

Tribal Engagement in Afghanistan

There is an ongoing discussion about the merits of engagement activities — activities between coalition military forces and foreign civilian personnel — as a means of obtaining information, influencing behavior and building an indigenous base of support for coalition and government objectives.

During a recent rotation to Operation Enduring Freedom, Special Forces A-detachments 3321 and 3315 developed models in the Paktia and Paktika provinces of what can be accomplished in terms of tribal engagement by working within the existing tribal power structure in Afghanistan. An examination of the detachments' understanding of the operational environment and subsequent methods of engagement can provide a model for others to use throughout Afghanistan.

Southeastern Paktia lies between the Tora Bora mountain ranges and Nangahar Province to the north and Khowst Province to the south. To the east lies Pakistan and the Federally Administered Tribal Areas, including the Shia-controlled Kurram Agency and the city of Parachinar. To the west lies the provincial capital, Gardez. Significant to the surrounding areas in Afghanistan is that they are all critical nodes in the lines of communication that connect Kabul to the populace. Eastern Paktia is strategically important because many of the insurgent infiltration routes pass through it. The separation of the insurgents (Taliban, Hezeb Islami al Gulbadin and Haqqani) from eastern Paktia would result in a decreased ability of the insurgents to project power into Afghanistan, allow for the development of capable governance and permit the necessary (and expected) reconstruction projects necessary to connect the people of eastern Afghanistan with the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, or IROA.

The rural population of eastern Paktia consists of subsistence farmers. The area is free of poppy cultivation, and crops consist mainly of wheat and potatoes. The challenges include a population largely untouched by modern times and tools. Issues such as electricity, running water and the lack of progress being made by the central government are not primary concerns. Most of the population is trying to survive, making do as their ancestors have done for generations.

The local tribes, all Pashto, include the Mangal, Moqbil, Jaji and Chamkani. Nomadic Kuchi tribes also make regular passages through the area, returning from Pakistan. Each tribe is divided into sub-tribes, all possessing unique cultures, norms and hierarchy of needs. Concepts such as national identity are far outweighed by loyalty to family, clan and tribe. Through the SF detachments' analysis, it became clear that tactics, techniques and procedures used against a relatively sophisticated and networked adversary were going to need adjusting. Because all the tribes are concerned mostly with providing for their immediate future, successful engagement is simply a matter of making their lives a little better.

ODA 3321 arrived in Afghanistan in late October 2007. Following a brief transitional phase with an SF detachment from the 7th SF Group, the team conducted a thorough assessment of their area of operations, or AO. The initial area assessment is essential for understanding the operational environment. After studying an extensive collection of reporting and analysis on insurgent operational patterns, the team began to develop logical lines of operations, or LLO, for the AO.

In early December 2007, the ODA met with the squadron commanding officer and tactical air commander for the 4th Battalion, 73rd Cavalry, 82nd Airborne Division. The Cav unit was the battlespace "owner," so it was extremely important to meet with them and share operational philosophies. Although the SF detachment has neither tactical control nor operational control for the International Security Assistance Forces, or ISAF, it is still imperative to nest LLOs with adjacent units. Understanding the need for unity of effort is the first step to success in the counterinsurgency, or COIN, environment.

The Cav unit had massed the majority of its combat power in the vicinity of Gardez. It needed to focus its security efforts there, because the Task Force 82 provincial reconstruction team had developed the city into a center of commerce, based on the classic ink-blot methodology. Through joint mission analysis with 4-73, the ODA determined that a primary infiltration route for insurgents to reach Gardez came directly through the ODA's identified AO.

Many successful examples of engagement in COIN were available, including Tal Afar in Iraq in



PROMISING SECURITY

A district police chief talks with elders of a village that is controlled by anti-coalition forces. The promise of security is one means of engaging the tribes. *Photo copyright Eric Long, used with permission.*



HELP ON DEMAND

Humanitarian-aid drops conducted in remote villages show the tribes that the government is looking out for them. *Photo copyright Eric Long, used with permission.*

2005 and the Tagab Valley in Afghanistan in 2006. However, achieving success was going to require a new look at COIN engagement — large, “clear, hold and build” operations were uniquely unsuited to this environment. First, the force structure that would be required to influence a population estimated at more than 350,000 did not exist. Afghan and coalition forces totaled fewer than 330 and 30 respectively, including support personnel. That 1,000:1 ratio was a far cry from the 20:1 to 25:1 ratio of population to counterinsurgent ratio that is doctrinally recommended for effective counterinsurgency operations. Additional forces were not going to be forthcoming during the ODA’s rotation. It was going to have to make good with what it had on hand: an ODA, a tactical Psychological Operations team and a Civil Affairs team.

Second, the battlespace owners’ efforts were centered on securing the major supply routes that enabled the IROA to connect to the population. The main effort lay to the east in Zormat District and secondarily in the Waza Zadran, Schwak and Gerdai Serai districts (the Zadran Arc) in the mid-south portion of the province. Third, even if forces could be massed to clear a given area, the porous border made for a relatively easy egress for insurgents.

In eastern Paktia, three centers of gravity are the real power needed to influence the population: the tribal elder, the local political leadership (the subgovernors; commanders of the Afghan National Security Forces, or ANSF; and other IROA/CF-sponsored leaders) and the local mullah. The power-broker who holds primacy is determined more by strength of personality, the problem at hand and the current local conditions than by any set of ideological values. If an element can influence the balance of power by tipping it to one side with incremental inputs, then that player has become the de facto power broker in the region. This was the genesis of the Moqbil Project.

Moqbil project

The Moqbil Project (named for the predominant tribe that straddles the border between Afghanistan and Pakistan) required an in-depth understanding of the local cultural norms. In eastern Paktia, the population’s ethical decisions are not governed by a rigid moral compass based on moral imperatives. Ethics are based on self-interest and self-preservation. Using one’s position to better one’s family, clan, village or tribe is expected. Why else would a public official hold an office, if not to advance his tribe’s interests? Understanding the culture, and working within the culture of eastern Paktia, not of the Western world, was essential if the teams were to make progress. The goal was to manage a tolerable level of what might be looked on as corruption in the Western world. The challenge was to get the mix right.

Armed with an understanding of the population, coalition forces led by SF Soldiers set out to separate the insurgents from the population. Based on its analysis of the districts in eastern Paktia, the team deemed the Moqbil tribal area in the Patan district the most important. The plan called for the SF teams to operate along two lines: security and development.

Security consisted of providing the population of eastern Paktia with a strong, capable and morally acceptable police force. In eastern Paktia, the Afghan Border Patrol, or ABP, is a relatively proficient force. Given the porous border and limited manpower resources, the ABP faced a challenging mission. However, the ABP was spending a disproportionate amount of time in the provincial interior, doing the job of the ineffective Afghan National Police, or ANP. Creating ANP capability was vital. The challenge was to create a training program with a program of instruction, or POI, that could succeed where others had not.

The plan for the Chamkani Training Center, or CTC, was designed to improve the capability of the ANP and the ABP. One of the problems was enabling the already over-committed ANP to conduct training without rendering the rest of the force incapable of conducting operations. This problem was dealt with by a POI that required attendance for four hours a day, three days a week. Although this arrangement was not ideal for developing capability, it was acceptable to the ANP.

Moreover, the training conducted was professional and respectful of Afghan culture. ANP or ABP officers running up hills or doing push-ups was not appropriate. The CTC concentrated on tasks necessary to bridge the gap between the training that officers received at the regional training centers, or RTC, and the training required to survive in the area’s COIN environment. The CTC sharpened the skills of ANP and ABP without creating more stress on the attendees. Moreover, the CTC developed an Afghan train-the-trainer methodology that provided Afghan ANP and ABP instructors. A more capable ANP and ABP force demonstrated to the local tribal leaders that the IROA subgovernors could provide security.

Another initiative taken was the creation of a joint communication center, or JCC, and a joint tactical operations center, or JTOC. The ODA’s communications sergeant opened a JCC/JTOC in the Chamkani District Center. This command-and-control node began as a JCC, giving all local ANSF elements the ability to communicate with each other on a daily basis and in time of crisis. As the ANSF matures in this area (because of ODA training and influence), the capability of a JTOC will be realized. The JCC/JTOC will facilitate the coordination of operations among the coalition forces, ANP, ABP and the tribal representatives. This JTOC will allow for real-time planning and action on time-sensitive threats and issues (criminal and insurgent). Although Arbaki (tribal militia) are not an official part of the security team, their support in the local villages is essential. The JTOC provides a physical structure for sharing the common intelligence picture. It enables the leaders of the local tribes to report information to the IROA, vet the information against personal vendettas and leverage the responsiveness of the ANP and ABP, combat-advised by U.S. Special Forces, to respond to the requirement. Furthermore, through a tip line, locals can call information into the JCC/JTOC. The JTOC not only provides the ability to deconflict but also provides a venue for synchronizing operations in order to prevent the tribes from playing one element of the security force against another.

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A second part of increasing the security is closing the traditional insurgent infiltration routes into the region. Team Chamkani's extensive engagement with the geographic and human terrain provided intelligence on the major infiltration routes, especially in the Moqbil tribal region in Patan District. Some of these routes are walking trails, others are so robust that they were easily trafficable 11 months a year by fully loaded trucks. These "ratlines" enabled the insurgents to move across the border to Pakistan unchecked. More significant was the ease with which insurgents could move north and south once across the border. Team Chamkani worked with the local Afghan security forces to establish a series of checkpoints for interdicting uncontested movement. Not only did the checkpoints begin to deny the insurgents freedom of movement, but they also provided a valuable means of projecting the rule of law through ANSF presence.

The ANSF presence was warmly received by the locals. In Pesho Ghar, the local merchants stated that they could go home without worrying about criminals robbing their shops. What is more interesting, at the Naray Pass checkpoint, 50 locals came out with shovels and pickaxes to help the ANSF construct the checkpoint.

There are many ways to separate the insurgents from the population. At times, the method of choice is through lethal targeting. At other times, it is through nonlethal engagement. In the Moqbil tribal region, one venue for engaging the tribes was the repatriation of Mullah Noor Kabahr. Noor Kabahr, a key leader and respected elder of the Moqbil tribe in both Pakistan and Afghanistan, had been detained by coalition forces in mid-2007. First, Team Chamkani was able to articulate why Noor Kabahr's repatriation would facilitate connecting the IROA to the population. Then, Team Chamkani gained influence over Noor Kabahr, and by working with the Moqbil tribal elders, the ABP and the Patan subgovernor, the ODA was able to leverage his release to develop influence with the Moqbil tribe (the population in the area).

The ODA leveraged SOTF-33's excellent relationship with the Combined Joint Task Force, or CJTF, at Bagram to coordinate a large ceremony for Noor Kabahr's release from detention. Following an overnight stay at the firebase, Team Chamkani escorted Mullah Noor Kabahr back to the Moqbil tribal area. A key leader engagement, or KLE, was held near Noor Kabahr's home. The Patan subgovernor spoke to the many Moqbil elders in attendance. Following the KLE, Kabahr invited the ODA to a small lunch. Immediately following lunch, Team Chamkani and the ANSF established the series of checkpoints along the border of Pakistan in the Moqbil area. The following day, Noor Kabahr held a shura with the elders from the Pakistan side of the tribe. During the shura, the elders focused on securing their tribal areas and recognizing the importance of the new security positions along the border.

Engaging key facilitators

The ability to target the key tribal facilitators within an area is essential to building a bond between the IROA and the tribe. However, a more capable security force alone cannot separate the insurgents from the population. One needs the support of the population, which is gained by applying the appropriate influence. If we can shape the operational environment by nonlethal means, the population becomes more flexible in its support of lethal targeting of insurgents. Without the ability to provide security from the insurgents, no amount of improvement in the standard of living was going to convince local tribes to support the IROA. Once the security improved to the level that the insurgents could not mass on isolated villages, the conditions were set to effectively begin reconstruction projects.

The tactical PSYOP team, or TPT, and the Civil Affairs team, or CAT, were an integral part of Team Chamkani's efforts to engage the tribal elders. The TPT and CAT assisted the ODA by providing quick assessments about villages and local elders. The TPT ran a radio station from the firebase. The Voice of Chamkani broadcasted throughout ODA 3321's AO, as well as into Pakistan. TPT 921 distributed hundreds of hand-cranked/solar-powered radios throughout the area, and almost every resident in eastern Paktia could listen to the Voice of Chamkani. Among the Voice of Chamkani's messages were reports of IEDs, local tribal elders who had secured the commander's emergency-response program, or CERP, and U.S. Agency for International Development projects through their IROA officials, and information for tribal elders about the next security meeting.

Most important to the Moqbil Project was the focused reconstruction projects implemented by the CAT. Nested with the reconstruction efforts of the 4-73 Cav and the provincial reconstruction team, these projects ranged from simply lending firebase-construction equipment to local elders to improve their control of floodwaters, to large-scale CERP (more than \$750,000 spent in three months). Some of these projects included: Serangur village school: \$45,300; Matwarkh village school: \$45,300; farming equipment for the Moqbil tribal agriculture co-op: \$78,800; farming equipment storage building for the Moqbil tribe: \$32,546; maintenance and training facility for the Moqbil co-op: \$32,136; Chamkani hospital solar power: \$60,000; and Moqbil tribe government building: \$31,846. One of the essential aspects of tribal engagement is that it is done through the IROA subgovernors. Tribal engagement was a means of establishing the legitimacy of the IROA, not supplanting it. Likewise, in an area where the tribal elders speak for the tribe, Team Chamkani's approach moved the local population toward a representative form of government, not away from it.

For example, in the Serangur village, historically an insurgent support site, the ODA lent its firebase bulldozer to the village elders. The ODA provided fuel and an operator. The village elders were entrusted with the bulldozer for three weeks. This single action caused a major change in insurgent tactics. The insurgents were no longer welcomed into the village by the elders and were forced to move through the mountains. Although that did not stop insurgent

infiltration, it did deny the insurgents the use of a high-speed avenue of approach. Alone, the action does not sound significant, but coupled with similar programs, it went a long way toward separating the insurgents from the population.

Another of the keys to engaging the tribes through the IROA leadership is coordinating government officials' actions. First, the ODA conducted internal team planning and coordination (including the CAT and TPT). The ODA knew what resources that it could offer and what it wanted to achieve. Then the ODA organized a weekly security meeting at the firebase. The subgovernors from the surrounding districts, as well as the ANP and ABP chiefs, met to discuss pertinent security issues. At first, the Afghans were hesitant to talk. Over time, and when they came to realize that the ODA could facilitate certain resources, the Afghans began to take the lead. The CF simply sat in the back and observed the IROA officials discussing concerns and conducting coordination for items of mutual interest.

While it is tough to measure the effectiveness of tribal engagement, there are regular indications of improvement. For example, the ODA commander was invited to a shura held by the Chamkani subgovernor. The issue at hand was the debt between two individuals from the Jaji and Mangal tribes. The Mangal man had kidnapped the Jaji because of an unpaid debt. A month earlier, the Chamkani subgovernor, with the support of the ABP and ANP (advised by the ODA), conducted a patrol to the Mangal's village and freed the Jaji man. At that point, the Paktia provincial governor ordered the Jaji man to remain in the custody of the Chamkani police during the subsequent investigation. A jirga, or assembly of elders, was held that included the IROA and elders from each tribe. With the blessing of the provincial governor, the decision was made by the elders for the Jaji man to repay his debt, minus an amount to compensate for his time while detained.

Another example is the detention of the target Abdul Jalil. Abdul Jalil lives in the Martwarkh village, but he would move between Pakistan, Khowst, Paktia, etc., on a regular basis. On April 12, 2008, the ANP received a tip that Jalil was back at his house (Jalil enjoyed freedom of maneuver because the ANP was not willing or capable to mount an operation to capture him.) The ANP chief decided to act. Following a cordon and search, the chief held a shura with the local elders. These are the same elders that the ODA/IROA had been working with over the past several months. The chief told the elders to have Jalil turn himself in to the ANP or subgovernor as soon as possible. He told the elders that Jalil would be arrested, "either tomorrow or 20 years from now." When Jalil returned home, the elders forced Jalil to go see the subgovernor. Jalil did. The subgovernor thanked Jalil for being forthcoming and then brought him to the firebase.

The key take-away from this scenario is IROA tribal engagement. The decision in these specific cases was for the IROA to empower the tribal elders to have a voice in a criminal case that clearly involved elements of traditional Pashtunwali, or hospitality. This integration of Pashtunwali into IROA tribal engagement was not lost on the tribes. Having a coalition-force representative present (the ODA commander) in support of the IROA gave great credibility to the CF in the eyes of the tribal elders. > **Top**

Tribal Engagement in Afghanistan

By Major Darin J. Blatt, Captain Eric Long, Captain Brian Mulhern and Staff Sergeant Michael Ploskunak

Continuation...

Tribal dynamics and governance in Shkin

Shkin lies in the southeastern portion of the Paktika Province, on the southern border of the Bermel district and the northern border of the Gomal district. The Pakistan border lies just to the east of Shkin, highlighted by the city of Angoradda. The predominant tribe in the Bermel district is the Waziri. The Waziri tribal area stretches into North Waziristan and South Waziristan in Pakistan. The other major tribe in the Shkin area is the Kharouti tribe, whose area encompasses the Gomal district. The Bermel district center is adjacent to Forward Operating Base Boris, and both are located 12 kilometers north of Shkin. The Bermel district center houses the Bermel district subgovernor and a small 10-man ANP element responsible for the entire Bermel district.



TRAINING CADRE

Afghan soldiers train their troops in standing training practices and processes. *Photo copyright Eric Long, used with permission.*

"The ANSF do not have the ability yet to protect the population in rural areas from enemy influences. Therefore, the people feel the need to both support the government and the enemy, depending on who is in their area at any given time."

Because of limited resources, this small ANP element can effectively control only the bazaar near the Bermel district center, and security for the entire district is the responsibility of the ANA battalion and the conventional U.S. Army infantry company stationed in FOB Boris.

Each week, the Bermel subgovernor holds a shura in the Bermel district center for the Bermel tribes. The Waziris have a majority, with minor tribes also in attendance. The SF teams operating in the area hold a weekly shura for the same Waziris from Bermel and the Kharoutis from northern Gomal. Forty elders regularly attend the Shkin shura — half from the Waziri tribe and half from the Kharouti tribe.

The ANA in southeastern Paktika is composed solely of the 2nd Battalion, 2nd Brigade, 203rd ANA Corps, which is stationed at FOB Boris. One company from the ANA battalion is rotated to Border Crossing Point-213 in the Shkin area, seven kilometers east of Firebase Lilley and just west of Angoradda, Pakistan. One kilometer north of BCP-213 is the ANA's north observation point, which holds one platoon from the ANA company and was designed to protect the BCP from enemy attacks from the north.

The ODA in Shkin is located at Firebase Lilley. The ODA employs several hundred Afghan security guards, or ASG. The Shkin ASGs secure Firebase Lilley's perimeter and occupy three border outposts in the Shkin area. The ASG Sangar observation post, or OP, is located two kilometers north of the ANA's north OP and was built to protect the north OP/BCP-213 from enemy attacks from the north because the north OP was deemed a "soft target" by the enemy. Sangar OP is on tactically advantageous terrain and dominates the area. The ASG south OP is located three kilometers south of BCP-213 and is designed to protect the southeastern portion of Shkin from enemy attacks. The ASG Shkin Bazaar OP is located seven kilometers south of Firebase Lilley and five kilometers west of South OP and is designed to protect Shkin from enemy attacks from the south.

When the ASG was created in 2006, it was composed only of former SF-trained Afghan Security Forces, or ASF, who were located on ODA firebases. From 2005 to 2006, in an effort by the Afghan government to stand on its own, the ASF were demobilized so that the government of Afghanistan could focus on the official branches of the Afghan military and police forces, such as the ANA, ANP, ABP and National Directorate of Security. Following the ASF demobilization, many former ASF soldiers were hired as ASG. Eighty percent of the 270 Shkin ASG were prior ASF. Since 2007, conventional forces have been hiring civilians "off the street" as ASG to guard Afghan convoys of resupply trucks or to secure routes all over the country and on the firebases of conventional forces. Most of the time, these ASG are untrained, and they have given a bad name to the ASG for those who are not familiar with the SF-trained version. The Shkin ASG on Firebase Lilley and its three border outposts have been trained by SF teams for the past five years, and they continue to set the standard for other Afghan forces for their professionalism, tactical excellence and maturity. The tribal elders see and understand the difference between Shkin's ASG and other regular ASG.

In 2007, to counter the new ASGs' lack of offensive capability, 20 of the best ASGs on Firebase Lilley were sent to the RTC in Gardez to attend basic training and become ANP. ODAs must conduct partnered operations with an official Afghan force in the lead. The ANP is a logical choice because it allows the ODA to focus on surgically removing key enemy nodes within

showed, because it allows the ability to focus on capturing, removing, and enemy nodes within target networks by police action, i.e., to gather intelligence and arrest the person responsible.

The tribal elders in Bermel and northern Gomal recognize and respect the outstanding ability of the relatively small Shkin ANP because of their operational history over the past year, their operational history as ASF over the past five years, and their continuing partnership with the ODAs. Also, a majority of the ASG and ANP are from this region and are recognized as understanding the environment and the culture — as opposed to Afghans brought from other regions of the country. The elders understand the Shkin ANP's ability to arrest known enemy facilitators and commanders. The Shkin ANP arrested nine persons during ODA 3315's deployment from October 2007 to May 2008. Three of these arrests were a direct result of local tribal elders cooperating with the Shkin ANP.

During shuras and other tribal engagements, elders were constantly reminded by both ANSF and coalition forces of the Afghan government's continued struggle to support the population and provide for the people. The elders usually remained "on the fence," because they did not believe their government was doing enough to support them and protect them from enemy forces. The ANSF do not yet have the ability to protect the population in rural areas from enemy influence. Therefore, the people feel the need to support the government and the enemy, depending on who is in their area at any given time.

Tribal engagement is arguably the most important aspect of the COIN effort in Afghanistan. The tribal system in Afghanistan is a strong facet of day-to-day life. The system of government establishing itself in Afghanistan has subgovernors in each district, a governor for the province, and a parliament and president for the country. The elders represent their villages and tribes; the government must receive their support if it is to survive. The majority of the population still views the elders as the decision-makers, as opposed to the government representatives. This is evidenced when the elders ask for a prisoner release after a person is arrested by either the ANSF or CF. The elders will ask for release because they collectively "vouch" for the prisoner's innocence and still believe that the tribal system is a much more appropriate method for dealing with criminals. Efforts are constantly made to convince the elders that the person was arrested based on evidence collected according to the new Afghan law system outlined in the new Afghan constitution.

Tribal elders are reluctant to submit to the proposed system of government for a number of reasons. According to the proposed system of law, power is taken away from the tribal elder and given to an elected official. The tribal elder has been the cornerstone of Afghan governance for thousands of years, and elders are not willing to relinquish this power to someone who may be from a different tribe. Elders assume that their tribe or sub-tribe will not be represented appropriately, and they often are correct in this assumption. Tribal loyalty, in many cases, is more important than loyalty to the country of Afghanistan. Elders are not willing to place a united Afghanistan over advancement of their particular tribe.

ANSF operations and tribal engagements are the keys to convincing the population and elders of Afghan governmental efforts and the importance of a united Afghanistan. ANSF is tasked with securing the country. Progress in governance can be made only when security is established. Only after security is established will the elders and the general population see the IROA as a legitimate force for stabilizing the country. Integral to the stabilization of Afghanistan is allowing the tribes to retain their individual identities while conceding some power to the new system of governance. This can be accomplished only through the engagement of tribal elders by ANSF and IROA representatives.

Tribal elders in close vicinity to ANSF or coalition firebases and outposts are much more likely to support the IROA government because of the constant presence. Enemy groups and facilitators constantly engage local villagers, but most of the time they get little or no support because of the constant ANSF and coalition presence.

The Afghan people understand power, and they will support the element that has the power in their eyes — either ANSF or enemy. The elders know the enemy can affect them more in remote areas, so they will harbor enemy facilitators more readily than elders who are near coalition firebases. The elders near a coalition or ANSF presence understand the power of the ANSF to arrest any facilitators that harbor enemy elements. This is the case in Shkin. The elders know the Shkin ANP will investigate and arrest anyone helping or participating in enemy attacks, and they therefore cooperate with the coalition.

Numerous ongoing projects in the Shkin area continue to supplement ANSF security operations. Road construction and solar-light projects increase and develop the area's economic growth and provide a source of income for local construction workers, which in turn benefits the villages and families in the area. Shkin ANP distribute humanitarian supplies to the local tribes to demonstrate the government's support of the people. These humanitarian and civil projects encourage the local citizenry to assist the ANSF and coalition effort against the enemy. Civilians in Shkin often report the location of IEDs before an ANSF or coalition convoy travels through the area. This type of support from the people is instrumental in the effort to battle the insurgency.

It appears that the Shkin-area elders are cooperating with the ANSF to improve security, eliminate insurgents and increase the stability of the government, but in reality, the elders have cooperated with the ANSF because it is a formidable force. Tribal elders would rather appease the ANSF and keep them from conducting operations in their villages than facilitate insurgents. In this immediate area, elders refuse to allow insurgent operations, to eliminate the risk of their village being targeted by the ANSF. The relationship between elders and Shkin ANSF is positive because of the greatly increased security and support of the ANSF within

ANSF works because of the overtly successful counterinsurgency operations of the ANSF rather than because the elders are working toward a unified Afghanistan.

Conclusion

The Team Chamkani and FOB Lilley models for tribal engagement produced results because they accommodated the unique tribal environment of southeastern Paktia. However, the effort is ongoing. Several factors make this possible, including the strong hold on the population by the tribal leadership. Additionally, the ODAs had a tremendous working relationship with the battlespace owners. The ODAs understood and were completely nested within the battlespace owner's vision of separating the insurgents from the population in the battlespace and striking an acceptable balance between lethal and nonlethal targeting. That set the conditions for connecting the IROA to the population. With the full support of the battlespace owner and as the only significant coalition combat power in southeastern Paktia and southeastern Barmal, the ODAs had the latitude and the capability to conduct the full spectrum of operations, including tribal engagement.

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