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Developing Foreign Security Force Capabilities as a "Strategic Way"

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Current Strategic Relevance

Developing the capabilities and capacities of FSFs (foreign security forces) has become a significant tenet of U.S. strategic dialogue on how to safeguard its interests at home and abroad from terrorist networks such as Al Qaeda, criminal organizations with global reach or third party states which sponsor non state organizations. The United States recognizes that the destabilization of, and security threats to other states and political bodies are relative to its own interests as they may involve mutual enemies, or give rise to conditions in which its enemies may find beneficial. As such the U.S. may promote a cooperative "venture" where interests are identified as beneficial to both the U.S. and another entity, but which may be limited in nature and may not signify and enduring partnership.

It is important to understand that these cooperative ventures may be pursued for different reasons to support different ends; ends which may not always align with the long term goals of the U.S., but may support limited cooperation. These mutual interests may not always be apparent while in the making, and may only come forward as objectives and conditions change; for example when another state or organizations realizes that its previous policies no longer promote, but may in fact inhibit or work against the realization of its own objectives. The term venture itself implies a certain level of existing risk where one's membership is based more on conditions than certainty and long term commitment.

Ventures that involve the provision of security may require the U.S. to support the development of the capabilities of foreign security forces of other venture members. This concept of developing capability and capacity assumes that, based on mutual interests, the capabilities developed in a FSF will be employed in such a manner that they will support member objectives in the venture. However, it should not assume that those capabilities will not be employed otherwise at the conclusion of the venture. Capabilities once they are developed may have a life that extends beyond the original purpose. Understanding the nature of the venture is important for its members as it defines how much equity and effort a given member may assume relative to the expectations of the outcomes.

The concept suggests that based on the successful interaction of the venture, a strategic partnership may develop, one that offers potential beyond the conditions that gave rise to the

venture. This partnership may lead to increased opportunities where interests increasingly overlap. These partnerships may permit outputs such as interoperable coalitions capable of encouraging stability or defeating common enemies outside of a local or regional area. Partnerships should be viewed as more than just a limited cooperation between members who have aligned interests but not necessarily aligned ends. Partnerships should be based on common objectives that are enduring in nature, and as such foster an expectation that partner capabilities will not be used to inhibit or frustrate one another.

Historical Strategic Context

While the U.S. Department of Defense has a history of developing foreign military forces, and other U.S. departments have a history of supporting the development of other types of security forces, the application of all of the U.S. Government to assess all of a potential venture member's or partner's security forces and its institutions and develop their capabilities in light of combined objectives has been limited. It has not been oriented toward developing FSFs capable of sustaining the generation and employment of their capabilities; as such, any improvements in security were mostly transitory, and contingent upon significant continued U.S. assistance.

This has produced varied results for reasons beyond lack of a capable venture member or partner. They include the manner in which all U.S. resources might be applied to these objectives, lack of an inclusive planning methodology that identifies contingent requirements, links what happens in a theater with what happens outside of it, supports consistent development, and most importantly one that links the problems in the FSF environment to the capabilities and capacities required to address and develop them. Also absent is a way to assess the effects and performance of our efforts to develop a given FSF capability. These deficiencies have to be overcome or mitigated in order to make developing FSF capabilities a more viable part of U.S. strategy than it has been in the past and as is currently envisioned.

Using Strategy to Develop Operational Approaches and Employ Tactics

Before looking at specifics it may be useful to discuss the relationship between: the making of strategy; the development and implementation of an operational approach; and the execution of tactical actions. Broadly, strategy can be described as a formulation that identifies an end(s) which promotes a desired outcome, the ways or steps required to achieve that end(s) and the means that must be provided in order to take those steps. Generally, strategies should be: feasible in terms of required ways and means, acceptable in terms of outcomes and consequences, and suitable in terms of proportion, end and process.

Once the strategy is formulated, it can be implemented, or *operationalized*. This broadly means that the strategic end(s) and ways are broken down into a series of objectives as they relate to that desired end, and resources and capabilities are arranged in time and space to achieve those objectives. Within these operational objectives tactical actions, which can be described as the employment or use of capabilities to execute tasks aimed at achieving a specific effect or outcome, will take place. Within this framework for strategy, operations and tactics this article will consider the development of FSF capabilities.

Developing FSF Capabilities: the Strategic Context

In a strategic context, efforts to develop the capabilities of a FSF have often been employed to support many political and military objectives. Primarily the rational for doing so has been rooted in the interests of the one doing or supporting the development and as such serves an end that justifies the effort. These ends historically have included:

- to change the strategic calculus
- to fill a security vacuum and support regional or international stability
- to gain political legitimacy through coalitions, alliances or partnerships
- to add capacity in light of adversarial capabilities for a current or likely confrontation
- to develop a FSF that may be more suited (and effective) to conditions
- to avoid direct confrontation with an adversary or competitor
- to promote other interests, gain influence, or trade/accommodation between polities
- to preserve one's own force or too difficult and unsustainable to use one's own force
- to support treaties and mutual interests
- to be able to withdraw one's own forces without leaving a security vacuum
- to promote and/or develop one's own capabilities

There is some overlap in these ends, and there are probably some that are not listed, however they all have in common that as the Greek general and historian Thucydides identified, they are rooted in fear, honor and interests.

As a state, political body or individual develops a strategy that includes developing capabilities in a FSF, it is to a degree accepting risk in areas that include:

- the FSF is capable of being developed to the degree required to satisfy the associated objective
- the FSF political authority can/will sustain the will to develop and employ the capabilities to the end for which support to develop FSF capabilities was given
- the developed capabilities will not be employed counter to one's own interests
- the act of developing a given FSF's capabilities will not create problems greater than the problem the act was intended to solve or address

These types of risks should be thoroughly scrutinized when looking at feasibility, acceptability and suitability which are sometimes referred to collectively as the "FAS" test. If it is determined that the risks and obstacles are too severe or too significant to overcome, than alternative ways and means may need to be found, or the end may need to be adjusted. Strategically, the decision to develop FSF capabilities should lend itself to a broader purpose or end to which resources have been applied; it should not be an end unto itself, no more than developing one's own military capabilities should be undertaken outside of the political purpose they serve.

Within the context of making the development of FSFs a key tenet in U.S. strategy to encourage stability and promotion of partnerships, a significant question that should be asked is: are the ends to which development of the FSF is being applied reasonably convergent with those of the FSF and its political leadership? If not than the risks identified above may outweigh any

potential benefits of the effort. This fundamental question forms the basis for the quality and scope of the venture or partnership, and both sides need to possess clarity and agree on what capabilities are to be developed, who is responsible for what, to what ends those capabilities may be employed, and what would terminate the venture or partnership.

Since it would be difficult for the United States to develop every FSF, or even those that could be classified as "partners" to the point where they can fully secure themselves, or have sufficient capability and capacity to participate in combined operations, the United States must be judicious not only in who it enters into ventures and partnerships with based on current needs, but also in terms of chances of success and sustainability as they relate to more enduring partnerships. Partnership conveys a sense of shared interests, the United States in choosing which partnerships to enter into should scrutinize the prospects of each as they relate to its broader interests.

Developing FSF Capabilities: the Operational Context

Developing an approach to operations means conceptualizing in terms of how the ways and means will be resourced, synchronized and applied to achieve the military and political ends. Since the desired conditions in this case require sustainable generation and employment of capabilities in the FSF, and are contingent upon the will of one (preferably both) of the partners to do so, the operational approach, at least for this line of effort (LOE) must make FSF development its core objective. This does not mean that the broader approach will not have to consider how to shape existing conditions such as:

- degrading enemy capabilities or denying the enemy freedom of movement in order to provide the FSF the time and other resources needed to develop their capabilities
- economic development required to sustain any capabilities and capacities developed
- political development that allows a legitimate authority the framework to employ its security forces

It does mean that if the political and military objectives rely upon a FSF employed by a legitimate authority, and one that is credible, competent, confident and capable, then our efforts should be unified from conception, and the LOE's viewed as interdependent.

From a specific LOE, operationalizing the development of a FSF's capabilities requires U.S. forces (or whoever is doing the development) assume at least a partial role of the FSF's Generating Force. This does not just mean replicating like force generation systems to those which are pertinent to U.S. forces, but rather it means that it assumes the job of a Generating Force to produce those capabilities and capacities in the FSF Operating Force as they are needed to achieve the legitimate political authority's political objective(s). This requires understanding how the political authority intends to employ the FSF, or in other words the security problem to which the political authority supports the generation and employment of the FSF. Security forces don't exist outside of their political context, even if the security force is itself the political authority. This may also require the development of capabilities within the FSF's executive functions, or those persons and offices which provide policy, strategic direction and regulation on both the FSF's Generating and Operating Forces.

From an operational perspective, this may require those U.S. forces developing capabilities in a FSF to adopt the mentality of a supporting command (not *subordinate*) to the FSF unit(s) they are developing. This means not only those tactical units, but the entirety of those forces and their systems (such as C2 and sustainment) are designed to support developing the capabilities identified in the FSF assessment relative to the tasks the FSF must do to achieve their purpose. In addition to this, U.S. operational forces must also provide ESS (enable, sustain and support) functions to their own forces - both those developing the FSF, and those being used in other LOEs. Depending upon the level of capability in the FSF, U.S. forces may also take on, or share the burden of providing ESS to the FSF (and possibly to other coalition partners).

The operational planner must consider that given the scale of the effort and the developmental objectives for the FSF and the conditions in the operating environment, operational requirements could place a burden on U.S. operating force two to three times that of it were operating unilaterally to achieve its objectives. Discerning what those operational requirements are requires a logic that accounts for both what capabilities the FSF require to do their mission and supporting tasks, and what capabilities the developers (includes all USG and its partners) require to do the tasks which develop FSF capabilities to include of the ESS functions discussed above. Based on the tasks that are derived from an operational analysis, the operational planner has to identify what capabilities are required. Once those capabilities are resourced by the Generating Force the operational planner then has to resource and synchronize them for their in theater deployment, employment and sustainment to support the execution of the tactical actions which will achieve those developmental objectives.

Developing FSF Capabilities: the Tactical Context

As discussed earlier in the paper, tactical actions can be described as the employment or use of capabilities to achieve a specific effect or outcome. Tactics are the specific manner in which those capabilities are employed. In developing FSF capabilities this paper will describe three tactics – advising, partnering and augmenting, and some of the techniques or methods of employing these tactics.

Using the tactic of "advising" to develop capabilities in a FSF consists of being able to teach, to coach and to mentor. In the context of develop FSF Capabilities this means:

- Teach: Providing instruction and/or education to FSF to develop skills or knowledge necessary to do a particular job.
- Coach: Assisting a counterpart to reach the next level of knowledge or skill by practicing those skills and building on previous teaching. The distinctive feature is that the recipient assumes more responsibility for success while the advisor gives assistance as required.
- Mentor: Provide the advisor's counterparts with expert opinions, advice, or counsel to assist them in making a decision based on applying knowledge and through a mutually developed bond of trust. The distinctive feature is that the recipient is responsible for making the decision while the advisor provides only advice.

Advising as a tactic does not necessarily encompass the role of an "advisor" who may be asked to take on a number of other roles such as "trainer" or "liaison". Advising as a tactic provides a

manner to obtain influence, or the ability to modify behavior, with FSF counterparts. If the advice provided results in the FSF employing its forces more effectively then it may also reinforce the commitment of the FSF to continue to develop its capabilities.

There are two broad techniques to consider in employing advising as a tactic, internal embedding and externally aligned. Embedding can be described as a relationship where the advisor(s) lives with, eats with and fights alongside their FSF counterparts. This technique allows great access and insights, and facilitates teaching, coaching and mentoring. Where operationally feasible it usually provides greater potential to support capability development. Externally aligned can be described as one where the advisor(s) have limited contact with their FSF counterparts, and as result may have limited influence with them. Because of conditions such as density of advisors, issues with force protection, or political issues with embedding, external alignment may be the only technique available. However, because of its limitations it is generally less effective than embedding.

Another tactic is "partnering" (not synonymous with the idea of "strategic partnerships"). Partnering is where two or more units on the basis of an agreement conduct activities together to achieve an objective, and share risk and liability. In this context it would be a developmental objective associated with the development of identified FSF capabilities. Partnering implies that there is a value based relationship, and that both sides are capable of being a credible partner. This not only implies a requisite amount of capability, but also a level of commitment to the basis of the partnership. Partnering requires common goals, common understanding of the problem and a level of trust that facilitates combined operations, exercises, etc.

On the ground, partnering manifests itself by cooperative planning and execution, shared HQs, shared resources, etc. It is not enough for one side to desire to partner, or say it is partnering, both sides have to be willing and capable of partnering and the physical actions have to reinforce that partnership. Partnering is not picking up an individual FSF member or squad for the purpose of "putting a local face" into the operation or to provide some level of linguistic ability or legitimacy. It is not operating in the same area, or occasionally attending the other's meetings or orders. Partnering, and the acts that support it, must be seen in the context of the agreed upon objectives which gave birth to the partnership. All of the efforts that are done or required to be done in that context are those that support the purpose of the partnership.

A third tactic is "augmenting" which can be described as providing a specific capability to support a given purpose. In the context of developing FSF capabilities, augmentation is providing a capability for the purpose of supporting the development of that capability in the FSF. An example might be the augmentation of a FSF battalion level organization with a U.S. platoon. In the context of FSF capability development the purpose of that platoon is not just to be another maneuver element for that FSF battalion, but to support capability development of that FSF battalion's platoons through training. Augmentation could include specific staff elements or functional expertise relative to the capabilities identified to be developed.

All of these tactics can be combined and employed together to support the conduct of the various developmental tasks of organize, train, equip and rebuild/build as they relate to developing capabilities in the FSF; they are not exclusive to one another, and the use of more than one may

expedite development. However, the unit leader and staff do need to determine which tactics and techniques are feasible and which ones are applicable given the conditions.

In Closing

The United States has historically found strategic requirements to both directly and indirectly support the development of capabilities in security forces other than its own. In some instances it has been a relatively limited effort, in others it has taken on a more enduring nature, and periodically it has been both large in scale and imperative to securing military and political objectives. In some cases it has proven a relatively inexpensive way for the United States to shape and sustain its policies and international relations while in others it has taken on a character where neither efficiency nor effectiveness can accurately be determined and most recently, one where the ultimate outcomes and consequences cannot be guaranteed.

Wherever the U.S. contemplates using the development of FSF capabilities as a "way" to achieve its strategic objectives, it should employ the FAS (feasibility, acceptability, suitability) test to determine what the impediments and potential consequences are. While our current strategic perspective identifies the cultivation and development of "partners" as a strategic pillar in combating the spread of ideologies that foment instability and denying terrorist and other disruptive organizations access and resources, it may be unrealistic to assume that we can develop the capabilities of every potential partner's security forces to a point where they can all fulfill not only the political purpose to which their legitimate authority sustains their generation and employment, but U.S. purposes as well. The U.S. should also consider which of these developmental efforts are of the more enduring "partnership" characterization, and which are of the more limited "cooperative venture" type as this will help it formulate ends, ways and means.

As potential candidates for development are identified their developmental potential must be assessed in light of U.S. objectives. This assessment should not serve to separate where we should develop from where we should not, however it should illuminate the costs of achieving the broader U.S. policy objective that developing a FSF supports. This is wise with respect to both current and future strategic requirements, and it has been proven wise historically not only from a U.S. perspective but from a broader world military historical perspective.

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