be more effective. An adviser should generally not employ compliance as the first option, but it should be available if commitment fails. Going back to the example of India, the British gained commitment from Indian soldiers, but they applied compliance as well. Using authority, resources, ethnic division, and coercion, the British skillfully maintained Indian Army loyalty. U.S. leaders have the ability to

empower American advisers so long as a financial investment is being made to the FSF.

In creating an SFA structure, planners should give advisers leverage in the form of legitimate, reward, and coercive powers. Each SFA mission is different, so some tools will be inappropriate for certain situations but effective in others. Importantly, incentives and disincentives must be adapted to the particular FSF to ensure they have value.⁸⁶ Reward and coercive powers are often tied together—a resource can be provided or withheld to generate the effect. Legitimacy is derived from an organizational position with formal responsibilities and authorities. U.S. planners can assign formal responsibilities to advisers to give them legitimacy. See the table below for some ideas.

Table 1. SFA Empowerment Recommendations

Recommendation	Type of Power	Explanation
Adviser Budget	Reward	A small budget gives advisers resource power. The bigger the budget, the greater the influence.
Requisition & Accountability	Coercive	Requiring advisers to account for major pieces of equipment and giving them requisition authority make them valuable to the FSF.
Pay & Equipment	Reward / Coercive	In extreme cases, American advisers should pay and issue equipment directly to FSF soldiers.
Certifications	Legitimacy	Require advisers to certify FSF units for meeting training requirements or performing missions in accordance with directives. This can be enhanced by requiring the higher level adviser to certify, making adviser and counterpart work as a team toward certification.
Training	Legitimacy	U.S. leaders can design and control FSF training, from individual through unit collective training.
Leader Selection & Promotion	Legitimacy	The U.S. can use promotions to build support and gain leverage. General Van Fleet quarreled with South Korean President Syngman Rhee over this question and won concessions. ⁸⁷ The result was recruitment of officers who were militarily competent, not just loyal to Rhee.
Operational Control	Legitimacy	Assign FSF units to American commanders.

Advisers must continue to creatively find their own leverage as well while striving to maintain good relationships (just as Korean War advisers did). Additionally, more advisers assigned to FSF units means more influence (especially if empowered).

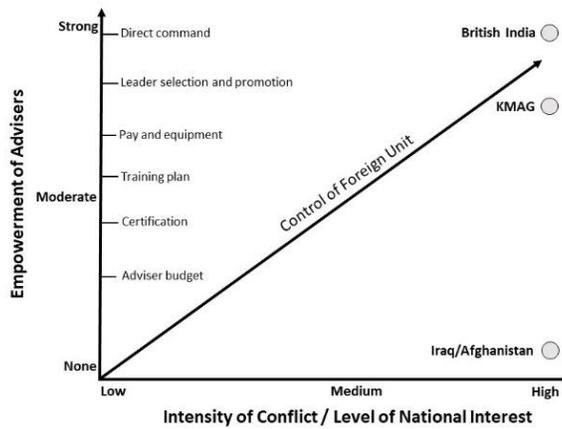


Figure 2. SFA Empowerment and National Interests⁸⁷

Returning to the graph, the higher the level of national interest or danger, the more empowerment is needed for the advisers to influence or control the FSF.⁸⁸

Empowerment is scalable. Advisers can have minor reward power or, at the high end, complete control over FSF units (such as K MAG and British India).

Conclusions and Recommendations

American military leaders should revise the old phrase “there are no bad soldiers, only bad officers” to “there are no bad foreign security forces, only bad SFA structures.” Interests between the patron state and the FSF will always diverge at some point, but divergence can be overcome with an SFA structure where advisers have leverage. In designing such a structure, military planners must determine the degree of American national interest and the enemy threat. The higher they are, the more leverage advisers should have.

The U.S. military should first revise its doctrine. The guidance on relationship-building, establishing rapport, and negotiation should all remain. A good relationship is central to influencing a counterpart. The suggested techniques to get commitment are effective and likely to achieve most advising goals. But the doctrine must address hard

power and offer an alternative psychological approach. The current approach is based on motivating people at the top of Maslow's hierarchy, who are driven more by self-actualization than basic physiological needs and safety. Since most SFA efforts take place in countries where basic needs are threatened, motivational techniques need to be different. Advisers should understand the five types of power and how to use each one effectively. They should start with rapport and a good relationship and escalate to incentives, disincentives, or coercion, as needed.

Most importantly, American leaders should deliberately empower advisers at every level through a well-designed structure. If advisers have power that is recognized by their counterparts, their relationships will revolve around that power. Just the understanding that this power exists is likely to boost their influence.⁸⁹ Powerful people are treated differently. Advisers may never even need to actually use their leverage. They can rely on a good relationship that is based on symmetrical power. When Lieutenant Colonel Yeo arrived at the 12th ROKA Division, his counterpart knew that Leo had power. Unlike advisers in Iraq, he did not have to spend days and weeks trying to find creative ways to influence the Koreans. Yeo had instant credibility and stature. Moreover, in a comprehensive study after the war, KMAG advisers reported that they rarely ever had to use coercion to get their advice followed.⁹⁰ ROKA officers knew advisers had leverage and tried hard to comply. At the same time, advisers eagerly worked to maintain good relationships.⁹¹

In an SFA structure where advisers are empowered, American commanders should hold advisers accountable for the success and failures of their FSF unit, just as commanders did for KMAG advisers. Some advisers complained that they had

“command responsibility without command authority.”⁹² While this was technically true, they were empowered with control of resources and coercive methods, which gave them de facto command over the Korean unit.

In 2007, General David Petraeus and Ambassador Ryan Crocker effectively used compliance influencing. They demanded that Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki replace several Shiite brigade commanders whom they suspected of war crimes. Maliki refused. Petraeus and Crocker responded by withholding key supplies until Maliki gave in.⁹³ Advisers at all levels need similar leverage. It is surprising that, with billions of American dollars going to SFA, U.S. advisers lack real power.

The U.S. uses SFA to further American interests. Field Manual 3-07.1, *Security Force Assistance*, reminds advisers of this, but the point is lost in much of the current doctrine.⁹⁴ For example, *Advising* gives an exhaustive list of what advisers must do to be successful but never mentions representing U.S. interests.⁹⁵ It also claims that “advisors only succeed by supporting the success of the FSF counterpart,” implying that advisers are there more to support the counterpart than for American national interests.⁹⁶ However, advisers are there to help oversee a return on the SFA investment. They should approach the job with a clear mandate to represent the principal and ensure the agent is worth the expense.

TE Lawrence wrote that advisers should not fix problems themselves, saying, “Better the Arabs do it tolerably than that you do it perfectly.”⁹⁷ He meant that FSFs develop better if allowed to find their own solutions. However, his comment needs modification today to read: “Better the Arabs do *what we want* tolerably than you do it perfectly.”

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