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MASTER OF MILITARY STUDIES

TITLE:
**BUILDING PARTNERSHIP CAPACITY: SUCCESS OR FAILURE HINGES ON
TRUST**

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF MILITARY STUDIES

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Executive Summary

Title: Building Partnership Capacity: Success or Failure Hinges on Trust

Author: Major Christian J. Pfeffer, United States Marine Corps

Thesis: Trust is the foundation of effective partnership. Building relationships and enhancing partner capacity enables to the United States to achieve national security with the least amount of risk, blood, and treasure. However, without establishing trust to diminish the fear of betrayal, a partnership will not be effective. In this light, rather than a committed relationship working toward a common end-state, a partnership is little more than a simple agreement.

Discussion: In a complex world, where terrorists and insurgents continue to exist, the best way to curtail unwarranted activity is through the use of local defense. Through the development of partnerships and cooperation, unwarranted activities can be recognized and dealt with locally. Ultimately, these local partnerships will benefit the United States and its allies by reducing the cost of combating illegal activities in the long term. In theory, this is a potential solution to the rise of violent extremism taking place around the globe. However, if the United States is going to achieve its National Security Objectives, leadership must focus on building strong relationships, the foundation of which is built on trust. Trust is an essential part of every team, family, organization, and international relationship. If trust is removed from any of these relationships, the end result is failure. If trust is properly developed and leveraged it “has the potential to create unparalleled success and prosperity in every dimension of life.”¹

Conclusion: During the past decade, the United States has experienced success and failure. If one lesson can be gleaned from both our successes and failures, it is the importance of establishing and maintaining a continuous and positive relationship with our partners and not merely an episodic one. An episodic relationship does not allow for the persistent human contact and face-to-face communication that are required to build long lasting, trusting relationships. Building trust requires persistent engagement at all levels; investing in developing trusting partners today will have a lasting impact on combating violent extremism in the future. The United States and its partners can provide a tremendous amount of resources in terms of personnel and equipment, but we cannot build trust in the same capacity. Unlike personnel and equipment that are tangible and can be delivered with immediacy, trust requires time. Trust is intangible; therefore it is difficult to implement and measure. Further, trust is required if the United States is to accomplish its national security objectives. Without developing trust, the United States will be unable to reach the full potential of combating violent extremism because our partners will not feel that they can always rely on the United States to be there in times of need. Until other nations have confidence in the United States as a long-term partner, the objectives of the US national strategy will be difficult to achieve.

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Introduction

The world is continually becoming more dynamic, presenting new challenges that are complex and difficult to understand. For example, as extremist organizations continue to grow and affiliate groups develop, it becomes essential to understand the core motivations of these groups to counter their actions. Leadership must remain flexible and view the complexity as an opportunity to learn and to incorporate new procedures to solve wicked problems.

The United States continues to possess powerful political and military leadership, unmatched military strength, the largest economy, and a commitment to democracy. One of the reasons the United States has the ability to continue advancement and development is because of the foundation of trust that has been developed over the last 200 plus years. Even with all of these positives, the United States cannot achieve global security alone. Because of the vastness of the world and the great cost global security would require in terms of economics and human resources, only a cooperative effort among nations can achieve global security. The US and its allies must realize that no matter how powerful, no nation can single-handedly solve global challenges alone.

In a world where terrorists and insurgents continue to operate, local defense is one way to curtail unwarranted activity. Through partnership development and cooperation, unwarranted activities can be recognized and prosecuted at the local level, reducing costs and required resources for both the United States and its partners. The utilization of local populations to recognize and react to violent extremist threats is effective due to their intimate understanding of the geography, culture, social structure, and political climate of their own villages and countries. However, the United States does not possess the material or financial resources to continuously support every arena. Therefore, to promote peace and stability, the United States must enable

and enhance the capabilities of partner-nations to assist with countering violent extremism and insurgencies.

The importance of enabling partners is evident in the 2010 National Security Strategy¹ in which President Barrack Obama states that, “our military will continue strengthening its capacity to partner with foreign counterparts, train and assist security forces, and pursue military-to-military ties with a broad range of governments.”² To combat violent extremism, the United States must harness and promote the capabilities of a global coalition. Four years later, the release of the 2014 Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) reiterated that building partners is still a top priority of the U.S. leadership:

The United States will maintain a worldwide approach to countering violent extremists and terrorist threats using a combination of economic, diplomatic, intelligence, law enforcement, development, and military tools. The Department of Defense will rebalance our counterterrorism efforts toward greater emphasis on building partnership capacity, especially in fragile states, while retaining robust capability for direct action, including intelligence, persistent surveillance, precision strike, and Special Operations Forces.³

If our efforts in this capacity are to be successful, building trust between the United States and local governments is vital. Trust is the underpinning of effective partnerships. Building partnership capacity enables the United States to achieve national security objectives through a partnered approach toward neutralizing violent extremism with the least amount of risk, blood, and treasure. However, without establishing trust, a partnership is not effective because it cannot diminish the fear of betrayal. In this light, a partnership is little more than an agreement rather than the necessary committed relationship essential to reaching a common end state.

Building Partnership Capacity

¹ The research for this paper began six months prior to the publishing of the 2015 National Security Strategy, which is why the 2010 NSS is referenced throughout the document. However, after analyzing the 2015 NSS, similar references to trust and building partnership capacity are prevalent throughout the document.

In his opening letter for the 2010 National Security Strategy, President Obama discussed the importance of using partners to assist with achieving national security objectives in four distinct sections. He began by discussing the multinational effort to disrupt and dismantle al-Qa'ida as part of our commitment to the security of US people, allies, and partners.⁴ President Obama then discussed the importance of integrating capabilities with partners to advance the overall interests of both parties, developing a win-win situation. In order to meet the many challenges ahead, the use of partners is critical, not just for the safety and security of the United States, but in an effort to pursue global liberty and justice. President Obama believes this achievement can be accomplished through “strengthening those old alliances that have served us so well, while modernizing them to meet the challenges of a new century. As influence extends to more countries and capitals, the United States will build new and deeper partnerships in every region, and strengthen international standards and institutions.”⁵ It is evident that the President believes in the importance of partnerships to achieve US national security goals while promoting global liberty and justice worldwide.

However, the NSS does not specifically define “partner” or describe the means for developing partnerships. The 2012 Defense Strategic Guidance places emphasis on the importance of “building partnership capacity (BPC)” through the use of the Joint Force and all the services and agencies.⁶ The initial challenge is to define what exactly is meant by “building partner capacity.” The intent of this paper is not to argue whether or not BPC is the correct or incorrect approach. Rather, the focus is on the role trust plays in effectively building partnership capacity.

Many different publications have attempted to define BPC over the past decade. Secretary of Defense Robert Gates defined BPC in reference to security issues as “helping other

countries defend themselves or, if necessary, fight alongside US forces by providing them with equipment, training, or other forms of security assistance.”⁷ The 2006 QDR Execution Roadmap defines BPC as “targeted efforts to improve the collective capabilities and performance of the DoD and its partners.”⁸ Nathan Frier, author of *The New Theology: Building Partner Capacity*, explained that building partner capacity involves the training and equipping of foreign security forces. These tasks, in turn, will extend US influence in troubled regions while reducing the cost of our involvement in these regions.⁹

For the purposes of this paper, BPC is defined as “helping other countries combat violent extremism by providing them with equipment, training, and other forms of security assistance in order to extend US influence and achieve mutual interests.” US influence is defined as the ability to have an effect without apparent exertion of force on the character, development, or behavior of someone or something to achieve an end state. The definitions related to BPC sound clear and concise; however, building this capability is much easier said than done. The United States has the ability to provide partners with the required equipment and training to assist with achievement of mutual goals. The United States and its partners cannot achieve their final goals without first securing strong, lasting, and trusting relationships. Therefore, the United States must focus on identifying the key factors that will enable the collective coalition to develop relationships in which the partners trust that actions will follow each other’s words. As relationships are built, partners will begin to develop win-win relationships. Relationships where partners are willing to sacrifice mutually in order to achieve mutual goals are vital for US success in combating violent extremism. In turn, win-win relationships will create a better sense of mutuality and a shared commitment toward achieving stability through the reduction of violent extremist organizations.

The Importance of Trust

Trust is the foundation of all human relationships. Trust is part of every individual, team, family, organization, and international relationship. If trust is removed from any of these relationships, the end result is destruction and failure. If trust is properly developed and leveraged, it “has the potential to create unparalleled success and prosperity in every dimension of life.”¹⁰ According to the *Merriam Webster* dictionary, trust is defined as “an assured reliance on the character, ability, strength, or truth of someone or something; one in which confidence is placed.”¹¹ Stephen Covey, author of *The Speed of Trust*, defines trust simply as “confidence.”¹² He then goes on to explain that, “when you trust people, you have confidence in them, in their integrity and in their abilities.”¹³ So, if this is the case, and trust is the foundation of building human relationships, trust plays a crucial role in US efforts to achieve its national and international security objectives.

In the global community it has become apparent that societal trust is declining around the world both internally within states and externally between nations. David Halpern, a British sociologist, conducted a survey that revealed only 34% of Americans believe that people, in general, can be trusted. In Latin America, 23% believe people can be trusted, and in Africa the figure is only 18%. His research also shows that Great Britain has seen a 30% decrease in trust over the last 40 years.¹⁴ If this decline of trust continues, establishing a global coalition that shares a common end state will be difficult. The establishment of a coalition requires that individuals and nations have the trust and confidence to rely on one another.

Trust may be the deciding factor of whether or not the world can achieve lasting peace and stability, but trust also plays a critical role within each nation state. Citizens must have trust and confidence that their government is working to provide both the basic necessities of life

(water, food, and electricity) and economic opportunities for the people. These opportunities include job markets so that people can provide for their families and the opportunity to grow both socially and economically. If citizens do not trust their governments, they will likely turn to groups or organizations that will provide them with alternatives.

Two recent examples where people have lost trust and confidence in their governments are Afghanistan and Yemen. Within both of these countries, the citizens have turned to other organizations for structure and potential answers to the problems they are facing because the current government was unable to provide for and protect its citizens. Both nations were failing to provide their citizens with food sources, clean water, and electricity, which led to chaos and the loss of governmental control. These in turn provide a potential safe-haven for extremist organizations to begin recruiting and operating.

To be effective, governments must continue to focus on building and sustaining relationships with allies and partners. These relationships will require individuals to learn and to develop behaviors that will increase positive human interaction and lead to higher levels of trust. Stephen Covey discusses thirteen behaviors that help develop and foster trust in relationships. This paper will focus on those behaviors which have a direct effect on how the United States, specifically, develops trust based relationships with allies and partners to achieve national security objectives and deter violent extremism and insurgency.

The first behavior that Covey discusses is to “talk straight,” which he believes is honesty in action and is grounded in principles of honesty, integrity, and straightforwardness.¹⁵ This behavior can become extremely difficult during conversations that focus on the wants and desires of another nation. Very difficult questions are often asked with regard to the capabilities and capacity that are available. The US military has a tendency to skirt the hard questions and

avoid specific promises related to capacity and capability. Military members often feel as though they will ruin or degrade a relationship by *talking straight* and telling the honest truth about what they can or cannot provide. In certain circumstances, this puts a temporary strain on a relationships because individuals do not want to be let down or disappointed. Leaders must recognize that not *talking straight* and giving false hope or false impressions will damage relationships over the long term.

Over the past decade, building capacity within the Afghan military forces, *talking straight* led to a potential breach in trust. The US provided the Afghan military with High Mobility Multipurpose Wheeled Vehicles (HMMWV) for the execution of missions. During the acquisition process, a miscommunication arose with regard to the maintenance and replacement parts cycle for the vehicles. The Afghan military was under the impression that the US was going to provide both maintenance and parts for the HMMWVs, when in fact responsibility for maintenance and repair was incumbent on the Afghanistan military and government. Members of the Afghan military felt they were being betrayed. When individuals have been victims of false impressions, they quickly become skeptical and cynical which lowers the trust level in a relationship. As a country, the United States must strive to increase levels of trust in all of our relationships. As trust grows, so will the desire of partners to help one another in order to achieve our shared interests and the common end state of a peaceful global environment.

Another key relationship behavior is the ability to create transparency. Covey relates this to creating an “open door policy” where people are involved and understand what is taking place in their work environment. Transparency is something that people can see through and understand, and it allows them the opportunity to make sense of and understand the situation. The opposite of something being transparent is to hide, cover, or obscure. Not being transparent

may lead to hidden agendas, hidden meanings, withholding information, or having secrets. This lack of transparency was seen in when the United States began partnering with the Afghan military. Originally, operation centers were kept separate, and only certain individuals were able to enter certain work spaces. Military leaders began to realize that this method was eroding the relationship and destroying any trust that had been formed. The Afghan military often believed the United States was withholding information or had a hidden agenda that could not be shared. Once these walls were torn down and the United States created joint military operations centers that integrated our partners, the relationship dynamic changed. This new environment provided US partners with a sense of both belonging and understanding of the overall end state. The Afghans quickly began to take agency in achieving common goals and the levels of trust between partnered units increased significantly.

A behavior that military leaders often struggle with is the ability to accept and fix a wrong doing. This behavior is difficult for most leaders because it often affects their pride and ego. Most leaders have strong personalities and take great stock in making sound, well thought out decisions. Mistakes can negatively impact trust in a relationship. However, covering up the mistake and not taking ownership of it can completely destroy trust and the entire relationship. As Covey mentions, it is not about the mistake, it is about how the individual reacts to the mistake and what actions are taken.¹⁶ Does the individual choose the path of humility and courage or the path of ego and pride?¹⁷ The ability to admit to a mistake and fix a wrong doing can have a tremendous effect on trust. Usually, more than one person, if not the entire organization, recognizes the mistakes. If an individual takes ownership and rights their mistakes, the potential of building trust with the entire organization increases.

One of the key behaviors to establishing a trustworthy relationship is to establish and show loyalty. Without loyalty, people and organizations have no reason to trust their partners or leadership. Showing loyalty is relatively easy if individuals can put their pride and ego aside. Rather than demonstrating the propensity and desire to take all of the credit for an accomplishment, showing loyalty begins with giving credit to others and acknowledging individuals or groups for their efforts in bringing about results.¹⁸

An opportunity for military leaders to show loyalty to a partner is during the operational planning process. Having the title of “lead planner,” is just that, a title. If members from the partner nation helped design and develop the concept of operations for the mission, they should be given full credit. Public recognition of their input and contributions to the design of the operation is a vital component in the building of a trusting relationship: it is just good management. This recognition develops both trust and respect with the planning team members. More importantly, it builds confidence within the partner nation military planners and staff. This confidence will eventually lead our partners to taking full responsibility for both the planning and execution of operations. It is reasonable to assume that the most people desire success and want to be acknowledged for their contributions. Promoting creativity and inspiring thought is critical in solving the many complex problems that the United States and its partners will be challenged with during the 21st century.

A major aspect on the spectrum of trust-building is to demonstrate results. Covey has been frequently asked, “If you want to establish a relationship with a new client, what is the one thing you can do to build trust the fastest?” Covey replies, “deliver results.”¹⁹ Covey believes that results give instant trust, instant credibility, clout, and they clearly demonstrate that an individual adds value and can perform.²⁰

Delivering results also demonstrates competence between partners, and competence is directly tied to trust. Delivering results plays a significant role in BPC. The foundation of providing a nation with additional capacity is fundamentally about the results that are delivered. At the end of final planning conferences, verbal and written agreements are created that capture what type of capabilities and capacities will be provided.

I have personally experienced situations in Africa, during Foreign Internal Defense missions, where expected capabilities were not provided. The underlying issue was the significant friction caused between trainers and trainees due to miscommunication. The partner force expected that it was going to receive several weeks of close quarter's combat training. Once the training curriculum was explained and the partner force realized they would not be spending several weeks clearing buildings, they became dissatisfied. The partner force felt betrayed and believed that the US force was not going to *deliver results*. Rebuilding trust required significant time and conversations between the trainer and trainee. It required hours of face-to-face conversations and a detailed explanation of the curriculum and training progression. Once the partner force understood the building block approach, it began to recognize the results that the trainers were delivering on a daily basis through the curriculum progression. Once the trainers had reestablished trust, the partner force's motivation, understanding, and grasping of concepts dramatically improved. The trust-based relationships that originated during this training still remain strong years later.

Even though there are criticisms of this approach, building effective, trusting allies is essential to US success. For these relationships to be successful, trust must be established at all levels. Trust must span the spectrum of relationships from the national level, which includes leaders and diplomats, down to the personal level, for example between trainers and trainees.

These levels have interconnected impacts. If strong trust is built at the trainer/trainee level, it could support developing trust at the national/ governmental level. If the trainees share the trust and belief they have in their teachers with their superiors, a larger trust will be established and solidified at the higher levels.

Integration of Trust in Partnership Building

Human relationships are critical components in building effective partner capacity. Without the establishment of a relationship, no common ground, no commitment, and no mutuality exist; therefore, defining shared interests and achieving a common end state is impossible. Once a relationship is established, leadership must focus on developing the core of the relationship, and that begins with establishing *trust*. Trust is critical because as trust increases, risk decreases due to growing, dependability, and dedication, as well as a decreasing fear of betrayal. Without trust, partner nations have a difficult time concentrating on important issues because they are too focused on self-preservation and guarding against betrayal. Since trust is the foundation of building human relationships, the United States must consider the tremendously valuable role that *trust* plays in building partnership capacity. Once the foundation of trust has been established, the training, equipping, and preparing of our partners will enable both the United States and its partners to achieve mutual national security objectives through a reduction of risks and resources. If the United States increases capacities that are within the national interests of both the partner nations and the U.S., the end result will be increased security of both partner nation and United States national and international interests. This approach can have the desirable effect of dismantling violent extremism by eventually eliminating the ability of extremists to operate freely while recruiting and planning for their operations.

Trust and the National Security Strategy

The NSS acknowledges the importance of establishing relationship and states that engagement with other countries is the *starting point* for achieving shared international objectives. Engagement, defined as an arrangement to be present at a specified time and place, or according to the NSS, defined as the “active participation of the US in relationships beyond our borders.”²¹ The initial engagement may be considered the first step in the establishment of a relationship. To combat violent extremism around the globe, the United States must rely more heavily on its relationships with its close friends and allies in Europe, Asia, and the Middle East.²² Relationships are critical for establishing shared interest and commitments that will promote broader security and prosperity throughout the world. Establishing partners and enhancing their capabilities will enable a proactive approach to countering violent extremism by empowering local forces to better handle the dangers in their own backyards. Training our partners and providing them better means of gathering intelligence will have the likely result of undermining extremist networks prior to violent attacks. Ultimately, preventing the capacity to conduct violent acts will have a lasting impact on the morale of terrorist organizations who require demonstrations of violence to sustain themselves. The capability to prevent, rather than react to, attacks must be an essential component of US strategy.

In the current US fight against insurgency in Afghanistan, the NSS discusses the importance of strengthening the security and capacity of our partners. One of the subtitles under the strategic approach of the NSS is “Pursuing Comprehensive Engagement.” The comprehensive engagement centers on relationships and shared mutual interests. The United States has been engaged in building partnerships to achieve NSS objectives since the conclusion of World War II. The United States played a significant role in building the international system,

with organizations such as NATO, United Nations, and the World Bank. Without building relationships and partners with nations that share common values and commitment to international norms, the creation of these organizations would not have been possible. International organizations provide a venue for nations to communicate internal and external issues and concerns pertaining to security, economics, trade, and governance. These organizations also provide a venue to leverage outside assistance, resources, and capabilities to achieve mutual interests and global stability.

Diplomacy is a fundamental aspect of our national security as both an offensive and defensive capability. The US diplomats can be considered the first line of engagement. Diplomats play a vital role in listening to US partners, building and sustaining relationships, learning from them, and seeking to achieve a common end state. Diplomats garner information that the United States can use in an offensive or defensive manner. They also have a vast knowledge of the political, economic, and social environment in which they work. Their knowledge and information is critical to making informed, and grounded decisions at the right times.

The NSS outlines the need for new skills that provide diplomats and other government officials with the ability to “foster effective interaction to convene, connect, and mobilize not only other governments and international organizations, but also non-state actors such as corporations, foundations, nongovernmental organizations and universities; all of whom increasingly have a distinct role to play with both diplomatic and development issues.”²³ According to the NSS, part of the solution to providing these new skill sets to diplomats is ensuring that the appropriate authorities and mechanisms are implemented.²⁴ Involving the correct authorities is critical to accomplishing successful missions. However, the NSS does not

recognize the core skill that is required to achieve our national security objectives. The ability to build trusting human relationships is the core skill set required to foster the ability to convene, connect, and mobilize. When trust is established, a greater likelihood exists that individuals and local governments will mobilize to accomplish the tasks outlined by the NSS. Without the development of trusting relationships, nations become reluctant to dedicate time, resources, treasure and, potentially, blood towards a task that may not seem worth the risk. However, when a trusting relationship exists, partners become more willing to assume these risks because they know that a guaranteed commitment and a belief in that commitment also exists. Another component of the NSS that relies on trusted relationships is development. The NSS is focused on assisting developing countries with the ability to manage security threats, reap the benefits of global economic expansion, and establish democratic institutions that provide basic human needs.²⁵ Many people believe that through an aggressive development agenda, the United States can strengthen regional partners to help stop conflicts, counter global criminal networks, and build a stable inclusive global economy. Once again, the United States can only accomplish these goals if it has established relationships and all parties are in pursuit of a common end state.

A cornerstone of the NSS is to “Invest in the Capacity of Strong and Capable Partners” to create partners that can manage threats within their borders and assist in addressing shared interests and common challenges. To effectively get ahead of this task, the United States must assist with reconstruction in the aftermath of conflict by assisting with the necessary capacity building of security, governance, and economic growth to foster long term peace and stability. The use of diplomats, government, and military members to proactively stay engaged and respond through partnerships and to provide capacity to at-risk-states will ensure much greater dividends than being reactive once a crisis has occurred. This proactive method will help

exponentially with the development and the growth of trust with members inside and outside of that country.

Being proactive and assisting at-risk states may directly prevent an increase in violent extremism. Violent extremists often work and develop plans in locations that provide them the most opportunity. The United States must focus on priority countries that have known violent extremist organizations working within their borders. An effective method to combating extremism and insurgency will begin with establishment of trust between the United States and the partner nation's government. Trust is the foundation that leads to communication where partners can share their grievances, strengths, and weaknesses. Understanding a partner's weaknesses allows the other party to apply their strengths to counter weakness with the intent of achieving the common end state. For example, in an insurgency situation, the partner country's strength is understanding the human/ physical terrain and the threat that illicit trafficking across a porous border poses to the integrity of their internal economic stability. However, the host nation may not have the means to address the understood grievances. Through a joint effort, the partner may possess the capability to assist with training and utilization of specific technological equipment to help secure a porous border. An interagency team led by the DoS could perhaps implement programs to ensure the countries internal economic integrity—ultimately producing a desirable end state.

Once the United States has established trust at the governmental levels, it must begin a concerted effort to connect with the partner nation's population. Extremist organizations tend to operate in rural areas where little government control or influence exists. In such environments, extremists can connect strongly with the populations because the populations have little or no interaction with the government or its security forces.²⁶ Therefore, to be effective in defeating

insurgency, the United States and its partner government must target capacity building projects at the specific populations that are supporting extremist organizations. Capacity building must cover a wide spectrum and not be solely focused on building capacity within military organizations. Projects that help the local population will strengthen the civil-military relationships which, in turn, will diminish extremist support. Extremist organizations must connect with people to recruit, generate financial support, and communicate their ideology. Projects designed to connect the population with the legitimate government institutions begin to separate the population from the extremist organizations because they are receiving the goods and services they require from legitimate governmental entities. As a result of better communication and a stronger sense of trust, governments will have a better chance of securing their mutually established goals because they will have already won over the hearts and minds of the people.

Pakistan: An example of the Importance of Trusting Relationships

Security is one of the four enduring national interests. A subtask of security is to *Disrupt, Dismantle, and Defeat Al-Qa'ida and its Violent Extremist Affiliates in Afghanistan, Pakistan, and around the world.*²⁷ President Obama plans to utilize relationships as one of his primary strategies to accomplish this objective. President Obama states, “We will foster a relationship with Pakistan founded upon mutual interests and mutual respect. To defeat violent extremists who threaten both of our countries, we will strengthen Pakistan’s capacity to target violent extremists with its borders, and continue to provide security assistance to support those efforts.”²⁸ The President makes it very clear that one of the US missions is to sustain a long-term partnership committed to Pakistan’s future while simultaneously providing deepened cooperation in a multitude of areas which address security and civilian challenges.²⁹ The US-Pakistan

relationship has gone through many trials and tribulations, but, if the United States plans to strengthen this relationship, it must begin by establishing a deep-seated trust with the Pakistani people.

Throughout the history of US-Pakistan relations, the countries have disagreed upon several issues, including imposed sanctions and military operations conducted in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA). The issues have led some of the Pakistani people to view the United States as a disloyal, inconsistent, unreliable partner.³⁰ Another element that has led to a lack of trust between the Pakistani people and the United States is the perceived religious and cultural insensitivity of the United States. This perception can be changed over time through better communication and coordination in relation to Pakistani and US objectives within the Pakistan region.

To build trust with the Pakistani population, several things must take place. First, the United States must clearly communicate its intent behind maintaining a partnership so that the Pakistani people understand that the United States is a true partner and not a threat to their sovereignty. Also, US and Pakistani leaders must jointly define the areas of government and military cooperation. These aspects of cooperation need to be broadcast through the media in order to reach the majority of the population. Until trust is cultivated, the relationship between the United States and Pakistan can be considered an agreement, but not a true partnership.

As the United States continues to build trusted relationships with partners around the world, the global community will jointly have success in “Contrasting Al-Qa’ida’s Intent to Destroy, with Our Constructive vision.”³¹ As relationships become stronger and trust is created, people will gain confidence and provide mutual support to prevent and react to the havoc violent extremists intend to create.

Challenges and Considerations

As the United States continues to build allies and partners, it must also pay particular attention to how other countries and nations interpret and understand the relationships that are being developed. These relationships can be viewed through two different perspectives. The first perspective is a positive view with an understanding that allies and coalitions are created to bring peace and stability to the global environment. These relationships may be developed from previously positive US actions and a mutual understanding that a trusting relationship provides increased potential to counter both internal and external threats. If a third party country understands the developing relationship as joining together to support international objectives of reducing violent extremism, it will most likely be viewed positively. The second perspective of developing relationships may be viewed negatively. As the United States continues to develop worldwide partnerships, regional, third party countries may view these developing relationships as a threat to their interests and sovereignty. Third party countries may perceive these relationships as US power projection with the main intent to spread US global influence. US global influence may be viewed as a threat to a country's internal political and economic interests.

If the United States attempts to handle the growth of violent extremism and insurgent factions alone, instead of using a collective approach through the development of partners and allies, United States will be unable to sustain the associated long-term financial burden. Extremist organizations have grown and expanded to such a level that it appears they will be present in the world for years to come. The United States does not have the financial capability or the military capacity to deploy forces worldwide in an attempt to combat all the instability created by extremist organizations. A persistent, worldwide deployment of US military forces is

unrealistic and a dangerous political and economic liability. Therefore, the United States must train, advise, and assist our partners to decrease the necessity for direct US involvement and intervention. However, US centric operations are beneficial for several reasons.

The positive side of attempting to deal with the issues solely through US involvement is that United States has more influence and can better guarantee the outcome. Although the US commitment to the issue requires US assets, a level of assurance exists that the situation will be handled in accordance with international policies and procedures. The use of international partners and coalitions can increase the potential for human rights and law of war violations. Another potential advantage of a US only approach is the ability to measure whether or not the operation or approach was effective. The United States can establish “measures of effectiveness,” and it can assess the operation with certain metrics to determine if follow-on action is necessary.

A US-only approach to solving global issues may be viewed as the United States acting as a hegemon with solely its own interests in mind. If the world views the United States in this light, the very trust so vital to success is eroded and potentially destroyed. By not approaching these issues by, with, and through our partners, other nations will likely see the United States as violating their sovereignty. The development of trusting relationships ensures that the partner nations understand that they share mutual objectives. A step toward developing trusting relationships requires the United States to make it evident that it is not using undue power or manipulation, or forcing partner nations to pursue agendas contrary to their self-interests. Clearly, if viewed in this negative capacity, the US will hinder its ability to establish lasting and trusting relationships where they are needed the most. Also, without the assistance of the partner nation’s strengths and capabilities as a force multiplier, the US may need to provide all the

resources required to accomplish the end state, which is economically and politically undesirable.

The alternative, and probably the most effective approach, to eventually eliminating violent extremism is through a partnered approach. The US should focus on providing partner nations with the capability and capacity to eliminate violent extremism and insurgency in their own countries. The initial investment carries a heavy burden of both blood and treasure, but the long-term investment will reap significant dividends and cost significantly less than a long-term US led combat operation. This initial investment requires US personnel to travel to far reaching places to assist partners in the development of a wide range of capabilities, including the ability to carry out missions without US assistance. These partnerships and training programs must be centered on creating a self-sustaining organization for training personnel and maintaining equipment. Part of the necessary program must be focused on creating a host nation training cadre for the skill sets that need to be taught. Relationships and trust will grow exponentially as partners recognize that the United States is teaching useful, tested, and proven skills, that they in turn can teach to future military forces. The equipment provided to our partners must also be something that the host nation can use and sustain once the United States is no longer present. Providing our partners with a capacity that requires US sustainment will only cost more over the long term. A more effective initial investment will reduce the amount of US blood and treasure over the long term and will achieve NSS objectives for a global partnership. The partnered approach also ensures that we are not violating a nation's sovereignty, which is a fundamental requirement in building trust. By empowering its partners to handle their own problems with US support, the people the US is attempting to help will more likely view the United States in a

favorable light. When people believe their leaders are weak and puppets of US ideologies, it is impossible to build a trusting relationship with the country, as a whole.

The United States also has the responsibility to communicate with its citizens about the importance of developing partnerships and its critical role in combating the internal and external threat of violent extremist organizations. The espoused US values of commitment to democracy, human rights, and the rule of law are values that also play a significant part in establishing trusting relationships that will promote global peace and stability. American citizens must understand the intent behind a willingness to risk lives and money to develop international relationships rather than supporting domestic programs. Understanding that the initial investment of risk on the front end will eventually lead to the reduction of US risk is an important point to emphasize. American citizens are reluctant to risk blood and treasure for something they do not believe is directly related to their safety, security, and US sovereignty. As an example, US citizens supported the 2003 invasion of Iraq because they believed that weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and the growth of Al Qaeda in Iraq were direct threats to the safety and security of US citizens. Once the reasons for the invasion of Iraq began to shift towards the US interest in oil, many people became disenfranchised because they did not want to see American service members dying for what they perceived as the wrong reasons. The often ephemeral feelings of the American public must be addressed if political and military leaders expect to receive continued support and money from Congress. The American public must be made to understand why we are partnering with different nations. Without the support of the American public, success will be difficult, and the establishment of trusting relationships with foreign powers, impossible.

The Importance of a Narrative

As the United States continues to develop relationships, it must develop a clear narrative and communicate it globally. This narrative, must explain the purpose and intent of the relationship if the end state of global peace and stability is to be reached. The narrative must also reinforce the importance of partnership goals that have been outlined in the NSS. “Through engagement, we can create opportunities to resolve differences, strengthen the international community’s support for our actions, and learn about the intentions and nature of closed regimes.”³² If US national security depends on alliances and partners, then the United States must actively engage these partners on issues regarding global and regional security priorities. “We will continue to deepen our cooperation with other 21st Century centers of influence – including China, India, and Russia – in the basis of mutual interests and mutual respect. We will also pursue diplomacy and development that supports the emergence of new and successful partners, from the Americas to Africa; from the Middle East to Southeast Asia.”³³ The ability of the United States to develop trusting relationships with partners and allies is essential to establishing the global coalition and successfully combat violent extremism.

Conclusion

During the past decade, the United States has experienced successes and failures. If one lesson can be gleaned from both US successes and failures, it is the importance of establishing and maintaining lasting relationships with partners, and not episodic ones. Episodic relationships do not allow for persistent human contact and face-to-face communication that build long lasting, trusting relationships. Building trust requires persistent engagement at all levels. Investing in the development of trusting partners today will have a lasting impact on combating violent extremism in the future. Without establishing trust, what some people define as a partnership is merely an agreement and over time, the agreement will fail. Building and

sustaining trust takes time and commitment, even after a foundation of trust has been established. Levels of trust may vary when the relationship is challenged or is faced with a transition, but when partners can deal with adversity and disagreements in a relationship without questioning their partners' motives a fundamental level of trust exists. Trusting relationships have the ability to learn from disagreements, to treat disagreements as isolated events, and to focus on the numerous positive events that have enabled the relationship to grow and develop over time. Without the development of trusting relationships, US interests and goals will be thwarted. Without trust, relationships are hollow and will not progress past the fear of betrayal. Once trust is established, fear is removed and partners can focus on the alignment of priorities, mutuality, shared risk, commitment, and dedication.³⁴ Mutuality and shared risk play an important role in partners achieving a mutual end state. Both partners are willing to stand together, united together to create more than they would have independently.³⁵ In turn, this mutuality reduces the level of risk as each partner understands they are "in it together" as they continue the mission of defeating violent extremism.

While the United States has the capability to surge forces during a crisis, it is not possible to surge trust among our partners. Trust is not built overnight and requires persistent engagement, time and commitment. The United States, combined with its partners, can provide a tremendous amount of resources in terms of personnel and equipment, but it cannot build trust in the same capacity. Building trusting relationships with partner nations will greatly enhance US national security efforts, while simultaneously building a global coalition focused on defeating violent extremist organizations.

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- ⁷ Jason B. Terry, "Principles of Building Partnership Capacity." Master's Thesis, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, 2010, 8.
- ⁸ Terry, 6.
- ⁹ Nathan Frier, "The New Theology: Building Partner Capacity." *Small Wars Journal*. May 2010. <http://smallwarsjournal.com/blog/journal/docs-temp/445-freier.pdf>, 1.
- ¹⁰ Covey, 1.
- ¹¹ Merriam-Webster, Inc. *The Merriam-Webster Dictionary*. Springfield, Mass.: Merriam-Webster, 2005.
- ¹² Covey, 5.
- ¹³ Covey, 5.
- ¹⁴ Covey.
- ¹⁵ Covey, 137.
- ¹⁶ Covey, 160
- ¹⁷ Covey, 160.
- ¹⁸ Covey, 166.
- ¹⁹ Covey, 172.
- ²⁰ Covey, 172
- ²¹ President Barrack H. Obama, *National Security Strategy*, (Washington D.C., The White House, May 2010), 11, http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/rss_viewer/national_security_strategy.pdf (accessed December 22, 2014), 11.
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- ²⁶ Herb Daniels, *Keeping COIN Simple: the Outhouse Strategy for Security Development 2009*. <http://www.dtic.mil/ndia/2009SOLIC/danielsessay.pdf>
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³³ President Barack H. Obama, *National Security Strategy*, (Washington D.C., The White House, May 2010), 11, http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/rss_viewer/national_security_strategy.pdf (accessed December 22, 2014), 11.

³⁴ Robert P. Lynch, "Building the Pillar of Trust." 2008.

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