The partner predicament: US building partnership capacity, the War on Terrorism and what the US cannot overlook

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Abstract

This paper explores factors the United States should use to assess potential partners under its Building Partnership Capacity (BPC) endeavor used in the fight against terror. This paper examines two broad variable categories on which to base such evaluations: compliance and capability. In this context, this paper will focus upon guidelines and policy-based process to maximize scientific, technical and socio-cultural resource sharing, in building partnerships in the war on terror. A poor choice of partner has ramifications that cascades through US strategic, operation and tactical efforts. This paper explores the justification for BPC and attempts to identify the minimum factors the US must examine prior to partnering with a country. This paper advocates more thoughtful consideration prior to committing significant US government resources to another country. In order to avoid strategic mistakes, the US needs to evaluate potential partners carefully so that it does not find itself mired in endless commitments and continuous counterinsurgency operations. Building partnership capacity requires strategic thinking by policymakers so the US does not find itself partnered with a country that it cannot influence or simply lacks the capability to be an effective partner.

Key words: building partnership capacity, host nation, governance

Introduction

A critical consideration for the United States' (US) war on terrorism is the need to determine what makes a reliable partner. Since 2001, the US has emphasized Building Partnership Capacity (BPC) as its strategic approach for the war on terrorism. BPC focuses on building or improving a partner country's capabilities through a concerted, whole-of-government approach by the US government so that the partner can provide security and stability within their country. Capacity building is officially defined in US Army Field Manual 3-07 as, "the process of creating an environment that fosters host-nation institutional development, community participation, human resources development, and strengthening managerial systems." (1) The emphasis is on developing the host nation's ability so that through cooperative social and military endeavors undertaken by the United States and partner nation(s) the partner is able to disrupt internal terrorist, insurgent and

criminal activity (2). BPC is the foundational element of both Stability Security Transition and Reconstruction Operations (SSTR), where partnering with other nations is a key assumption, and counter insurgency operations where building host nation legitimacy is critical to success.

This paper explores factors, the metaphorical "construction materials" that the US should use to assess potential partners prior to embarking on a BPC approach and joining forces in the fight against terror (3). This paper will focus upon guidelines and policy-based process to maximize scientific, technical and socio-cultural resource sharing, in building such partnerships. A poor choice of partner has ramifications that cascades through US strategic, operational and tactical efforts. This paper does not provide an exhaustive list of all variables that could be considered, but rather identifies the minimum factors the US must examine prior to partnering with a country. Assessing a partner's potential is difficult since a success-

ful partnership ultimately relies upon faith that the other country can satisfy American security needs. Building partnership capacity requires strategic thinking by policy-makers so that the US does not become partnered with a country that 1) it cannot influence, or 2) simply lacks the capability to be an effective partner.

This paper does not urge rejection of the current BPC concept, but advocates more thoughtful consideration prior to committing significant US governmental resources to another country. In order to avoid strategic mistakes, the US should evaluate potential partners so as to avoid being mired in endless commitments and continuous counterinsurgency operations. This paper examines two broad variable categories on which to base such evaluations: compliance and capability. In other words, what is the will and what is the skill of the partner. Compliance, the will, is critical because if the partner does not have a shared strategic interest, the US will struggle to achieve its own strategic objective. Capability is critical because the US must, at some level, enable the partner in order to achieve the US strategic objective.

The Building Partnership Capacity rationale

Building Partnership Capacity (BPC) serves as the strategic method for the United States to help deter and defeat terrorist threats against the United States for two primary reasons. First, the "American System" of international relations described by Ikenberry does not apply to the countries the US finds itself partnering with in the war on terrorism (4). The US finds itself partnering with countries that reside in the "Gap" according to Barnett (5). Second, the global terrorist threat is geographically and ideologically diffuse. These conditions strain finite US resources. Because of the geographic vastness where terrorist groups reside, the US must partner with resident nations. The terrorist threat requiring US military involvement is existential and ideologically, while the terrorist threat to the US comes largely from Islamic groups, the threat is certainly not monolithic. By partnering with states or entities familiar with the terrorist problem that understand regional geography and culture, the US can leverage their partner's capabilities. Further, utilizing and enabling partner forces is less costly than using US forces and limits the presence of US forces in areas sensitive to such intrusions (2). Although BPC makes sense from a US standpoint, it represents a departure from the multilateral security environment familiar to the US.

During the Cold War and prior to 9/11, the United States had developed what Ikenberry labeled the "American System", which describes US partnerships within the international order based on a framework of multilateral relationships (4). Ikenberry argues the US strategy should continue to stress multilateral relationships in its fight against terrorism and reinvigorate the alliances, multilateral cooperation and commitment to building mutually beneficial agreements that lapsed post 9-11 (4). But Barnett notes that the traditional security approaches stressed in Ikenberry's "American System" are diluted in the current security environment. As Barnett contends, "Mutually assured destruction, deterrence, collective security inside the Core is not altered…because it simply does not apply in the Core—only to the Gap. Inside the Core we have a host of official mechanisms, both bilateral and multilateral, to deal with any security issues that arise." (5) These mechanisms do not apply to countries in the "Gap". Yet, in the war on terrorism, the US finds itself partnering with these "Gap" countries.

According to Barnett, globalization accounts for two distinct groupings in today's security environment. First, countries that have embraced globalization and by default are connected to others within the globalized network are considered the "functioning core". Core countries accept global connectivity, can handle the content flows that connect their economies to the global economy, and are willing to harmonize their indigenous rule sets to meet the global rules of democracy, law and free markets. Barnett claims the "functioning core" consists of North America, Europe, Russia, Japan, China, India, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, Argentina, Brazil and Chile. The remaining countries in the world are disconnected and are considered to be in the "non-integrating gap." "Gap" countries are characterized by their disconnectedness to the rest of the world, poor leadership, resource intensive exports, theocracies, poor geography, illicit economic activities, and marginal treatment of women (5). "Gap" countries offer sanctuaries for terrorists and represent a shift in US focus within the international security environment because these "Gap" countries now represent the threat to the US, not a near peer competitor. With multilateralism's limited application in the "Gap", the US focus is bilateral, partnering with nations individually and tailoring its approach within the context of the terrorist threat.

Second, the threat is diffuse, both geographically and ideologically. Kilcullen claims that the war on terrorism is best understood as a global Islamic insurgency and

must be fought as an insurgency rather than as a counter-terrorism campaign (6). While Kilcullen's notion may be debatable, each country host to an Islamic insurgent group has different needs, wants and capabilities to contain their localized Islam terrorist group. Kilcullen states that the key to defeating this insurgency is to disaggregate the disparate Islamic insurgent groups so that they cannot function together as a whole (6). Because BPC advocates an individualized approach with a partner, it conceivably enables the US to disaggregate the interconnectedness of groups, such as al Qaida, that operate in multiple countries. BPC is the mechanism to implement a "divide and conquer" strategy.

Moreover, by partnering individually with nations, BPC allows the United States to cope with a global security problem that threatens to disrupt the world order while also recognizing the importance of what Frederick Hartmann labeled, "conservation of enemies". (7) Enmity is a permanent condition with which a country must cope. Critical within this dynamic is the ability for a country to prioritize and scope its interactions so that it is not facing an overwhelming threat. In other words, a nation has limited capability to cope with all threats so it must conserve its energies in order to meet the most pressing threats. Since terrorist groups exist throughout the world and span the spectrum from those that are poorly organized, disjointed and motivated by money to those that are highly organized, coordinated and motivated by ideology, the US must be able to focus its assets in key areas. The most dangerous armed groups are those that are ideologically motivated, organized, and armed with the support of an external power (8). Globalization has enabled terrorist groups to transform from regional challenges to major, strategic security threats since terrorist groups can exist in failed states or ungoverned areas using undetectable communication technologies to strike at the globalized world (9). By empowering other nations, BPC helps the US conserve its resources in the face of a globalized foe.

Consequently, the shift away from "Core" countries to "Gap" countries and the resultant US need to rely more on bilateral than multilateral relationships to thwart terrorism provides the context for the US BPC endeavor that has become part of the prevailing US strategic tenets. A key theme of both the US National Security Strategy of 2006 and the US National Security Strategy of 2010 is that the United States must strengthen alliances and build partnership capacities to defeat global terrorism and work to prevent attacks against itself and its allies (10, 11).

The Defense Security Cooperation Agency's Strategic Plan 2006-2011, states that agency's primary mission is to build allied and partner capacities for self-defense and coalition operations in the global war on terrorism (12). In the May 2006 Building Partnership Capacity: Quadrennial Directed Review Execution Roadmap, US strategic objectives are described as, "unattainable without a unified approach among capable partners at home and with key friends and allies abroad." (13) To that end, "whenever advisable, the United States will work with or through others: enabling allied and partner capabilities, building their capacity and developing collaborative mechanisms to share the decisions, risks and responsibilities of today's complex challenges." (13) Unfortunately, as the United States has discovered in Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iraq, working by, with and through others does not necessarily mean that a partner's capability will improve or that they will share risks and responsibilities.

US limitations

The US experience partnering with Afghanistan, Iraq and Pakistan has shown that sometimes partner relationships can be fickle. In Afghanistan, President Hamid Karzai has proven to be unpredictable ally at least publicly, while Afghan security forces are only marginally capable after nine years of US and North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) mentoring. The Iraqi government ripples with sectarianism while ethnic strife plagues the country hampering both US and Iraqi government initiatives to improve governance, establish a stable economy and provide nation-wide security. While its government readily accepts US aid, the Pakistani government proffers a less than robust effort to squash the Taliban sanctuary in the North West Provinces and Federally Administrated Tribal Area (FATA) of their country. The US has struggled at times with these partners.

A critical component of the US BPC effort is the other country's capacity. US capacity building efforts can be no more enduring than the available "construction materials" with which to build (3). Host nations must provide a substantial portion of the solution to any terrorist threat lurking within their borders yet much of the literature on US capacity building focuses on improving US capabilities rather than the partner's capacity. Douville, Worthan and Wuestner advocate organizational improvement for US partnering efforts. Douville proposes a structural solution to improve the United States' ability to respond effectively in multiple and simultaneous SSTR operations (14).

Worthan notes that the benefit of a correctly structured Joint Task Force (JTF) headquarters and claims the appointment of a deputy to the JTF commander for SSTR operations will help overcome any interagency members' shortcomings and greatly aid the SSTR coordination (15). Wuestner examines how the State Department's new Civil Response Corps and the Army's BPC and SSTR capabilities complement one another arguing that the Army should establish a Security Assistance and Advisory Command, which would provide combatant commanders with trained regional experts to conduct BPC (16). Crawford claims the US Army must improve the training and education of soldiers to better prepare them for capacity building (17). Crowley, et.al, find in their Strong Angel Report that the US military lacks training and equipment to operate effectively in an SSTR environment, and argue that better training programs and personnel selection process will improve the United States ability to conduct SSTR (18). The Center for New American Security report, Beyond Bullets, discusses the importance of seeking, enabling and improving partner capability to counter violent extremism, but does not address specific partner capacity (19). While Teichert notes that the host nation is the critical component in the partner relationship and must be enabled to defeat the threat, he provides no analysis of partner capabilities (20). Seemingly, the US is more inward focused assessing its own "construction materials" rather than the partner's ability to man, train and equip itself to handle a terrorist threat.

The US military has struggled to develop effective partners because as defined, BPC requires improving a host nation's governance capacity, political moderation and good governance. In the war on terrorism, the US finds itself often partnering with countries that have limited governance capacity, muted economic vitality and are generally disconnected from globalized world. Many of these countries lack an economic constituency that demands security and infrastructure from the government to enable business activity. These countries typify Barnett's "Gap" countries (5). Moreover, the US military bears the burden of developing a host nation's capacities, which goes beyond the traditional purview of the traditional US military partnering missions of security cooperation and foreign internal defense.

According to US strategic directives, capacity building requires a functioning legal framework and economic capacity allowing further utilization and enhancement of the host nation's human, technological, organizational, and institutional resources (1). By promising, expecting or needing to build governance and economic capacity, the US government in effect, commits more than US military capabilities to a partner yet the US military is expected to provide the majority of the effort and resources to building partnership capacity. Both US Army Field Manual 3-07: Stability Operations, and Field Manual 3-24: Counterinsurgency, advocate the whole of government approach in which the different departments and agencies within the US government integrate their efforts so that all instruments of power are used to help improve host nation institutions (1, 21, 22). However, US regulatory agencies and federal departments by definition regulate processes that already exist. For example, the Department of Agriculture does not build farms nor does the Department of Commerce create economies. They regulate such processes by leveraging government policy for better agriculture efforts or economic vitality. Therefore, the whole-of-government approach advocated by the US to accomplish BPC is a misnomer since the US government is not trained, equipped or manned to meet the requirements of BPC.

Out of necessity, the US government has placed the BPC mission upon the US Department of Defense. Security is a necessary requirement for partnership capacity to take place and the US military provides it. Prior to 9/11, the US military had maintained and continues to retain a significant foreign engagement effort to cultivate relationships in regions where the US may need access. Also, the substantial manpower and resources of the US military coupled with its authoritative environment gives the US government through the US military the ability to engage a partner on a number of different levels. Hence, the US military bears the burden of BPC. Yet, the US military is an organization organized, trained, equipped and resourced for a wholly different set of tasks and therefore, partnership capacity becomes a US military strategy rather than a broad US whole-of-government strategy.

This is problematic in that the US military's general purpose forces are finite and limited. While skilled at security and helping other nations develop security through security cooperation agreements or the foreign internal defense mission, the US military is not an internal development agency. Thus, if security hinges on the US military as the primary architect of a partner's economic vitality and good governance, the US will continue to struggle to build competent, effective partners willing and capable of meeting their strategic interests. The structural and func-

tional limitations of the US military withstanding, the US needs to assess a partner's (metaphorical) "construction materials" before undertaking capacity building.

Partner problems and BPC

A partner's "construction materials" fall into two broad categories: compliance and capability. First, the United States, to a varying degree, is reliant on another country to achieve its strategic objectives. Success often depends on the partner who may or may not share similar objectives or have the capability to serve US interests. This is the "will" problem. As Sun Tzu has stated, "One who is not acquainted with the designs of his neighbor should not enter into alliances with them." (23) The US in its pursuit of building partnership capacity can find itself in the classic dilemma of agency theory where a principal actor works through an agent to help achieve the principal's goals. In partner relationships, three problems can occur. First, the partners' goals can conflict. Second, the partners may have different risk tolerances and may prefer different tactics because of those tolerances (24). A third problem within principal-agent relationships is the difficulty the principal has in verifying what the agent is actually doing (24). While all three of these may impact US BPC efforts, another prominent concern is the partner country's relative ability to build its capacity.

In the fight against terrorism, the US finds itself trying to build the capacity of countries that have limited resources, limited governance and limited economic development. Capacity building, according to FM 3-07:

> *…includes efforts to improve governance capacity, political moderation, and good governance—ethos as well as structure—as part of broader capacity-building activities within a society. Supported by appropriate policy and legal frameworks, capacity building is a long-term, continuing process, in which all actors contribute to enhancing the host nation's human, technological, organizational, institutional, and resource capabilities (1).*

Countries that the US needs to partner with may simply not have the ability to become an effective partner. This is the capability problem. Barnett notes that where globalization has spread, stable governments exist that require neither military intervention nor should be considered threats. However, beyond globalization's frontiers are the failed states that command US attention (5). It is in these weak states that terrorist groups can thrive, and through these weak states the US, currently and in the future, tries to build capacity.

The partner nation has a better grasp than the US of local language, networks, and culture, and the US military is limited in its capability. Further, the goal of BPC is government legitimacy, therefore the host nation, not the US, must be the one to defeat an insurgency (25). The US, then, must closely evaluate the potential partner to avoid the strategic mistake of committing to a partner that will not or cannot help the United States meet its strategic interest of thwarting the terrorist threat. The following section explores the key factors involving a potential partner's will and capability the US must assess.

Compliance factors

Shared common interest: A common interest between parties is at the root of compliance according to Schelling. In diplomacy each party controls what the other wants to a certain extent and can get more by compromise, exchange or collaboration than by taking things into his own hands (26). While US policymakers should assume that the partner will act out of self interest within the relationship, they need to discern if the host-nation government or partner entity shares the desire to rid itself of the cancerous terrorist cells that exist within its borders. Without any commonality of purpose, US partnership efforts, no matter if it is security cooperation or full blown stability operations, are useless. Risk tolerance and the length of the partnership relationship are two corollaries demanding assessment within the context of a shared common interest (24).

Risk tolerances need to be assessed throughout the partnership by US officials because if the partner country is more risk-averse than the US, the US will require a greater commitment and likely will not succeed if the partner is not willing to assume more of the risk for their own security situation. In turn, if the partner's relationship with US creates a greater set of problems for the partner, the partner may distance itself from US efforts or blame the US for efforts gone awry.

The length of the relationship determines the partners' level of knowledge of one another. A long term partnership building effort will allow the US to learn more about its partner, giving the US a better sense of why efforts are working or not working. In a short term relationship, nei-

ther the US nor the partner has enough information about each other to anticipate the results of their actions. US support to Afghanistan's mujahedeen through Pakistan in the 1980s is an example of a short-term relationship whose effects were understood only years later.

Conflict will likely exist between the US and a partner nation in such aspects as approach to the problem and overall goals. Both hopefully are driven by a shared self-interest in pursuing the terrorist threat but the cost-benefit calculus of partnering with the US is a key consideration for the partner nation. What the partner derives from the partnership needs to outweigh the negative consequences of partnering with the US. Therefore, in the strategic decision-making process, US policymakers must assess whether they can incentivize the partner, and determine what level of incentives will be required.

Incentivize: Some degree of conflict is unavoidable and with both sides pursuing their own self-interests in the relationship, the US first needs to know if it can change the behavior of the partner through incentives and to what degree incentivization will be required. In the three years following 9/11, the United States provided $4.7 billion to Pakistan in military aid. This was a 50,000 percent increase compared to the $9.1 million the United States had provided to Pakistan during the three years prior to 9/11 (27). Pakistan makes available air bases and key logistical support for US and NATO efforts in Afghanistan. However, Pakistan's commitment to helping the US by eliminating the Taliban's sanctuary within its borders has been less than definitive. The length of the relationship has been illuminating since the US has now had nine years in which to discover that incentivizing Pakistani cooperation may not always work. US policymakers need to know there are limits to incentives and that other factors may trump the US ability to incentivize partner behavior.

Third party influence: Pakistan's influence in Afghanistan through its location and tribal ties illustrates the critical influence a third party can play in US partnership efforts. The consequences of US partnership efforts often extend beyond the specific partner, particularly to those that have cultural or geographic connectivity to the state. In the case of Iraq the example would be Iran; in the case of Afghanistan it is Pakistan. Third party influence cuts both ways—it can help or hurt US efforts but it demands consideration. The US may be able to leverage a third party country to coerce the partner but third party influence may also distract from US partnership efforts. Iran

continues to support a Shiite insurgency against the US while trying to establish a Shiite-dominated government that leans towards Iran. Pakistan provides sanctuary to the Taliban and has had little success in destroying terrorist havens in the Northwest Frontier Provinces or the FATA. A third party that feels the consequences of US activities may influence an erstwhile partner that conflict with US objectives. Consequently, these third parties have a stake in the process and may seek to influence or mitigate US efforts with a partner. For Iran, the professionalization of the armed forces of their traditional Arab enemy by the United States is a concern. For Pakistan, US anti-Taliban efforts have resulted in increased disorder on Pakistan's western border. That, in turn, has further magnified the need for Pakistan to address the seemingly intractable problem of internal security in that area of the country.

Capability factors

The second problem of US BPC involves "capability", this is the skill problem. In the fight against terrorism, the US finds itself trying to build the capacity of countries that have limited resources, limited governance and limited economic means. While host nation countries may have the will, they may be unable to develop the capabilities desired by the US to control effectively the terrorism threat within their sphere of influence. Implicit within US BPC is the host nation taking some level of initiative to become self-sufficient. The host nation needs to develop a capability that allows the US to step back from providing governance and security. US policymakers (at a minimum) should consider the following five factors to determine if a partner will be able to develop the capability to help the US meet its strategic goals.

Culture: Culture, as applied to a society, is defined as the behaviors and beliefs characteristic of a particular social, ethnic, or age group that taken as a sum total of ways of living are built up by a group of human beings that are transmitted from one generation to another (28). In short, culture matters (29). Culture pervades the institutions, the power structures, the innovative propensities, the technological abilities, the levels of corruption and the social dynamics of a host nation. Specific cultures are more adept than others in providing good government to their citizens, fostering innovation, interconnecting to the broader world, and cultivating economic vibrancy (30, 31). Huntington, Inglehart, Fukuyama, Homer-Dixon and Gladwell note that cultures differ in their ability to influence a nation's prosperity and security. They stress the

importance of cultural influences in shaping the political and economic behavior of their societies (29, 30, 32-35).

However, many of the countries the US is currently partnered with or could potentially partner with in the war on terror are mired in a perpetual existence of poverty due to government failure, corruption, poorly educated workforces and an inability to link to the globalized world (34). Many of these countries struggle to improve their situation because they lack the institutions to cultivate good governance and security. In some of these countries, governments are weak, judicial systems corrupt, civil servants poorly trained and universities politicized. Therefore, many of these countries have less capacity to meet the demands of the globalized world (34). This environment is largely a result of cultural influences that affect their capability to partner with the US.

US policymakers need to understand that the culture of host nation will not change. Cultural tendencies persist tenaciously. For US partnership capacity to succeed, the host nation needs a solvent level of governance, economic capability and security. Moreover, the US tends to bring technologically sophisticated means and methods to the partnership so the partner should have some capacity to absorb these technologies. Most importantly, for a host country to have legitimacy in the eyes of its citizens, it has to take the initiative to become legitimate. A legitimate government responds to its citizens, honors human rights, exercises effective sovereignty and limits the overreach of government into civil society (10). Building a legitimate government in some of these countries is a monumental task and for BPC to succeed, the host nation government, not the US, at some point has to take matters into its own hands to cope with the terrorist threat and protect its citizens.

While both FM 3-07 and FM 3-24 recognize that cultural influences impact a host country's capacity to govern, cultural symptoms that point to a lack of initiative or an inability to improve their situation need to be discerned. (1, 21, 22) The ability to adapt, innovate, and develop economic and political institutions is culturally dependent. Key differences exist culturally that policymakers need to take into account when assessing a partner. Cultural influences that may or may not impede governance, economic development, or security impact the level that the US can accommodate in its partnership efforts. More importantly, the longer the relationship persists, the more urgent the need to determine if cultural factors are insurmountable

and if US efforts need to be re-evaluated. Additionally, because cultural influences are related to government effectiveness, culture impacts the potential for civil strife in a host nation. That, in turn, creates security issues for the host country. The US will bear a proportion of the associated security costs as it helps develop the partner's capacity.

Prone to insurgency: Some countries are more prone to insurgency than others. Fearon and Laitin find that certain countries have characteristics that favor insurgency: those countries that suffer from poverty and political instability, coupled with rough terrain and large populations, are more prone than others. These characteristics, and not the ethnic/religious characteristics of a country indicate a greater potential for an insurgency (36). More importantly, a state with a weak, corrupt government with a poorly resourced, organizationally inept military opposing the insurgents is conducive to an insurgency forming and prospering (36). These circumstances enable terrorist organizations to exist and to mature into an insurgency. In this environment, terrorist organizations are capable of remaining out of the reach of host nation security forces. If the US chooses a partner with an existing terrorist threat with which the host nation cannot cope, not only will it be incumbent upon the US to deal with that threat, but the insurgency will likely already have weakened the capability of the host nation forces. Thus, the US may find itself with unenviable task of fighting an insurgency while concurrently having to repair a badly damaged security force or building one from scratch (as it is currently doing in Afghanistan).

Democratization: Democratization summarizes the processes a nation undergoes to become a more democratic form of government. Successful democratization initiatives indicate to the policymaker the potential of a host country to enjoy legitimacy in the eyes of its citizens. Democratic forms of government tend to be viewed with more legitimacy since the people have a stake in their government. And, while certain Islamic countries have represented themselves as a moral alternative to the Western liberal democratic model, democracies tend to be economically stronger, better equipped to protect property rights, able to secure the rule of law and oversee laws without undue corruption (37, 38). Democratization can be measured through several variables but key among them is legitimacy which is broadly associated with the behavior of those in power (38). Both FM 3-07 and FM 3-24 stress the importance of establishing host nation le-

gitimacy (1, 21, 22). Host nation legitimacy allows the US to place greater reliance on the partner. Whether or not the formation of a mature, Western-style democracy occurs, a host nation that is incapable of meeting its constituents' needs on some level, will not be a feasible partner for the US. Policymakers therefore need to assess possible indicators of legitimacy or be able to tap into cultural institutions that can provide the government with legitimacy.

Colonial past: The colonial past of a partner needs to be considered for a number of reasons. First, former colonies are often impacted negatively both economically and politically by the colonial experience. Former colonies can be underdeveloped economically because the colonial power had extracted either mineral resources or agriculture products to a degree that left the colony almost exclusively dependent upon those goods for economic prosperity. Former Western colonies also suffer from ethnic and religious fractionalization because colonial powers had drawn essentially artificial borders for administrative or military reasons. Lastly, colonial powers often changed the traditional power dynamics of a region, which encouraged the rise of authoritarian rulers after the departure of the colonial power or provided fertile ground for competing groups to wage a struggle for supremacy (39). Therefore, the colonial experience may have left a potential partner less capable because they are poor, lack governmental legitimacy and have shown little initiative to improve their situation.

However, the colonial power may have had a positive influence depending on 1) who the colonial power was, and 2) the length of time the colonial power had influence. As Bernhard, Reenock and Nordstrom discuss, despite the long-held notion that Western colonialism had a harmful after effect on a country's ability to develop or sustain a democracy, this in fact may not be true (39). Colonial powers, in particular Great Britain, may have had positive impact on a country's post colonial period especially if they maintained the colony for a sustained period of time. As Huntington notes, if a country has had a democratic past or a previous experience with democracy, this often creates legitimacy problems for an authoritarian regime. According to Huntington, a country that has experienced democracy in the past would retain the belief that government legitimacy must be based on democratic practices (33). Thus, a partner that has experienced the kind of colonial rule that allowed for or required local democratic participation may be more amenable to US efforts at government reform. In comparison with other former Western colonial powers, the British colonial legacy has often been associated with more democratic initiatives during the colonial period and with better post colonial governments in the years that followed.

From an American perspecitve, a partner's capability could be directly linked to its colonial past. US policymakers need to scrutinize a partner's colonial legacy to determine if the former colonial power had exposed that partner to Western culture, economic models, governmental mechanisms and with what results. US policymakers need to assess what worked for the former colonial power in terms of establishing security or governance as well as what did not (40). Every country the US is currently partnered with has a colonial legacy that can be traced back to a European power.

International aid return on investment: The amount of foreign aid a potential partner has previously received and what the partner has accomplished with that aid is another potential indicator of a partner's capability. International aid, whether from Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO), the United Nations, or directly from the US, is an investment that seeks a return exceeding the opportunity cost (41). International aid seeks to improve a country in any number of ways. Aid could be short-term, such as famine relief, or a sustained partnership that provides military assistance for security purposes. Return on investment can be measured in multiple ways. Greater literacy rates, improved infant mortality rates, increased life expectancy and several other social measurements indicate that a country is effectively utilizing the aid it has been provided.

Kaplan notes that the examples of India and Sierra Leone demonstrate the differences in how countries benefit from aid. In the early 1960s, when the United States first established the Peace Corps, both Sierra Leone and India required basic agricultural know-how. Thirty years later, India had become a net food exporter and a producer of high technology with no further need of farm assistance. Sierra Leone, on the other hand, remained exactly where it was in the 1960s when the Peace Corps first arrived— an impoverished, economically stagnant, poorly governed country (42). Again, cultural influences are critical with what a country does with foreign aid, but what a country does with aid can say a great deal about that nation's initiative, its ability to improve its situation, and thus its capability to leverage what the US will provide in terms of partnership. US policymakers need to discern how po-

tential partners previously utilized foreign assistance to determine if they improved their situation in a sustainable manner. This, arguably, could bode well for US partnership initiatives.

The need for criteria

The terrorism threat to the US emanating from the world's poorly governed areas requires the US to respond and the practical realities, a better understanding of the region, language, societal norms, will require the US to use a partner to help defeat any terrorist group residing in these areas. The evaluative criteria aforementioned in this paper provide a method for the US to tailor its BPC approach to the specific country in question. Besides taking no action, US policymakers have three broad options available to them to defeat the overseas terrorist threat: counterinsurgency, counter-terrorism and unilateral action. The lines between these options often blur. The efforts underway in Afghanistan and Iraq contain elements of both counterinsurgency and counter-terrorism. The US military's counter-terrorism campaign in Somalia over the last three years appeared unilateral but occurred through the help of its regional partners in the horn of Africa (43-45). The criteria provided can help policymakers determine the right military strategy and the magnitude of the US effort to help determine if hybrid approaches are required. Ideally, these criteria should be used initially to evaluate a potential partner but the dynamics of a partnership change during the course of a relationship and should be used to re-evaluate a partnership.

Pre-decisional evaluations are subject to the vagaries of bounded rationality where policymakers will not have all the information they need to make the correct decision. A partner's will may wane over the course of a partnership or the partner will not be able to develop the capability that helps the US meet its interest in an area. Third party influences may become more pronounced or fiscal constraints may impact strategic choices. Whatever the reason, the US needs to assess continually the partnership with the help of these criteria to determine if the partnership is worth the effort. US partnership efforts in Afghanistan illustrate this point. The US is nine years into its partnership with the Afghan government, will spend $65 billion this year in Afghanistan and is in the process of committing more troops and resources to Afghanistan to help build Afghan capacity (46). The US is in the middle of strategic debate that questions the effectiveness of US counterinsurgency methods against the "counter-terrorism plus" strategy recommended by Vice President Joe Biden (46). Yet, what should also be assessed is the partner. Afghanistan's government effectiveness, security capabilities and economic well-being have not risen to the level the US needs in order for the US to depart. Using the criteria provided, US strategic decision can better ascertain why the Afghan effort lags; if whatever causes the Afghans to lag can be surmounted; and will the US need to change strategic direction in its partnership with Afghanistan. The criteria provided can be used to help re-evaluate partnerships to determine if the current course of action is worth US efforts.

Conclusion

BPC will remain the preferred strategic method to cope with the terrorist threat. Aiding other countries to provide better security for themselves and by proxy, the US, BPC will be a major component of the US strategy in the war on terrorism because the terrorist threat is too diffuse geographically and ideologically for the US to handle alone. At least in the near term, the US is unlikely to engage in BPC endeavors of a magnitude similar to what we have witnessed in Iraq and Afghanistan. But failing states harboring terrorists will remain the major security challenge to the US for the foreseeable future and that challenge can be expected to result in continued US reliance on BPC as its strategy "of choice". (47)

The eight factors—shared common interest, incentivization, third party threats, and culture, prone to insurgency, democratization, colonial past, foreign aid results— explored in this paper are by no means exclusive and individually are not comprehensively defined or quantified. They offer only an initial template for assessing potential partners but they cannot be overlooked. Further research is required to quantify and bound these variables before attempting any predictive analysis but the criteria serve as indicators to help determine if a partner country will be effective. Secretary of Defense Robert Gates has noted that building partnership capacity is a complex institutional challenge for the US government (47). Without doubt, the US needs to improve its tools and organizations to help other countries develop their own capabilities. However, the effectiveness and credibility of the United States will only be as good as the effectiveness, credibility, and sustainability of its local partners (47). Realistic expectations of a partner need to be established during the strategic-decision making process and require reassessment during the partnership so that the US does not find itself in

endless or unproductive commitments that drain US resources, enervate US standing in a region and ensnare the US in cost-benefit conundrums.

Disclaimer

This manuscript soley represents the views of the author, and not the United States Air Force or the Department of Defense.

Competing Interest Statement

The author declares that he has no competing interests regarding this publication of this manuscript.

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