

Security Force Assistance Quarterly



**Keeping the 'Air' in Air Advising:
Making the Case for non-USAF Inventory Aircraft in
the Air Force's Security Force Assistance Strategy**

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Cover Photo Credit:

*Lt Col Jesse Stubbs, 818th Mobility Support Advisory Squadron (MSAS) and a Chadian Air Force instructor pilot on short final for landing.
(Photo by USAF Captain Jordan Hechinger, 818th MSAS)*

About JCISFA

JCISFA is a Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS) controlled activity (CCA) that reports to the Joint Staff J7, Joint Force Development.

JCISFA supports the integration of Security Force Assistance (SFA) capabilities into the current and future Joint Force in order to advance joint warfighting capability, through our two Mission Essential Tasks:

1. Develop and Integrate SFA Capabilities
2. Support SFA Strategy, Policy, Planning and Current Operations

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The purpose of this quarterly newsletter is to inform the SFA community of interest (COI), to highlight the greater COI efforts, and to foster COI interoperability. Sharing JCISFA's efforts will help inform the COI of the many ways JCISFA can be leveraged.

In addition to Chairman's Joint Lessons Learned Information System (JLLIS), this newsletter serves as a forum for the COI to submit Observations and Recommendations or other articles of interest regarding their respective SFA efforts. As a service to the Joint Force, this newsletter promotes dialogue among the SFA COI that finds itself dispersed across various countries, Interagency, Joint and Service organizations.

The opinions, conclusions, and recommendations expressed or implied within are those of the contributors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Department of Defense or any other agency of the Federal Government.

Again, as this SFA newsletter encourages dialogue, it is part of an ongoing effort to more effectively "Communicate, Cooperate, and Coordinate" across the Joint Force with all SFA stakeholders. Please let us know if there are any topics of interest you would like to see in the future or to submit an article.

Submit to:

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1000—2000 words, for public release preferred

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From the Director's Desk

It is my pleasure to introduce the 21st edition of the SFA Newsletter (NL). I want to welcome JCISFA's new Deputy Director—Mr. Chris Arne to the Team. Mr. Arne comes to us from the 807th Medical Command (Deployment Support), a USAR 2-Star Medical Command, where he served as the Command Executive Officer. His most recent SFA experience comes from a deployment where he served as a Senior Advisor to the Afghan National Security Council through the Defense Security Cooperation Agency MoDA program. Previously Chris has deployed to the Philippines (JSOTF-P), Afghanistan (ISAF) and Africa (CJTF-HOA) where much of his efforts were focused on building Partner capacity and capabilities. He has also completed numerous SFA related courses through various organizations and departments. Mr. Arne brings a strong understanding of SFA activities and valuable lessons learned from the application of SFA around the world. He will be a valuable asset to the JCISFA team.

The previous SFA NL focused on multi-national interoperability (MNI) as a key SFA by-product of the U.S. and its allies competing globally. Although this edition does not focus exclusively on MNI, it draws attention to US and coalition relationships and integration with key partner nations (PNs) through the lenses of two different Services, and from a historical vignette.

In an effort to continue providing various Service perspectives, this edition highlights the Headquarters Air Force A-3 Air Advising Branch examination of nonstandard aviation advising. In a resource constrained environment, Services must balance the competing demands of modernization efforts against lower cost methods to develop key partners. The USAF is no different, and this article describes how they benefit from continued investment to expand PN capability, albeit on airframes not in the USAF inventory. These air advising missions, which provide training to key smaller PNs, also develop functional area capacity, enable relationship building, enhance MNI, and help gain or maintain partner access.

The Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation (WHINSEC) is a Department of Defense organization featured in a 16th edition NL article focusing on their multi-faceted synergy. WHINSEC has over 30 US billets filled by SOUTHCOM AOR Service members, thus affording daily opportunities to directly engage and plan with PNs. This edition's WHINSEC article presents distinct pitfalls to avoid when assessing PN needs, and concludes that bi-lateral assessments of mutual needs is the best method to dodge those pitfalls. I invite a look at both articles through a common lens of how to effectively assess mutual US-PN needs.

The final article examines the British relationship with Arab PNs a century ago. This article contains an 'Assessment' paragraph that provides a useful comparison with the other two articles. A bi-lateral assessment might help us take a 'best' look at ourselves along the way.

As always, please provide us with your feedback on this NL. Also, please join us while we discuss PN integration and other relevant topics during the December Col Update, and we invite cross-talk throughout all of our shared missions over the coming quarter! We wish you a great holiday season and hope we all can take time to assess and reflect more broadly on our year, lives, and families. We always welcome your thoughts, ideas and article content for the March edition of the SFA Newsletter!

DALE K. SLADE
Colonel, U.S. Army
Director

Keeping the 'Air' in Air Advising:

Making the Case for non-USAF Inventory Aircraft in the Air Force's Security Force Assistance Strategy

by Lt Col Jonathan Magill, Chief of the Air Advising and Expeditionary Readiness Branch

Article Approved for Public Release by SAF PA

The views expressed are those of the authors and do not reflect the official guidance or position of the United States Government, the Department of Defense or of the United States Air Force.

Recently, the United States Air Force (USAF) has seen significant gains in operationalizing the Air Advisor

Enterprise and responding to Combatant Commander needs for trained Security Force Assistance (SFA) professionals in line with Secretary of Defense and National Defense Strategy priorities. As SFA Operators, Air Advisors are the USAF's professionally developed Security Cooperation Workforce who work directly with partner nation (PN) military personnel on the ground across a large spectrum of capabilities to meet the strategic goals of the U.S. However, we may be approaching a decision point on whether or not to continue developing a very important USAF capability within Air Advising.

Specifically, the ability to train our partners using aircraft that are not officially in the Air Force inventory (non-USAF aircraft) is an enduring, growing Geographic Combatant Commander (GCC) requirement and a force multiplier for global security cooperation. Air Force Special Operations Command (AFSOC) uses this capability as part of a well-developed dynamic worldwide with the Combat Aviation Advisors (CAA) in the 6th and 711th Special Operations Squadrons (SOS). It also has played a major role in deployed expeditionary Air Advisor operations in AFCENT. However, only recently has the standing conventional Air Advisor community designed and fielded this capability.

Over the past several years, squadrons like Air Mobility Command's (AMC) two Mobility Support Advisory Squadrons (MSAS) and Air Education & Training Command's (AETC) 81st Fighter Squadron trained PN personnel in non-USAF aircraft to develop specific aviation capabilities. The MSAS qualified its aircrew instructors on the Cessna C-208 (Grand Caravan) and the 81st is currently using the Embraer A-29 (Super Tucano). While neither of these aircraft are found in the USAF inventory, experts see both platforms as good choices for smaller and/or developing air forces to efficiently build capability. This article focuses on the C-208 as an example of non-USAF inventory aircraft for air advising activities and ties it to the bigger strategic picture.

The C-208 is an extremely versatile light mobility aircraft used for a wide range of mission sets including airdrop, medical evacuation, and ISR if outfitted with the correct sensor ball and onboard console. It is relatively inexpensive, easy to maintain, very reliable, and widely proliferated throughout the world. It offers smaller air forces an aircraft that adds a lot of operational capability despite its smaller size. In fact, Congress prioritized several countries throughout Africa with funding to acquire these aircraft to build ISR and mobility capability supporting strategic interests of the U.S and our partners. The MSAS supports many of these programs.

(Photo by USAF Senior Airman Rebeckah Medeiros)



A Nigerian Air Force A-29 Super Tucano aircraft fires two .50 caliber machine guns at a target at the Grand Bay Bombing and Gunnery Range near Moody Air Force Base Georgia, Sept. 1 2021.

(Photo by USAF Senior Master Sgt. Don Senger)



A Cessna 208 Caravan lands on the runway at Kirkuk Regional Air Base, Iraq. Students spend approximately six months learning to fly the Cessna 208 and receive pilot wings upon completion.



The Author instructs Crew Resource Management and aircraft fundamentals with a Chadian C-208 pilot in July 2019.

Perhaps the best example of this is with the Chadian Air Force (CAF). Approximately two years prior to aircraft delivery, the MSAS started to build the operational support capabilities of the CAF focusing on logistics, maintenance, intelligence processing, command, control, communication, and security training. The advisors did several 2-3 week missions over this timeframe providing training, and making recommendations on needed equipment or facility improvements. The MSAS also worked hand in hand with the security cooperation office at the US embassy in N'Djamena, with AFRICOM and Air Forces Africa, and also with the international affairs team in the Pentagon, SAF/IA, which was responsible for the management of the funding and the case. Perhaps most importantly, however, is that the Air Advisors built trust within the CAF—all the way from the enlisted members to the Chadian Air Chief who gave his full support and announced that the C-208 program would adopt the training standards that the CAF aircrew and the MSAS advisors developed jointly.

Often a sizeable portion of the authorized funding for these programs goes to contract training for initial aircraft or mission qualifications, but does not provide significant support for making that capability operational. This is where trained Air Advisors really make a difference as SFA operators. As seen in Chad, even prior to aircraft delivery, advisors worked with their PN counterparts to develop operational support capability. Then after delivery, air advisors can fly with the partner to instruct everything from Crew Resource Management, flight safety, and instructional techniques in addition to flying training, maintenance and logistics sustainment. Furthermore, air advisors should work hand in hand with Security Force Assistance Brigade (SFAB) or other ground advisors to provide training on air support to ground forces—especially since many of these air capabilities are being improved to better support ground forces. All of this provides increased interoperability between the USAF and PN airmen, higher training standards, and allows for increased and enduring trust that is a valuable

Keeping the 'Air' in Air Advising Continued...

investment for the future. Without follow through to make that capability operational as part of the total package, the result will probably be only a Foreign Military Sales (FMS) sale, not a new or enhanced PN capability.

Not all PN capability building should be tied to an FMS sale. There are strategically important PNs that already have viable platforms Air Advisors can use to build capability with appropriate planning and funding. With strategic forecasting, the USAF can ensure trained personnel are available for SFA tasking. Even if it is not realistic for standing air advisor units to qualify aircrew on many/multiple different types of non-USAF aircraft, simply having the experience in a light mobility or a light attack platform will increase credibility and allow for better training engagements.

Unlike the AFCENT deployed model of advising, standing units like the MSAS are not a constant presence within their PNs. In fact, missions tend to run between 2-4 weeks and at most four times per year per country. This allows for each mission to set obtainable and measurable objectives, present a relatively limited amount of instruction, make recommendations, and then set goals for the partner to accomplish on their own prior to the next mission. Over time, this decreases reliance on the Air Advisor, and increases confidence of the partner in their ability to develop, maintain and sustain an enhanced or new capability.

Unfortunately, some in the USAF have not connected the professed asymmetric advantage of our multiple allies and partners in our national defense strategy with increased partner capability. They think that non-USAF aircraft aviation advising is a luxury that the USAF cannot afford. Perhaps the most striking example of this is that no funding is currently allocated for the 6th SOS in Fiscal Year 2023 and beyond, due to other funding priorities. While the CAAs within this squadron will still be used for SFA and irregular warfare missions within AFSOC, the squadron and the non-USAF aircraft it uses to train will no longer exist.

While it is certainly true that the USAF needs to continue to invest heavily in the latest aircraft, space, and cyber technologies to prepare for the next major conflict, not properly valuing the benefits that non-USAF aircraft advising can bring to the table is a mistake. The relative low cost of this capability within standing advisor units is easily offset by the high return on investment from presenting a highly trained, predictably sourced force able to satisfy growing GCC requirements. Building PN aviation capability is a force multiplier. Although it is hard to put a precise number on the value of the partner relationships, the increased interoperability and access that air advisors help provide to our forces should certainly be an important piece of our holistic strategy moving forward.

Throughout the Air Staff at the Pentagon everyone seems to be talking about the developing strategy for the future high end fight, and how we are going to adapt our operations to the next big conflict. While we have needs for bigger, more exquisite platforms and capabilities designed to directly engage the enemy, we also have needs for low end, inexpensive capabilities in order to support the NDS' calls for more and increasingly capable allies and partners. With these capabilities, we can build relationships on foreign soil, lay the ground work for access and coalition building capability. In early October, the US Army announced

Sule Baba Lawal, Nigerian Air Vice-Marshal, right; Uzoma Elizabeth Emenike, Nigerian Ambassador, center; and Jibrin Usman, Nigerian Air Commodore, pose for a photo on the wing of an A-29 Super Tucano aircraft at Moody Air Force Base, Georgia, Sept. 14, 2021. The ambassador came to the 81st FS to meet and send off the pilots who are transporting the A-29 Super Tucano aircraft from Moody AFB to Kainji Air Base, Nigeria.



(Photo by USAF Airman 1st Class Megan Estrada)

Nigerian Air Force A-29 Super Tucano aircraft pilot launches a Hydra 70 rocket at a target at the Grand Bay Bombing and Gunnery Range near Moody Air Force Base, Georgia, Sept. 1, 2021. The 81st Fighter Squadron trained the NAF with A-29 Super Tucano light attack aircraft to be mission ready in Nigeria.



(Photo by USAF Senior Airman Rebeckah Medeiros)

plans for the 4th SFAB to rotate to Europe for a “competition-focused” deployment. According to Maj Gen Jarrard, the deputy commanding general of US Army Europe and Africa, the SFAB will be focused on the countries of Georgia, Latvia, North Macedonia, Poland, and Romania. Their mission is to advise, support, assess military capabilities, and liaise with these important strategic partners—building capability and interoperability for the future fight. The USAF does the same in their domain.

As we talk about peer conflicts, it is unknown whether or not our allies and partners will inherently welcome our forces, lest they make themselves a target in large scale combat operations. However, if we continue to build those relationships now, and support coalition building, we can increase the size, scale, and scope of the force we posture against the enemy, especially by leveraging smaller or developing air forces in strategically important areas throughout the world. We can leverage this capability and support our partners in the Pacific, defining "Phase 0" for Agile Combat Employment (ACE) and more, gaining ready access to personnel and airfields. Non-USAF aviation is a critical tool in this strategy to develop aviation capability that can directly or indirectly support US forces in a conflict while generating a common operating picture with our strategic partners. We should be building more of this capability to support the NDS, not divesting it for the sake of short-term budgetary metrics.

For the past 20 years, the USAF used Conventional Force Air Advisors to train partners in non-standard aviation enterprise development, while SOF forces have been doing it since Vietnam. As the USAF pivots from a deployed CENTCOM focused mission to preparing for the next major peer-to-peer conflict we should not forget about the strategic value that conventional SFA forces, air advisors within the USAF, offer to meet objectives within our National Security Strategy. With a relatively small additional investment these standing advisor units can also continue to train on non-USAF aircraft and directly operationalize partner air capabilities in support of a future fight.

USAF Air Advisors have had several training engagements with the Chadian Air Force over the past 5 years focusing on both operations and operational support of the CAF's C-208s.



(Photo by USAF Lt Col Jonathan Magill)



A delegation of Sergeants Major from the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation (WHINSEC) Senior Enlisted Advisory Course visits 2nd Armored Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division footprint on Fort Bliss, Texas, May 25, 2021. The delegation of 17 SGM's represented 5 partner countries: Chile, Honduras, Colombia, El Salvador, and Brazil.

(Photo by U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Michael West)

Tips and Tools of the Trade:

Partner Nation Assessments and Running Estimates of Bi-Lateral Relationships

by COL John D. Suggs Jr., Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation (WHINSEC) Commandant and Jeffrey S. King, JCISFA Military Analyst

Article Approved for Public Release by WHINSEC Director of Communications

The Challenge: Using SFA to Drive Strategic Change. The United States Government (USG) through its various Agencies (especially State and Defense) spends an enormous amount of money each year on security force assistance (SFA) activities as a subset of security cooperation (SC). SFA is a powerful SC tool, but one that is easily misused. In recent years the US Congress has made SC reform a key part of their agenda. Congress has forced a more detailed level of planning focused on streamlining our efforts and developing multi-year plans that have achievable/ measurable milestones and also prioritizes US interests.

There is a natural tension between our desired ends and those of our partners. Many times, political leaders in partner nations (PNs) seek to derive short term benefit from their engagement with us, *as opposed to driving strategic change*. Instead of 'raising their own cows,' some of our partners have learned how to elicit the response of having the USG deliver cows (or milk) to sustain their security forces. Realpolitik causes many countries to cultivate, develop, and juggle 'donor-nations' with deftness. Many of our partners are happy to let us train their forces while they focus on other areas. How do we move beyond this paradigm?

The majority of SFA the US provides is focused on purely tactical training. We train partners to shoot, fly, communicate, litigate, investigate, and give medical treatment. We have personnel running marksmanship ranges in countries that have a small arms industry. We have personnel training combat medics in countries that have medical schools. We provide flight training in countries with an aircraft industry. Why do we consistently train skills in countries that clearly have the capacity to train them? We believe that there are three reasons we do so:

1. We are training what we want to train to build our own expertise - *we are training ourselves*.
2. We are training to build a capacity that benefits US interests, even if the Partner Nation (PN) is agreeable but has no desire to build the capacity – *we are building a capacity that has overwhelming tactical benefit to the US*.
3. We are training the capacities we think (but are unsure) the PN needs – *we are training the wrong capacities because we have sub-standard PN assessments and lack a running estimate of the bi-lateral relationship*.

PN Assessment Pointing to Positive Strategic Effects

The focus of this article is #3 above; sub-standard PN assessment as a root cause for failure to get SFA right. The surest way to achieve tactical training successes that produce minimal to poor strategic effects is substandard PN assessment. When we fail to assess properly, we end up with an imperfect view of the operating environment based on our understanding (or lack of understanding) of US national security interests, the national security interests of the PN, and the agendas or self-interests of the agencies involved. Perhaps the most important part of conducting a PN assessment is 'seeing ourselves.' Many times, the diverging interests at inter/intra-governmental levels dilute our lines of effort to the degree that results can be unachievable, or that the resulting gains become so ambiguous as to be strategically ineffective.

Four PN Assessment Azimuths: Based on US Needs, PN Needs, or Combined Needs?

PN assessment is not easy. It comprises the doctrinal first step of any SFA-related problem-solving exercise. As we conduct our assessment, we are really defining the 'problem' that we are tasked to solve. What follows are four examples of how engagement plans were developed based on the quality level of the PN Assessment. These are the four most common examples that we see ranging from horrible to optimal, which offer increasingly effective and efficient results. The first example leverages 'convenient assumptions' instead of a solid assessment and neither US nor PN goals are adequately considered; the second contains more thought, but skews too heavily towards US goals to the detriment of the relationship; the third is the opposite of the second and blindly gives greatest weight to PN goals; and finally, an example where a solid assessment facilitates a more balanced



Mexican Armed Forces, Medical Corps Lt. Jenny Fuentes Zaragosa attained top honors for the Medical Assistance Course recently held at WHINSEC August 19, 2021.

(Photo by U.S. Army Sgt. Vladimir Varlack)

engagement plan. Several “tips” are included along the way that can help SFA operators make sure that we attain the best results possible.



(Photo by U.S. Army Sgt. Vladimir Varlack)

Small Unit Leadership Course police and military students worked alongside during five weeks as they tackled course academic requirements in the areas of Human Rights and the Rule of Law; Leadership skills; and problem-solving skills within a Joint Interagency Intergovernmental and Multinational (JIIM) environment.

Convenient Assumptions

In this example, convenient assumptions born from lazy planning and shallow PN assessments lead to a disastrous engagement plan. Though this mindset and planning approach is obviously erroneous, the root causes of those errors and the fixes are not so obvious. It is helpful to explore three basic steps to make this example a rare occurrence.

A SC planner's first step should always be to identify the friendly forces aligned against the problem set. SFA is never the main effort. It is *always* conducted in support of the efforts of other entities; usually the Department of State. The majority of those focused on the problem set will be members of the interagency (IA) in both the US and the PN. Understanding each community members' interests is the second step and it is key. We should never assume that the entire community of interest has the same interests. Finally, we should never assume that IA planners have taken the entire community of interests' motivations into account, synchronized them, and laid out a cogent plan. The United Nations recognizes 195 countries. We simply do not have the collective planning infrastructure necessary to ensure complete and cogent multi-year plans for each

of those countries. SFA commanders and planners should be unrelenting in the use of Requests for Information (RFI); which should include PN prioritization. They must push supporting staffs to formulate and provide a complete common operating picture (COP) to ensure that overall intent is expressed and to identify where our efforts fit into that intent.

Interagency planners many times posit that strategic ends can be reduced in mathematical fashion into operational and then further, into tactical (functional) activities. As if it were an exercise in geometry class, a ruler is laid down, adjusted, and a straight line drawn from basic individual skills upwards through advanced skills and capacities, through all the intermediate steps and milestones, to terminate at the strategic end state. It is this planning *malpractice* that is the genesis of a rationale that tells us, 'The first step to competing in the security sphere of the Western Hemisphere starts with running a flat range for basic marksmanship in El Salvador.'

Skewed to the US - 'My Way or the Highway'

This example is better than the previous one if only because one half of the preparation has been done. The 'My Way or The Highway' scenario is characterized by a plan that assumes PN acceptance of US goals and does very little to draw the PN into a discussion of their own goals. This eventually leads to failure as the PN never 'buys-in' to the capacity development plan. If the SC planner is unsure of where the relationship lies, here are some easy questions that can raise red flags:

1. Self-assessment - Do planners know what the *USG* wants out of the relationship?
2. Overall Goals - What does success look like for our IA? For the PN IA?
3. Goal Ambiguity - Do we know what the off-ramp looks like and has the PN agreed to what program completion looks like (i.e., who is responsible to keep the lights on after the party and who is paying the bill)?



4. Culture - Do we know what the PN is saying 'yes' to and what that looks like to the PN?
5. Will - Do both the US and PN have the will to continue the investment to fruition?
6. Synchronization – Have we taken PN planning cycles (fiscal year, procurement timelines, assignment timelines, budget timelines) into account and synchronized engagements accordingly?
7. Counterpart - Does my PN counterpart have the legal authority in his country to make decisions? Which member of the IA does? Are they onboard?

It is a basic SC principle that US interests are the starting point for our SC planning efforts. However, if PN Assessment ignores PN goals, we will fail to gain desirable effects.

Nations do not act out of benevolence.

Nations act (or even cooperate) only when it is in their own self-interest. In the end, SFA is a SC tool. It is designed to get us to 'yes' with PNs.

Understanding what PN self-interests are, is the key.

Having served in SC billets for almost two decades, my most demoralizing moments are after we remove ourselves from a situation and then see our programs collapse because we never truly had PN buy-in. Too many times, I have had to enter a PN and retrain or restart a previous program that lapsed after we weren't there to execute. The PN never really cared about that program, and we never understood that. We were simply engaging to engage because there was no running estimate of the relationship.

Skewed to the PN - 'Have it Your Way'

Opposite of the previous example's scenario (where SFA engagement is completely weighted towards US goals) is the 'Burger King' scenario. In this example, SC planners default to whatever the PN wants, just to remain engaged. An immediate red flag that tips off SC professionals that this dynamic is prevalent, is the use of the word 'customer' to refer to the PN. The ultimate 'customer' of SFA is the people of the US, not the PN. Policy makers have consciously designed our efforts with partners to be security 'cooperation' for just that reason. We do sell training and education to assist our partners through SFA, but we do not provide any assistance that is not cooperative in nature. If it does not benefit the US, we do not and should not provide it. The PN is a partner and collaborator and therefore (like us) they are never completely right. A historical review shows the value of this point of view. Further, end-state successes most often (and should) include success in multi-national (MN) missions, operations, or campaigns, or unilateral PN missions that support a MN campaign.

Additionally, SFA developmental activities always expend some combination of US funds, material, personnel, or other tangible effort. Thus, as there must be adequate checks and balances to ensure an acceptable US return on investment (ROI). Another quick tip towards this end is to check for situations where the PN will accept 'any' training. Likewise, for situations where PNs accept any training but want to hide it from their populace. Those are both red flag indicators (as identified above in the previous example) where there is no true ownership by the PN; they are simply seeking the investment. Unless there is an overwhelming tactical gain, we should waive off those efforts, as the US will derive very little strategic ROI from those activities.



A running estimate of the relationship is necessary to understand the level of 'give and take' with the PN. Blindly reinforcing success with one partner to the degree that it pulls limited resources from our engagement with other partners is as bad as reinforcing failure. Our partners are rarely going to tell us that we have succeeded in our efforts. They desire the investment. Therefore before engaging with the PN, SFA leaders must ask planners to identify the 'off-ramp' for every activity or program that we 'on-ramp' (see question 3 under the previous example). Another useful technique is to gradually and iteratively decrease our investment as we verify that the PN has increased its capability (through our running estimates that are hopefully informed by bi-lateral assessments).

Always ask:

1. How are we measuring effectiveness and advancement towards key milestones?
2. How do we know when we have succeeded (or failed)?
3. What is our dis-engagement plan, and/or criteria and means to iteratively and gradually reduce our investment?

Balanced and Cooperative Process – 'It's in The Name'

The goal of security 'cooperation' is to attain US strategic security goals thorough cooperation. We must 'find the overlap' the mutually beneficial interests for both parties. The Venn diagram that is briefed to strategic commanders by their staffs is beautiful on a slide, but is very difficult to achieve in practice. Being brutally honest and transparent is the key to reaching ground truth. Only when both sides have clearly identified their positions can we engage bi-laterally to shape US and PN goals into solid lines of effort. This is an art, not a science. It is about relationships and building trust. At every opportunity, we should practice this with our partners through building a bi-lateral assessment process.

It is a given that the US and PNs can, will and should conduct their own independent planning and assessment sessions. However, any assessment plan that does not include the PN in the *initial* assessment and a reasonable number of *touchpoints to mutually* adjust along the way will ultimately fall short. A healthy mix of *bi-lateral* (or multi-lateral) assessments is key.

The following are some additional (not all inclusive) tips while conducting bi-lateral assessments; that acknowledge and expound upon the value of a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis as a good overall tool. Some tips are similar to those used in previous examples:

-What are the US and PN shared threats? (It is best to consider this first. Threats could be enemy forces and/or a myriad of operational environmental conditions.)

-What are US and PN goals over time, and how do each respond to contingencies (contingencies that might threaten failure or that we can exploit for success)?

-How much does capability development and employment depend on US assistance and how might that US assistance change over time?

-Accordingly, don't forget to assess the US assistance capability, but more importantly US assistance capacity and will over time. Communicate that assessment result clearly to the PN. Is the desired PN capability (and possibly US support) sustainable over time?

-What is the state of MN interoperability (MNI) across the human, technical and procedural domains, and what is the plan to develop MNI over time?

An honest SWOT Analysis is imperative.

Many times, our partners are 'strong where we are strong and weak where we are weak (or thin).'

For example, for SFA, we often default to the troops available; in general, to maneuver branches where we have strength in numbers. However, what we are finding is that, even if significantly less advanced than ours, PN maneuver units are the most advanced units in their countries; that is where they are strong. Where they are weakest is where we also have the least capacity in force structure to train; areas such as institutional education & training, logistics, and technical skills (cyber, human resource management, finance). They have much greater needs in their support and service support organizations, which we are challenged to address.

Way Ahead - Tying It All Together for a Sustained Positive Trend:

Perfection is not the goal. Moving forward, we must seek excellence through sustained improvement. The routine requirement is a solid initial bi-lateral PN assessment followed by a running estimate of the relationship that is updated regularly through the assessment process. In a perfect world, SC planners and SFA commanders would be handed the running estimate as part of their in-briefs. However, strategic level staffs are not sufficiently manned to work across the US IA to develop and maintain national level relationship running estimates for 195 countries. Thus, subordinate staffs may bear a large part of this burden. It is necessary burden, and also imperative for all levels to enforce the weighted prioritization of PN's upfront; to optimize limited planning bandwidth and ensure the right level of planning investment that excellence requires. In a multi-polar world where we are competing across the spectrum against peer-level actors, we must be present, and we must be prepared to compete.

We acknowledge that this publicly releasable article is not 'the answer' and it poses as many questions as it answers. However, this article will kick-start continuing dialogue to crosstalk, compare notes, and compare ideas and attain and stay on proper azimuth together!



U.S. Coast Guard Lt Nathan M. Borders is congratulated by WHINSEC's Commandant, COL John De Suggs Jr., as he receives the GEN George C. Marshall Honor Distinction, his Master in Operational Studies and his CGSOC diploma. Borders, first USCG member to attend WHINSEC, is the CGSOC class 2021 top U.S. student.

(Photo by Milton Mariani Rodriguez)



The Seven Pillars of Wisdom: A Security Cooperation Photo Finish

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A Milestone: T.E. Lawrence started writing his memoirs of World War I's (WWI) Arab Revolt just over a century ago. Since reaching such a significant anniversary often allows current readers to think without the emotions of 100 years ago perhaps this milestone lends itself to a profitable retrospective. Few foundation stones of the security cooperation house match the "The Seven Pillars of Wisdom," perhaps because it is one of the readable few written holistically. Part memoir, part adventure story, and even part romantic travelogue, it is unique in the security cooperation library. Of course, as with any Victorian comedy, tragedy, and romance all rolled into one, caution is in order. As others have noted, the Great Arab Revolt was neither great, nor particularly Arab, and possibly not even a revolt.¹ For example, more Arabs probably died fighting against British Expeditionary Forces than died fighting in support, and even fewer died fighting for the British.² Keeping perspective is important when tying the past into current security cooperation efforts and their role in peace and war. Nevertheless, when "operations hang by a thread" in the words of British General Allenby, effects mattered; even if they were part of a tertiary security cooperation effort on a tertiary front far from the decisive action in Europe.³

Assessment

It began with an assessment. This shouldn't surprise anyone. Most good Captains in a CJTF J-2 perform assessments and Captain T.E. Lawrence fits the mold. Except that he didn't. After years of working on the Ottoman Turk order of battle, mapping Middle Eastern terrain, and reporting on events in Arabia while two younger brothers died in Europe's carnage, he'd had enough of deskwork.⁴ Or according to one retelling, the General Headquarters Staff in Egypt had enough of a certain young know-it-all. Worse, Lawrence had actually 'been there' and 'done that' while most of his colleagues and many superiors hadn't. Sending the Middle East historian, archeologist and Arab linguist to the field eliminated some tensions at headquarters.⁵ In any case he left to assess the Arab Army efforts that stalled after seizing Mecca and Jeddah.⁶ What may surprise capability developers working with partners today is where he focused his assessments. Doctrine, organization, training, material, personnel, and facilities all played a role, but the 'L' in DOTMLPF forms the center of his numerous and constant assessments. For Captain Lawrence, leadership comprised the central pillar determining the placement of the remainder.

The Seven Pillars of Wisdom Continued...

More startling is that he never confined his leadership assessments to Arab partners, but assessed his own British generals in equal measure.⁷ His foundational assumption, that successful multinational efforts depend on all nations ‘fitting’ together and that leadership is the first ‘fit’ upon which all interoperability depends, remains out of style. Another aspect that stands out is the sheer breadth and depth of his assessments.⁸ Reconstructing the current strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats (SWOT); political, military, economic, social, information, infrastructure, physical environment, time (PMESII-PT); and other modern assessment models comes easily from his work. Physical terrain assessments include such detail as where flint rock, which might cut the soles of camel’s feet, covers the ground as well as which water wells lay on an axis of advance.⁹ His assessments of human terrain not only included which tribe or clan lay claim to that water, but the blood feuds between them requiring smoothing.¹⁰

His efforts ended with an evaluation. “The Seven Pillars of Wisdom” is at its core a strategic evaluation of British security cooperation efforts with their Arab partners. Of course, wrapping the security cooperation evaluation in a Victorian style adventure story ensured that at least someone would read it. Indeed, the memoir is the only collection of security cooperation after action reports to

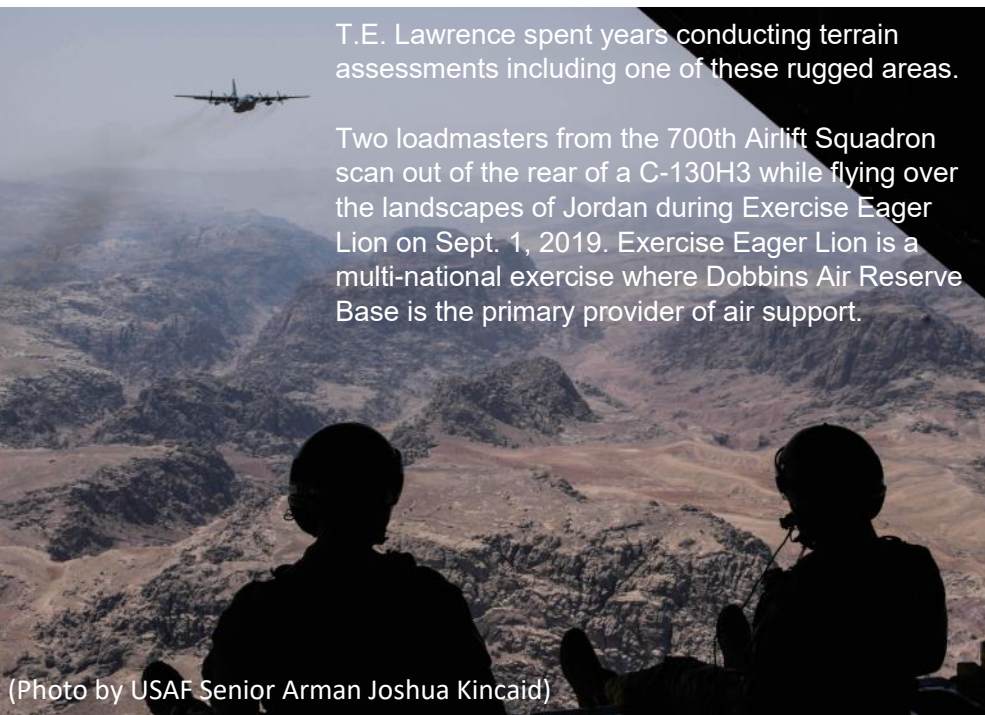
ever have a general audience. Like any good evaluation there are many observations followed by discussions. Also, like most it includes findings similar to ‘efforts had some effect yet more was needed.’ Unlike most, the author criticizes himself and recommends greater vision and efforts than his own.¹¹

Security Force Assistance-Quantity Matters

Quantity has a quality all its own. This key recommendation for building partner capacity stands out in a simple compare and contrast study between the approach of advisors Captains Newcombe and Hornby, and the approach Captain Lawrence advocated. The first two Captains mastered demolitions and employed them with unmatched zeal in blowing up the railway line connecting Damascus and Medina. They were part of a years-long railway interdiction effort successfully isolating an entire Turkish Division in Medina, far from the fighting in Palestine and Syria. Their Arab contemporaries were in awe of the Captains’ demolitions skill to the point of discouraging their own, less expert attempts. Their Arab companions even commented that when Captain Hornby ran out of explosives he gnawed at the rails with his teeth. Contrast this with equal efforts to train Arab demolition teams and trade one superior effort for a thousand mediocre ones. Captain Lawrence claimed the results

from partially trained Arab demolition teams’ performance at 17 locomotives, 2 strikes by railway workers, and the virtual end of civilian traffic in only 4 months of work. Individually Arab demolition teams performed lower, but as a far more numerous whole their effects spoke for themselves.¹²

Allowing junior officers and NCOs to take initiative may yield some surprising new capabilities.¹³ In an example full of ‘what ifs’ Captain Lawrence dropped over 35 sick and wounded men at an allied camp before proceeding the rest of the way to the Arab Army HQ with the remainder of his returning strike group. By chance two British armorers were in camp repairing



T.E. Lawrence spent years conducting terrain assessments including one of these rugged areas.

Two loadmasters from the 700th Airlift Squadron scan out of the rear of a C-130H3 while flying over the landscapes of Jordan during Exercise Eager Lion on Sept. 1, 2019. Exercise Eager Lion is a multi-national exercise where Dobbins Air Reserve Base is the primary provider of air support.

(Photo by USAF Senior Arman Joshua Kincaid)



Arab strike groups packed Maxim guns, similar to these used by WWI reenactors, on camels across thousands of miles of harsh terrain and used them to deadly effect.

World War I Dawn Patrol Rendezvous, Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio 2018
(Photo from video by Ken LaRock, National Museum of the USAF)

broken Maxim heavy machine guns. Bored to tears with the desert and with no hope of returning to a better location soon, these two NCOs proceeded to do what British sergeants have done since at least the 1600s; train indigenous forces. Several weeks later the now healed casualties showed up as the core of a new Arab heavy weapons company. The two NCOs with much repeated ‘watch me, now you do it,’ broke through language and cultural barriers to create a partner capability. Two NCOs on the ground imagined and acted on what advising officers in headquarters could not. After all, a Maxim gun is a terrible thing to waste. Their actions illustrate one of the many ‘what could have been’ effects in WWI and ‘what might be’ effects in future operations if initiative is unleashed.¹⁴

Security Force Assistance-Quality Matters

It takes uncommon quality to successfully conduct unconventional warfare. One factor stressed time and again is how often headquarters staff overlooked real quality capabilities in partner forces. Often, Europeans just couldn’t see quality in the Arab forces of WWI. Captain Lawrence recommended constantly seeking for and then expanding partner forces’ quality capabilities. For example, while he paid the same wage to the Arab cavalrymen as any regular Arab recruit, he provided them the best camels money could buy; free of charge.

The prospect of not having to acquire one’s own mount and risk it in battle meant he had the pick of volunteer Arab cavalry for his strike groups. He often selected his personnel from the Bedu camel raising tribes guaranteeing his riders were the best in the world at what they did: riding, maintaining, and fighting on camels in the hostile desert.¹⁵ There wasn’t a force in the world to match their quality and Captain Lawrence planned it that way. He increased capacity of an already top quality, partner capability to true lethal proportions. He viewed the camel as key to going where and when the Turks could not to gain maneuver advantage. Many others couldn’t see partner capability. Their cultural view of what constitutes a capability and gauging quality was not from a partner force’s view. One recommendation, perhaps most difficult to implement, is to recognize a partner force’s quality capabilities and then capitalize on them (e.g., increase their capacity). Cultural biases constituted major obstacles because the General Headquarters Staff simply didn’t have the imagination necessary to recognize quality capability in a partner force that volunteered for short periods of time (often only one raid) and fought in irregular formations. Eventually, Captain Lawrence simply bypassed the staff as he didn’t have time to start a “kindergarten class” for them.¹⁶ Luckily, his combined assessments of British and Arab Generals proved correct and allowed him to open windows when doors closed. In fact, General Allenby and

Prince Faisal often pushed Captain Lawrence back into the field when he returned to report the British advising effort a failure (i.e., culminated) and recommended halting offensive efforts. General Allenby was one of the few who recognized quality in his own advisors and grew it, even when they didn't see it in themselves.¹⁷

The Dawn of Multi-Domain Operations

The Great War started with limited combined arms and ended with multinational, joint multi-domain operations. George Washington would have understood the tactics and operations at the beginning of WWI while modern generals recognize multi-domain operations at the end. Operations on the East side of the Palestine-Syrian front went through this same dramatic transition. At any one time an allied strike group attacking from the desert might contain: multiple squadrons of irregular Arab Bedu cavalry (camel mounted); Gurkha assault infantry platoons; Indian heavy weapons platoons; Algerian artillery batteries; English-speaking cavalry companies (camel mounted); Battalions of village Arab mounted infantry (horse); British light armored platoons (turreted armored cars); Egyptian engineering squads (sappers); Arab information operators (e.g., tribal diplomats); finance teams; and a flight of Australian piloted aircraft. When striking targets this force might be augmented by local infantry/cavalry (village militias) that outnumbered the strike force.¹⁸ The sustainment supporting this organization stretched all the way to the United States on the back of the US and Royal Navy. The advising teams assisted in orchestrating all this to a functioning, though far from perfect whole.

British Advisors realized Arab camels gave them a maneuver advantage.

A camel observes U.S. Airmen with the 82nd Expeditionary Air Support Operations Squadron as they train in a downed aircraft scenario with U.S. Navy aviators-Kuwait 2021.



(Photo by U.S. Army Sgt. Eric Smith)

British advisors often overcame this complexity through close personal relations stretching across services and nationalities. Captain Lawrence personally knew many of the Aussie pilots. At one point their pilots rolled off a target after dropping bombs and spotted the strike group nearby. The Aussie pilots pranked their allies' withdrawing column by pretending to strafe: flying low overhead, firing their machine guns, and raining brass on their heads. With great difficulty, Captain Lawrence kept the Arab cavalry from shooting back as he rode up and down the column explaining the joke. No doubt the pilots got an even better howl at the squadron bar that night as the attacked Turkish garrison spotted the activity and launched an energetic pursuit, forcing the strike group to rapidly retreat into the desert.¹⁹ Surveying and constructing forward air fields was a particular specialty of advisors that paid dividends throughout the campaign.²⁰ Once a strike group was under Turkish-German air attack and about to scatter when their one remaining Australian pilot with an operating plane received the air support request. He launched to attack seven enemy aircraft, drawing off the attackers for hours. This allowed the strike group to find cover. He was shot down of course, but survived a crash near friendly troops who conducted what may be the first recorded combat search and rescue mission to recover a downed pilot in the Middle East.²¹ The intrepid pilot stripped his downed aircraft (flipped over on its back) of its light machine guns and commanded one of the armored cars until he could get another plane. Maintaining air superiority and coordinating air to ground fires was key to successful operations and one of the most important tasks of these World War I advisors.²² Their communication lines to HQ (via aircraft) and very survival in the desert depended on air support as all sides knew where the water wells (i.e., potential base camps) were.



The 22 carat gold sovereign markets for over \$500 today, enough said. (Public Domain photo from Wikimedia Commons)

The Seven Pillars of Wisdom

Another tale from the mythos of the Arab Revolt recounts when Captain Lawrence disappeared into the desert with 40 men for two months. He subsequently emerged from the land side of Akaba at the mouth of the Red Sea with over 1000, destroyed a regiment of Turks along with their German Advisors, and captured the port.²³ This port access shortened the lines of communication linking the Arab and Egyptian Armies, increased their capacity (a ship carries far more than a camel pack train) and enabled the Arab Army and British Air Force to shift operations to the Eastern flank of the Ottoman Fourth Army around Amman.²⁴ A careful reading of the account illustrates skilled use of political instruments of power and the multinational, multi-domain nature of this audacious operation: the British Navy raided the target area taking prisoners and gathering detailed intelligence; Prince Faisal (General of the Arab Northern Army and one of the best Arab diplomats of the age) spent months spearheading the diplomatic and information campaign;²⁵ Sheik Auda abu Tayi (the military commander of the Arab strike group) was known as the greatest tactician and fiercest cavalryman among the Arab Bedu.²⁶ Multiple Arab commanders led raids as part of an elaborate deception operation to lure Ottoman forces north. The advisors assisted in tying this all together with no small help from camels loaded with British gold sovereigns (see picture page 17) and promises of much more to come should it succeed.²⁷ The WWI era Bank of England was not to be underestimated when harnessing the economic instrument of power.

Thinking Takes Time

Where does one find time in the midst of ongoing operations? Re-planning takes thinking, thinking takes time, and finding time takes a forcing function. For Captain Lawrence the forcing function was dysentery and fever. Immobilized by pain, weakness, and with a mind clouded at times with fever he refined his model of irregular warfare (i.e., recipe for a successful revolt), reworked the operational plan, and figured out how to influence his own superiors so they'd buy it. Once healed he acted. His 30-second elevator speeches still resonate today. Here's one of his originals with a little modernization.²⁸

A rebellion needs:

1. An unassailable base, guarded not only from attack but from the fear of attack as well
2. A sophisticated alien enemy disposed as an army of occupation in an area greater than it can cover with fortified posts
3. A friendly population, only two percent who fight at any given time, but who will support or look the other way
4. Fighters who maintain secrecy and discipline, who can endure, maneuver, and sustain locally
5. Fighters who have the technical means to paralyze enemy lines of communication and even destroy them where the alien enemy was not present

Then Captain Lawrence could easily run a checklist for his Generals (based on the above) to convince them success was possible. The first is provided by the Royal Navy guarding ports, the rugged terrain hindering enemy movement, and surveillance aircraft/spies providing advance notice of Ottoman movements. Second and third, the numerous fighting fronts (e.g. Russian) ensure the Ottoman Turks are stretched thin and what Arab doesn't hate Ottoman rule? Fourth, Arab Bedu clannishness supplies the secrecy and discipline and the desert has taught forces self-sufficiency. Fifth (the punchline), the British can supply the engineering expertise (e.g., demolitions) and other technical enablers to interdict enemy lines of communications.²⁹ Of course, none of this messaging was strictly true. However, the point was to deliver something clear, concise, and just accurate enough to his own leadership (while demonstrating the personal competence needed for trust, combined with an occasional, modest victory) that headquarters would trust the myriad of complex details to the advisers and sustainers.

From his fever-induced re-planning sessions came another compact reassessment of his partner force strike groups and principles underlying operations.³⁰

1. Irregulars will not attack places, so they are incapable of forcing a decision (i.e., main effort).
2. Irregulars are as unable to defend a line or point as they are able to attack it.

The British advisors didn't have total air superiority until Aussie pilots shot down a particularly troublesome German two-seat, fighter-bomber.



World War I Dawn Patrol Rendezvous, Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio 2018
(Photo from video by Ken LaRock, National Museum of the USAF)

3. Our partner force's virtue is in depth not face.
4. Geography/physical terrain must form the basis of all operations.
5. Attain ends with the greatest economy of life.
6. Preserving partner forces is more important than time or money.

This type of thinking (occasionally taught today using models like operational design), refining of concepts, re-planning, testing, and learning all took time. In fact, each point was derived from pages of analysis and re-analysis in his writings. How modern advisers will find such time during active operations without a forcing function (e.g., sickness) is an open question.

Influence Over The Population

The British advisers loved Ottoman deserters. In fact a good portion of the Arab regular force came from British prisoner of war camps filled with Ottoman Arab soldiers. It was even better if they deserted the Ottoman Army on their own to join.³¹ After all who wouldn't want enemies to shoulder the burden of training basic drill and weapons handling while a partner force reaps the benefit? It also meant the Arab regular soldiers were often volunteers like the irregular soldiers, even if it was for the gold and better food. Desertion was very acceptable and practiced by both sides depending on how the winds blew. In fact, Prince Faisal was in near constant communication with the Ottoman Minister of Defence working out the terms of his (Faisal's) desertion should the fortunes of war change. After all it was in no way, shape, or form certain that the British would win until the last German offensive burned out in summer 1918. The American Third Division isn't nicknamed "Rock of the Marne" for

nothing. In fact, the war wasn't ever going to be decided on the Palestine-Syrian front anyway. So why not collaborate with the enemy? Partners need exit strategies too. The advisers knew this and even helped shape some of the communication going back and forth between Ottoman and Arab leadership.³² The British headquarters staff, comprised heavily of regular officers and steeped in their cultural traditions, would never have understood (Treachery!) so the advisers never told them. When parts occasionally came to light the advisers explained it away as part of a deception operation. That seemed good enough for the staff in Egypt. The advisers, however, lived with fewer cultural illusions.³³ If things went bad in a big way for the Allies their Arab partners would flip for governorship positions and smooth reintegration into the Ottoman Empire. To help ensure that didn't happen the advisers: propped up the Arab nationalist information campaign (in spite of the blatant fratricide coming from the British Foreign Office); helped score occasional meaningful wins; took few serious losses; and kept the gold coming.³⁴ When quizzed about which contradictory promise was real Captain Lawrence would joke "The latest one signed." When asked what territory the Arabs were promised he'd reply "How much can you take?" Partner force leadership like Prince Faisal knew realpolitik from political fantasy and appreciated the honesty laced with gallows humor.³⁵ Others did not. Nevertheless, as long as Allied information operations remained unbroken by an irrefutable, catastrophic loss and the Ottoman Empire's information campaign committed its own fratricide by promoting Turkish nationalism, the advisers were able to maintain influence superiority (though never dominance).³⁶

Take An Appetite Suppressant

They were not going to decide the war's outcome and establish world peace. The advisors knew this. They were performing difficult, even heroic work to help others win the war somewhere else. Perhaps more of their friends and bothers wouldn't die in mass quantities on the European Western front if everyone worked together to stretch the Central Powers thin enough that there could be a breakthrough, somewhere, anywhere. There was hope. The Americans might join, and then they were actually coming, even if not to their front. The advisors hoped things would be better for a while afterward, not for world peace. On the Eastern side of their front they assisted Arab forces to achieve occasional, modest wins. That was good, but those wins were surrounded by failures before, during and after. The trick was to use information operations to enlarge the wins and avoid catastrophic failure by preserving their forces to fight another day. Avoiding lucrative targets to minimize casualties was the *rule*, not the exception.³⁷

General Allenby understood and let the advisors know it. As an economy of force operation much of his strategy depended on deception. If only "three men and a boy" showed up to conduct a demonstration in front of a Turkish garrison far from the main effort then so be it. One time General Allenby lent the now Major Lawrence the last remnant of the British Camel Corps after most transferred to the Belgium or Italian fronts. He gave firm instructions that they could take no casualties. They were the last, precious 300 camel mounted British troops available in theater.³⁸ The British cavalry commander understood, the advisors understood, their partners understood, the many regular staff did not. They almost pulled it off taking only three British cavalry and limited Arab casualties. Their combined force prepared for months, maneuvered for weeks, fought a few days, and actually took down a remote Turkish garrison far from the main effort. As planned the bark was bigger than the bite. Wild stories of a massive combined British and Arab force spread throughout the villages in the East. These modest successes along with many failures (e.g., called off attacks renamed demonstrations) was enough to

help fix in place the Ottoman Fourth Army in the East away from the main effort in Western Palestine against the Ottoman Seventh and Eighth armies. Their modest successes surrounded by failures was enough.³⁹

Conclusion: No Set Recipes

Advisors like T.E. Lawrence lived in a world with no set recipe for security cooperation success. Nevertheless, through great trial and error, forced re-planning, and the will to continue they came to understand ingredients enough to make something occasionally edible.⁴⁰ One key ingredient was the help of a few extraordinary leaders who understood the advisors' challenges and at times inspired them to 'keep calm and soldier on' when things looked darkest. Money was a true force to be reckoned with. Even today archeologists excavating WWI sites in Arabia must take everything with them when they leave as treasure hunters immediately descend after the departure of government guards to dig with abandon in hopes of finding some British gold.⁴¹ Sometimes they received surprise ingredients when NCOs started their own security force assistance programs producing unexpected capabilities. If ingredients weren't around they sometimes stole them. When they didn't have access to partner nation ports where needed they helped their partners take one (without British headquarters authorization). When the British Navy arrived they appreciated an onboard shower as much as the supplies. Mostly they just didn't give up. Neither did the German advising and enabling teams. Major Lawrence praises their heroism when the end came. They German advisors endured to the last, marching and fighting northward in tight, regular formations. They continued on with no real hope of breaking out as their Ottoman partners collapsed into a sea of chaos around them. He was never so proud of his enemies.⁴²

Indeed it was a "near run thing."

British commanding general the Duke of Wellington after victory (barely) at Waterloo against Napoleon.

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**T.E. Lawrence (Center) was an archeologist before the war
(Public Domain photo taken January 1913-Imperial War Museum)**



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