

CONVENTIONAL AIR ADVISING IN THE COMBAT ENVIRONMENT:  
CAPABILITIES-BASED ASSESSMENT ON THE TRAIN, ADVISE,  
ASSIST COMMAND-AIR'S FUTURE EFFORTS WITH  
THE AFGHAN AIR FORCE

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General Studies

by

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## ABSTRACT

CONVENTIONAL AIR ADVISING IN THE COMBAT ENVIRONMENT:  
CAPABILITIES-BASED ASSESSMENT ON THE TRAIN, ADVISE, AND ASSIST  
COMMAND-AIR'S FUTURE EFFORTS WITH THE AFGHAN AIR FORCE,  
by Major Robert J. Weitershausen, 131 pages.

Since 1919, Afghanistan's Air Force has shared a unique relationship with the Air Advising mission. The United States led North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), Train, Advise, and Assist Command-Air (TAAC-A) mission has been essential to the development of Afghanistan's Air Force. Changes in the strategy for achieving a safe and secure Afghanistan, by both the Afghanistan government and NATO, have generated additional requirements and presented new challenges for the Afghan Air Force (AAF) and their ability to support Afghan National Defense and Security Forces conducting Internal Defense and Counter-Terrorism missions. Recent efforts to modernize the AAF comes at a time when the coalition has moved away from a time-line focused mission to one that is conditions-based. A capabilities-based assessment is needed to identify capability gaps within the AAF, assess current and future capabilities and capacity, and determine how the TAAC-A Advisors can mitigate these shortfalls across the Doctrine, Organization, Training, Materiel, Leadership and Education, Personnel, and Facilities spectrum.

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I dedicate this study to the Air Advisors who are engaged at the strategic, operational, and tactical level every day, enduring the dangerous mission to enable the Afghan people are capable of foreign internal defense and building legitimacy in their national identity.

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## ACRONYMS

AAF	Afghan Air Force
ANA	Afghan National Army
ANAAC	Afghan National Army Air Corps
ANDSF	Afghan National Defense and Security Force
ANSF	Afghan National Security Force
CAS	Close Air Support
CBA	Capabilities-Based Assessment
CDM	Chief Decision Maker
DoD	Department of Defense
DOTMLPF-P	Doctrine, Organization, Training, Materiel, Leadership and Education, Personnel, Facilities and Policy
EF	Essential Functions
FAA	Functional Area Analysis
FID	Foreign Internal Defense
FNA	Functional Needs Analysis
FSA	Functional Solution Analysis
HR	Distinguished Human Remains Transfer
ICD	Initial Capabilities Document
IG	Inspector General
ISAF	International Security Assistance Force
JCIDS	Joint Capabilities Integration and Development System
MEDEVAC	Medical Evacuation
MoD	Ministry of Defense

MoI	Ministry of Interior
NATC-A	NATO Air Training Command-Afghanistan
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NT-ISR	Non-Traditional–Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance
R1	Initial Personal Recommendations
R2	Informed Position
R3	Recommended Solutions
RSM	Resolute Support Mission
SFA	Security Force Assistance
SIGAR	Special Inspector General (IG) for Afghanistan Reconstruction Reports
TAAC-A	Train, Advise, Assist Command–Air
USAF	United States Air Force
USA	United States Army

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

#### Introduction

The purpose of this thesis is to determine the requirements of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) led Air Advising mission supporting the Afghan Air Force (AAF) and their support of the Afghan National Army (ANA) and Afghan National Defense and Security Forces (ANDSF) conducting Internal Defense and Counter-Terrorism Operations. Applying the Joint Capability Based Assessment process assess current capabilities, identify capability gaps, and provide doctrine, organization, training, materiel, leadership, personnel, facilities and policies (DOTMLPF-P) solutions to mitigate the identified shortfalls. The results of this study will suggest solutions the Air Advising mission should execute to enable success in Afghanistan.

#### Background

Beginning in 1919, the Soviet Union and Great Britain provided the Afghan Government a few aircraft and, in 1924, the Soviet Union provided additional aircraft and advice to King Amanullah building the first AAF.<sup>1</sup> The Soviets remained a significant supporter of the AAF until the civil war in 1928; which decimated the AAF resulting in their virtual grounding until post World War II when it was renamed the Royal AAF.

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<sup>1</sup> Stewart Nusbaumer, "The New Afghanistan Air Force: How the U.S. Military is Training Afghans to Fly," *Air and Space Magazine* (January 2011): paragraph 2, accessed 23 August 2017, <http://www.airspacemag.com/military-aviation/the-new-afghanistan-air-force-67148969>; Nathan Hodge, "U.S. Builds Afghan Air Base, but Where Are the Planes?," *Wall Street Journal*, 24 July 2012, accessed 23 August 2017, <https://www.wsj.com/articles/SB10001424052702303292204577517010230335018>.

In the early 1950s, the Soviet Union again took an interest in Afghanistan and their Air Force. This build-up continued and a coordinated effort between King Zahir Shah and the Soviet Union began a fleet modernization program throughout the 1960s. The Soviet Union further provided advisors focused on maintenance, operations, and tactics. The Soviets assisted with Afghan pilot training, conducting training in the Soviet Union, India, and throughout Europe.<sup>2</sup> In 1973 Mohammed Daoud Khan replaced King Zahir Shah, during a bloodless coup.<sup>3</sup> It was during this time that the Soviets once again began to develop the AAF's capabilities and modernize their Air Force with fighters, bombers and transport platforms. In 1978, Afghanistan suffered further under the communist regime of Najibullah and the Soviet Advisors providing support.

The Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan in 1978, bringing with them a decade of aircraft modernization, equipment and an estimated 5,000 Czechoslovakian and Cuban advisors. Due to the nature of the relationship, the AAF continued to grow reaching a force strength of 13,000 operating approximately 400 aircraft. Due to the nature of the conflict, Russian advisors did not trust their Afghan counterparts and would either fly the advisors from other countries or conduct the missions themselves. In 1989, the Soviets withdrew taking with them the support and foreign advisors that complimented the AAF. As a result, the operational capability began to decline and infighting among Afghan tribes fractioned off what remained. In 1992, the Afghans entered yet another civil war

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<sup>2</sup> Hodge, "U.S. Builds Afghan Air Base;" Michael R. Boera and Paul R. Birch, "Rebuilding Afghanistan's National Security Forces: Fighting Asymmetry with Symmetry," *Military Review* 91, no. 2 (March/April 2011): 23-30, accessed 23 August 2017, <http://www.proquest.com>; Global Security, "Afghanistan Air Force History," accessed 23 August 2017, <http://www.globalsecurity.org>.

<sup>3</sup> Hodge, "U.S. Builds Afghan Air Base."

reducing the Air Force even further. In 1996, the Taliban took control of the country, and the remaining two Air Force Groups consisted of very few working aircraft. Remaining aircraft were all but destroyed by the United States at the onset of Operation Enduring Freedom in 2001.<sup>4</sup>

In 2002, the coalition established the Afghan National Security Force (ANSF). Under the ANSF were the ANA and the Army National Army Air Corps (ANAAC). With few functioning platforms, lack of maintenance and logistics support, the Afghans required assistance. The Afghans attempted to utilize prior Afghan Pilots (known as legacy pilots) as mentors and provided their ANAAC members with training on logistics, computers, maintenance and safety practices.<sup>5</sup> In the beginning of 2003, Operation Iraqi Freedom requirements created delays in materiel and support for the hemorrhaging ANAAC.

In 2005, the United States Secretary of Defense, Donald H. Rumsfeld, directed the development of a Presidential Airlift Capability for the Afghan President to be operational by the end of 2006. This year, the first U.S. Army Advisors arrived in the capital city to begin the advising mission.<sup>6</sup> The United States led Combined Air Power Transition Force–Afghanistan started setting the conditions for an entirely independent and operationally capable AAF in 2007. Their plan included 7,000 personnel that would

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<sup>4</sup> Nusbaumer, “The New Afghanistan Air Force;” Hodge, “U.S. Builds Afghan Air Base;” Boera and Birch, “Rebuilding Afghanistan’s National Security Forces.”

<sup>5</sup> Global Security, “Afghanistan Air Force Modernization,” accessed 21 August 2017, <http://www.globalsecurity.org>.

<sup>6</sup> Forrest L. Marion, “Training Afghan Air Force Pilots 2006-2011,” *Air Power History* (Spring 2016): 22-31.

operate both rotary and fixed-wing platforms. With the ANAAC's demonstrated ability to conduct missions, coalition members contributed Mi-17s and AN-32s to add to the ANAAC capabilities. In 2008, Afghan President Hamid Karzai declared the AAF reborn.<sup>7</sup>

In early 2009, Afghan Army Air Corps pilot candidates traveled to the United States to attend English Proficiency Training followed by the United States Air Force's (USAF) Undergraduate Pilot Training Program. In 2010, much like the birth of the United States Air Force, Afghanistan recognized the importance of separating the capabilities of the Air Corps from the ANA and renamed the ANAAC to the AAF including its Chain of Command. In September of the same year, NATO agreed to become the lead for assisting, advising, assessing, training and equipping the AAF. The NATO Air Training Command–Afghanistan (NATC-A) was established and was subordinate to the NATO Training Mission.<sup>8</sup>

Under NATC-A, development of the AAF and their Aviation Enterprise began to grow to add additional platforms and mission sets. To build the number of pilots, outsourcing of pilot training continued in the United States, India, Czechoslovakia and the United Arab Emirates. NATC-A established three USAF Advising Wings; Kabul, Kandahar, and Shindand. Shindand became the organic pilot schoolhouse for the AAF rotary and fixed-wing units. This advising mission included a team of contracted civilian

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<sup>7</sup> Global Security, "Afghan National Army Air Corps (ANAAC)–Modernization–2002–2010," accessed 23 August 2017, <https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/afghanistan/anaac-modernization.htm>.

<sup>8</sup> Afghan Air Force History, "History of Afghan Air Force," accessed 15 May 2018, <http://www.centaf.af.mil/news/story.asp?id=123222413>.



pilot instructors working alongside coalition advisors that flew training missions, conducted on-site simulator training and classroom instruction. United States Army (USA) Advisors conducted initial rotary-wing training and advising across the entire Aviation Enterprise spectrum in parallel efforts to USAF advisors. As pilots graduated, they either remained at Shindand as operational pilots or were reassigned to Kandahar and Kabul and from there to the smaller geographically separated locations throughout Afghanistan. In 2012 the decision was made to build the AAF by providing close air support (CAS) platform. Contract issues delayed the final decision on the platform, and in 2013 the A-29 Super Tucano was selected to meet the AAF's requirement to support the ANA and ANDSF with CAS directly.

NATC-A and the Afghan Government agreed that Shindand would be the location for the pilot and maintenance training on the A-29 and construction of infrastructure and hangars began to support. Throughout 2014, AAF pilots built experience, and a few pilots were selected to attend the Pilot Instructor Training Program. The intent was to take the now experienced AAF pilots and have them start to train pilots in the operational units and the pilot candidates attending Initial Flight Screening and UPT. This concept was a great success and the Afghan Instructor Pilots started to conduct training missions in conjunction with the civilian and military advisors.

The political climate of the United States changed in the early summer of 2014 resulting in an abrupt stop to the advising missions in Shindand and Kandahar.<sup>9</sup> The

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<sup>9</sup> David Jackson and Jim Michaels, "Obama Announces 34,000 Troop Drawdown in Afghanistan," *USA Today*, 12 February 2013, accessed 23 August 2017, <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/politics/2013/02/12/obama-afghanistan-34000-troops/1912435/>.

timeline allowed for 90 days to transfer pilot training capabilities to the qualified Afghan Instructor Pilots and conduct a transition of authority over to the Afghan Air Base leadership. This decision reduced the number of instructors producing new pilots from 56 to 9 within 45 days. The young AAF Instructor Cadre took to the mission and continued training AAF Pilot Candidates through the end of 2014. Unfortunately, operational requirements, logistical deficiencies, maintenance issues and reduced support caused by the withdrawal of NATC-A Advisors led to the termination of organic pilot generation in Afghanistan.<sup>10</sup>

During the NATC-A mission, the AAF developed the capability to conduct cargo airlift, passenger transport, Casualty Evacuation, Distinguished Human Remains Transfers, Non-Traditional Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance, re-supply missions, and began training on Night Vision Goggles and CAS. The NATO mission changed in January of 2015 and NATC-A became Train Advise and Assist Command–Air (TAAC-A) under Operation Resolute Support.

Focused on developing new capabilities in fixed-wing CAS, experienced pilots were selected to attend A-29 Super Tucano Attack Aircraft training in the United States. Meanwhile, rotary-wing pilots began the operation of the MD-530F light attack helicopter conducting CAS mission in and around Kabul and later as an expeditionary force in Kandahar. The first fixed-wing aircraft arrived in January of 2016 with sixteen more expected by the end of 2018.<sup>11</sup> Fortunately, the Instructor Pilots from the Afghan

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<sup>10</sup> Personal experience.

<sup>11</sup> Sharon Weinberger and Paul McLeary, “Building the Afghan Air Force Will Take Years: Will Afghans ever be able to take over from U.S. Forces?” *Foreign Policy*,

Schoolhouse became the next group of pilots selected for the new fixed-wing CAS mission. This year the decision was made to transition the AAF Mi-17s and Mi-35s over to the UH-60 Blackhawks due to increased operating costs, logistical issues and current political climate with Russia. This decision almost tripled the number of pilots required to operate the estimated 159 new UH-60s.<sup>12</sup>

### Current Situation

Statements in 27 September 2017 from the current Afghan President, Ashraf Ghani, renewed their commitment to combat terrorism and their commitment to developing the Afghan military to eradicate the insurgency and deny their ability to operate from within Afghan borders. He reinforced this position by announcing that the Afghan Ministry of Defense (MoD) planned to double their Afghan Kandaks taking them to twenty Afghan Commando units. This approach generates an increased demand on the number of assets required for their support. With the introduction of new platforms, rise in mission sets, and further conditions-based requirements from U.S. Government, the AAF faces a difficult challenge.<sup>13</sup>

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21 August 2017, accessed 23 August 2017, <http://foreignpolicy.com/2017/08/21/building-the-afghan-air-force-will-take-years/>.

<sup>12</sup> Shawn Snow and Mackenzie Wolf, "U.S. to Provide Afghanistan with Up to 159 Black Hawks to Help Break 'Stalemate'," *Military Times*, 17 May 2017, accessed 23 August 2017, <https://www.militarytimes.com/news/pentagon-congress/2017/05/17/us-to-provide-afghanistan-with-up-to-159-black-hawks-to-help-break-stalemate/>.

<sup>13</sup> Office of the President, "President Ghani's Remarks at the Joint Press Conference," 27 September 2017, accessed 25 October 2017, <http://president.gov.af/en/President+Ghani's+Remarks+at+the+Joint+Press+Conf.>

President Trump identified the significant challenges that we face in Afghanistan and the surrounding countries. He recognized 20 terrorist organizations are operating within Afghanistan and Pakistan, the highest concentration in the world. He has stated that the situation in Afghanistan made him reassess his decision on withdrawal and instead to allocate more forces to support the mission. Additionally, he stated that the strategy has changed, removing arbitrary timelines for withdrawal and focuses on regional issues. He further noted that the United States will no longer be in the business of building nations, but will focus on working with coalitions and allies on shared national interests. Afghanistan is fighting a common enemy, and the United States wants them to succeed in their efforts. He further commented that the United States and their supporters are not a blank check and the American people are owed proof of real resolve, real progress and real results leaving it up to Afghanistan to prove their commitment. This announcement and political direction change presents a challenge for Afghanistan, as they are heavily reliant on equipment, resources, and support from the United States Government. The decision to change platforms has generated an enormous demand all elements across the DOTMLPF-P spectrum.

#### Purpose and Significance of the Study

For the past thirteen years, NATO advisors have been in Afghanistan. With continuous changes in political climate and Afghanistan in the middle of the third modernization of the AAF inventory, a new approach to NATO's mission has presented new challenges to on-going efforts. The new conditions-based strategy, presented by President Trump in August of 2017, further complicates the development of the AAF. It comes at a time when the decision to increase CAS mission capability, as well as, replace

all existing Russian rotary-wing platforms with smaller United States built ones, drives significant demands on the Afghan government. Combined with President Ghani's desires to double the number of Afghan Commando Units, the number of challenges to meet the new conditions-based requirements increase exponentially. Utilizing a Capability Based Assessment to determine requirements and assess current capabilities will present the opportunity to provide solutions to mitigate shortfalls and enable AAF's success.

### Researcher's Qualifications

The researcher is an Air Force Officer and Mobility Pilot with over twenty-one years of experience. He started his career as an Enlisted Aviator performing in-air refueling and cargo loading duties as an Instructor Boom Operator on the KC-10A Aircraft. After completion of Officer Training School, he was selected to attend Undergraduate Pilot Training and graduated from the course in September of 2007. From 2007 through 2013 he performed duties as an Aircraft Commander and Instructor on the KC-10A and as a Pilot on the C-20H and C-37A aircraft. In 2013, he volunteered to deploy to Afghanistan as an Air Advisor, Evaluator C-208 and C-182T Pilot, and Government Flight Representative for the contract conducting three phases of pilot training for the AAF. During his year in Afghanistan, he worked with a team dedicated to achieving organic pilot generation for the AAF and Operational development of their Mobility, Casualty Evacuation and Non-Traditional Intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance programs. He and another USAF Advisor were the authors for a single aircraft pilot training program that met AAF capabilities to conduct organic pilot training. The drawdown reduced the advising mission at his location to mobile team engagements,

and he was assigned as the Chief, Operations Group Standardization and Evaluation for fixed and rotary wing operations in Kandahar. Here he focused on developing C-208B Short/Soft Field Landing training and Hot Landing Zone Medical Evacuation (MEDEVAC) procedures for the AAF.

After this deployment, he returned to flying the C-20H and C-37A as an Aircraft Commander and Instructor. Based on his C-208B Air Advisor experience, he became the Subject Matter Expert for United States Air Forces in Europe and Air Forces in Africa, assisting the command with C-208B capabilities and addressing training programs for African Nations. In 2017, he became the Assistance Director of Operations and Air Advisor focused on the integration of Air Advising in the command and their utilization during the European Reassurance Initiative (now European Deterrence Initiative). Here he drafted country advising plans for sixteen different nations and worked on gaining a light aviation capability for United States Air Forces in Europe to further their advising capabilities. He remained in this position until his departure to attend the Army Command and General Staff College.

#### Research Question

The outcome of this study is that solutions exist to enable NATO and the United States military advisors and can be applied to continue transformation within the AAF that meets the requirements needed to allow the ANA and ANSF conduct internal defense and counter-insurgency operations with great success. However, the current operational environment and fragile status of the Afghan Government combined with these two factors will significantly impact future operations and the survivability of

Afghanistan. At the completion of the analysis, the recommended solutions will identify shortfalls and offer solutions that can be utilized by NATO and U.S. Advisors.

With this broad strategic approach to the study, the primary research question is: What is the best way for NATO and U.S. Advisors to support the growing AAF requirements supporting the ANA and ANDSF missions conducting Internal Defense and Counter-Insurgency Operations in the future?

### Secondary Questions

1. What are the Doctrinal changes required for AAF's utilization in combat operations that NATO and TAAC-A could assist the Afghan Government with developing?
2. What organization structure changes will TAAC-A need to support the growing Air Advising mission in Afghanistan?
3. What training functional areas can TAAC-A provide the AAF that will posture them for success in the future?
4. What materiel will be required to conduct the Train, Advise, and Assist mission?
5. How can NATO and TAAC-A advise and assist AAF Leadership to be more efficient in the execution of their support to the ANDSF?
6. What personnel will be required to conduct the Train, Advise, and Assist mission?
7. What facilities will be required to support the Train, Advise and Assist mission?

## Assumptions

The following assumptions were considered during this research:

1. The United States will continue to provide Security Assistance for Afghanistan including defense articles, military training, and defense-related grants and loans in support of our National Strategy and to provide the capital and resources to support Afghanistan and their development of capacity and capabilities to conduct Foreign Internal Defense.<sup>14</sup>
2. The United States will continue to support NATO and the AAF with qualified Air Advisors in direct support to platform acquisition through current Foreign Military Sales programs.
3. NATO will remain the lead for advising the AAF until Operation Resolute Support is designated complete and the Combatant Commander is satisfied with the success. United States Military Advisors will continue to support Security Force Assistance efforts within Afghanistan.
4. Afghanistan will continue to project a position of Internal Defense and Development, with the end state of being able to protect their citizens from subversion, lawlessness, insurgency, terrorism, and other security threats within their borders.<sup>15</sup>
5. Selection of new rotary and fixed wing aircraft, through Foreign Military Sales, will generate an increased workload on TAAC-A and the AAF.

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<sup>14</sup> U.S. President, *National Security Strategy of the United States of America* (NSS) (Washington, DC: The White House, September 2017), 40.

<sup>15</sup> Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS), Joint Publication (JP) 3-22, *Foreign Internal Defense* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2010), ix.



6. Afghanistan will be challenged to find qualified candidates to fill new positions within the AAF.
7. Afghanistan will require increased Coalition Support during the transition to new platforms.
8. Afghanistan's Aviation Enterprise will require additional advising to address the increase in the number of aircraft and extra mission sets added to support current Foreign Internal Defense operations.
9. Current training pipelines are insufficient to support the increasing demand for pilots and maintenance personnel.

#### Biases

The following biases were applied to the Initial Personal Recommendation (R1):

1. The decision to transition the mission in Afghanistan from Operation Enduring Freedom to Operation Resolute Support generated significant setbacks in the advising mission.
2. The decision to fully man the MoD Special Mission Wing generated a gap in experience within the pilot community, which was further impacted by the introduction of the A-29 to fill the gap of CAS previously supplied by the Coalition.
3. The decision to discontinue Afghanistan's ability to organically generate their pilots were made to fill the manning requirements of the A-29 and failed to recognize the significance of this capability and national pride that it created within the AAF.

4. NAC-A and TACC-A efforts lack synchronization across the advising mission and are insufficiently postured, manned, and resourced for the magnitude of the mission.
5. The rotary wing replacement for the Mi-17 (UH-60) lacks the required performance and lift capability necessary to adequately support ANDSF in Afghanistan.

#### Scope and Delimitations

The research is intended to identify shortfalls in the current application of the advising mission, determine requirements generated by the introduction of new aviation platforms and mission sets, assess TAAC-A's capabilities, and provide solutions to mitigate the identified shortfalls. The methodology used will be a Capabilities-Based Assessment (CBA) focused on the DOTMLPF-P structure. This assessment will not include the Policy (P) of the spectrum. The time period from when NATO assumed the advising mission in 2010 until present will be used when conducting the research and analysis.

#### Initial Personal Recommendation (R1)

This thesis research is an applied professional case study. Chapter 3 covers the Research Methodology. This section provides the Initial Personal Recommendation (R1) of the author's view on what areas within the DOTMLPF elements require attention with the intent to improve NATO and the United States' ability to Train, Advise, and Assist the AAF. The author applied professional judgment to the existing topical knowledge in the development of the suggestions in R1. The author's experience was identified earlier

in this chapter in the Author's Qualification section. R1 recommendations are provided in each element of DOTMLPF to establish a baseline and final recommendations include stakeholders' concerns and professional knowledge reviewed during the research.

### Doctrine

Current strategic doctrine is in its infancy for adding additional capacity to the AAF. Additionally, the advising mission is not fully integrated across the services which creates even more disconnect in determining requirements and how to mitigate shortfalls, defining the doctrine that is understood by leaders within the ANA, ANDSF, and AAF. NATO and United States' doctrine needs to be reviewed at the Joint Level and the mission must transition from a single service approach to one that integrates with interoperability as its principal focus. Without a discussion on how to coordinate and synch efforts our abilities to be successful in training, advising and assisting the Afghans will fall short. Additionally, the mission in Afghanistan has evolved into a hybrid of conventional and unconventional forces advising simultaneously in the combat environment. Where Special Operations Forces have typically conducted this mission, the need to re-establish an AAF required the involvement of conventional forces to develop their Aviation Enterprise and build their initial experience and capabilities. Integrating the advising mission within doctrine must be considered to ensure the communication of mission requirements is directed and the reduction of mission creep supports ongoing and future operations.

Afghanistan Strategy needs to be communicated through doctrine that integrates their forces with a joint approach. The Afghan government has defined an end state where the Afghan Government is capable of protecting the Afghan People from terrorism

and threats within Afghanistan.<sup>16</sup> However, stating that you want to double the size of your Commando forces without determining how you will increase the number of personnel across the forces creates capability gaps and generates immediate shortfalls in your defense plan. The Afghan Government requires advising on expectation management and doctrine development at the strategic, operational, and tactical levels of war. By doing so will establish the standard framework and much-needed foundation required to be able to conduct campaigns, operations, and engagements successfully. Understanding that the mission in Afghanistan will require constant reevaluation of their capabilities, the operational environment, and the support of coalition members, having foundational doctrine will provide the criteria to assess their abilities. This doctrine will also enable NATO and the Advising mission to determine the required advising, training, and assistance needed to support the Afghan Government in achieving their desired end state. Doctrine development is necessary to set the principles for the Afghan Military Forces to use in conducting their pursuit of national security objectives.

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<sup>16</sup> Lara Logan, “16 Years later, Afghan Capital Under Siege,” 60 Minutes, aired January 11, 2018, on *CBS*, accessed 15 April 2018, <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/16-years-later-afghan-capital-under-siege>.

Table 1. R1: Doctrine Recommendations

Chief Decision Maker	R1: Doctrine Recommendations
Commander of TAAC-A	Recommendation 1. Work with Afghan Air Force Commander of AAF to ensure doctrine being utilized at the tactical level is nested within the strategic level across the ANDSF.
Commander of TAAC-A	Recommendation 2. Develop doctrine that focuses on the integration of conventional and unconventional ANDSF.

*Source:* Created by author.

### Organization

NATO must coordinate increased advising positions internal and external with Afghanistan. Additionally, other considerations on how to de-compartmentalize the single service approach and integrate a joint interoperability system that creates clarity for advisors and the Afghan counterparts. The United States military needs to increase the training and integration of conventional and unconventional advising units. The increase requires a joint approach creating the opportunity for clarity and communication supporting our Host Nation. Reevaluating the evolving mission in Afghanistan may produce the requirement to change the training lead conducting the mission within Afghanistan.

The AAF is scheduled to receive 179 Blackhawks to replace their Mi-17 fleet and an increase to 159 MD-530F, which produces a significant shift in techniques, tactics, and procedures used to conduct airlift, CAS, Casualty Evacuation, and Air Assault.<sup>17</sup> The

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<sup>17</sup> Combined data from articles and DOD IG reports.

U.S. remains the leader of TAAC-A mission with a focus on Aviation Enterprise development, fixed-wing CAS execution, Airlift and Airdrop operations and the development of the Afghan Tactical Air Controller program. U.S. Army and Australian Army pilots have conducted integration of the rotary wing assets and their increased support of ANA and ANSF forces. The evolution of the AAF and transition from heavy lift rotary wing to light lift will generate an increase in the number of aircraft involved in the operation and is more suited to be conducted under U.S. Army leadership or a Coalition Partner that primarily operates rotary wing aircraft for use during combat operations. The increase in aircraft will require NATO to re-organize forces to support conventional, Special Mission Wing and training missions within Afghanistan. NATO's involvement in the internal development of their aviation crew force provides the opportunity to monitor progress, assist in recommendations for advancement in crew positions and identify aircrew members that have the capabilities and knowledge required for potentially operating within the Special Operations Wing. Consolidation of these missions within the border of Afghanistan will eliminate multiple issues experienced under the current construct and provide better oversight of the development of AAF crewmembers. Training and Facilities will be addressed in their respective sections of the Personal Initial Recommendation.

Recommend NATO reactivate the 838th Air Expeditionary Advisory Group with the focus on training Afghan pilots, crewmembers, maintainers, and other personnel to meet the needs of the AAF. This mission should be combined with the AAF 3<sup>rd</sup> Wing

located at Shindand Air Base.<sup>18</sup> Reestablishment of the Group will provide Squadrons that can focus on Initial Pilot Training for both Fixed and Rotary wing platforms, provide focused support on training maintenance personnel across the various platforms, and reestablish the advising support for the AAF Training Group and schoolhouse. This change will consolidate the efforts into one location and provide the pipeline that is much needed to meet the demands of the AAF. Additionally, the consolidation of training will create requirements and require the generation of a new Squadron to support the training operations under this construct.

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<sup>18</sup> Personal notes; U.S. Air Force Central Command, “Organizational Structure of TAAC-A (438 Air Expeditionary Wing),” accessed 15 April 2018, <http://www.afcent.af.mil/Units/438th-Air-Expeditionary-Wing/>.

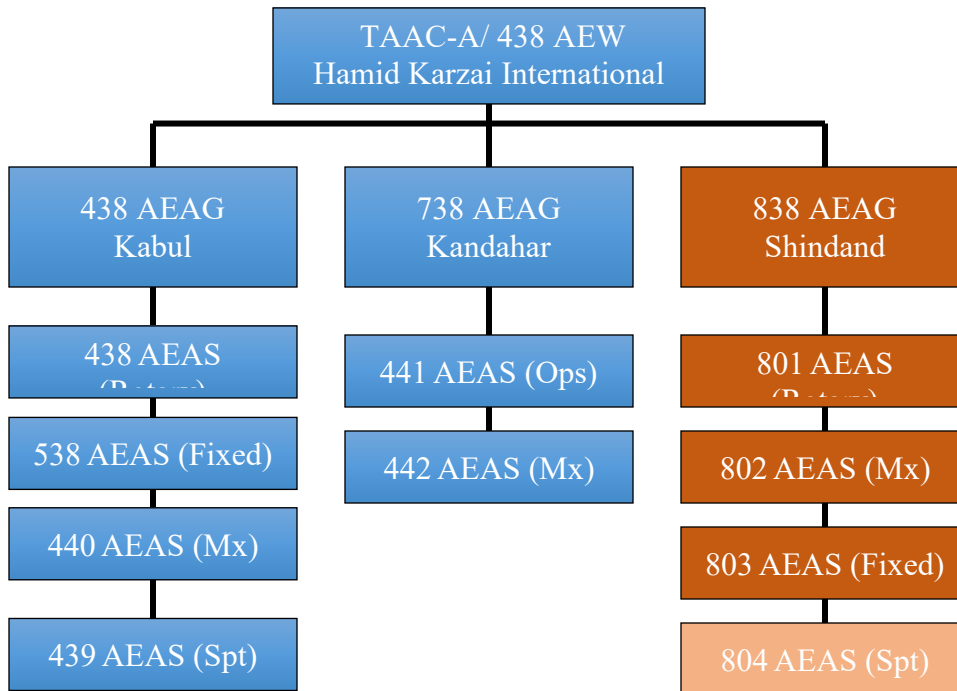


Figure 1. R1: Initial Personal Recommendation Organizational Structure

*Sources:* Created by author based on U.S. Air Force Central Command, “Organizational Structure of TAAC-A (438 Air Expeditionary Wing),” accessed 15 April 2018, <http://www.afcent.af.mil/Units/438th-Air-Expeditionary-Wing/>.



Table 2. R1: Organization Recommendations

Chief Decision Maker	R1: Organization Recommendations
Commander of Resolute Support	Recommendation 3. Determine the personnel requirements to meet increase in TAAC-A support required to train, advise, and assist the AAF
Commander of Resolute Support	Recommendation 4. Coordinate with Host Nation for Status of Forces Agreement and increase in coalition forces required to support Recommendation 3.
Commander of TAAC-A	Recommendation 5. Consolidate AAF pilot training under TAAC-A utilizing the structure recommended in Figure 1. R1: Initial Personal Recommendation Organization Structure.
Commander of TAAC-A	Recommendation 6. Determine if the United States Air Force is the appropriate service to lead TAAC-A based on the significant increase in rotary wing platforms.

*Source:* Created by author.

### Training

Training of capable and qualified pilots, crewmembers, maintenance, and support personnel is essential to sustaining the current AAF and enabling them to grow to meet the increased requirements of the ANA and ANSF forces conducting Internal Defense and Counter-Insurgency Operations within Afghanistan. The author recommends the re-activation of Language Proficiency Training, Initial Flight Screening, Undergraduate Pilot Training, Pilot Instructor Training and Maintenance Instruction consolidated under the 838 Air Expeditionary Advisory Group located at Shindand Air Base. Training should focus on both rotary and fixed-wing fundamentals including day and night visual flight rules, introduction to instrument flight rules and current operational mission sets utilized by operational units within the AAF. Additionally, initial consideration to

conducting Crew Position upgrades to Aircraft Commander, Instructor, and Evaluator and should resemble the training programs of coalition partners throughout the world.

In August of 2014, the 803 AEAS Advisors developed a program that enabled the Afghans to reduce the training requirements that generated initial pilots, which in-turn cut significant costs across all facets of the aviation enterprise. The author recommends the utilization of the single airframe approach from this International Traffic In Arms Regulation approved training plan to conduct Initial Flight Screening. Similar to U.S. pilot training, upon successful completion of Initial Flight Screening, trainees will be selected to attend Unqualified Pilot Training for either rotary or fixed wing training. These two separate tracks were utilized before the termination of the direct advising mission at Shindand in August of 2014.<sup>19</sup> Recommend renegotiating the Operational Contract Support that was utilized and includes an increase in Language Proficiency Instructors from the Defense Language Institute and requirements to translate all maintenance manuals and instruction into English. These modifications will enable the ability of maintenance and support personnel to learn English while simplifying the instructional courses, communication in the logistical supply chain and assist with the transition away from Russian based systems. These are the foundations of any Air Force being able to sustain an Aviation Enterprise and provide adequately trained personnel to support combat operations. Determination on what training requirements are appropriate for conventional application should drive the additional courses offered to crewmembers attending upgrade training under this training structure. The only exception to this

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<sup>19</sup> The author was directly involved in developing the single airframe option for the AAF and gaining ITAR Release require to transition the training mission to the AAF Instructor Pilots.

structure is the training of those pilots selected for the C-130. The number of aircraft does not drive a large enough demand to conduct the training of initial pilots within Afghanistan and should continue to receive their training in the United States. Additionally, Afghan Pilot Candidates should continue to attend pilot training conducted in the United States by the Air Education and Training Command at their current rates to keep the support of the International Military Education and Training program. Based on the limited numbers of the A-29, it is the author's recommendation to relocate the training school from the United States to Shindand to decrease operational costs and promote involvement within the AAF pilot community.

MoD will continue to pull from the conventional forces pool of qualified candidates and training to fill Special Mission Wing Tashkil positions and will remain located in Kabul, Afghanistan.

Maintenance fundamentals should be included in the English Language Proficiency portion of the maintenance-training program, better preparing the Afghan Maintenance Officers and Technicians for the transition to platforms that operate with English written language for their instructions and maintenance manuals. Figure 2 is a Wire diagram of the primary flow of the training programs.

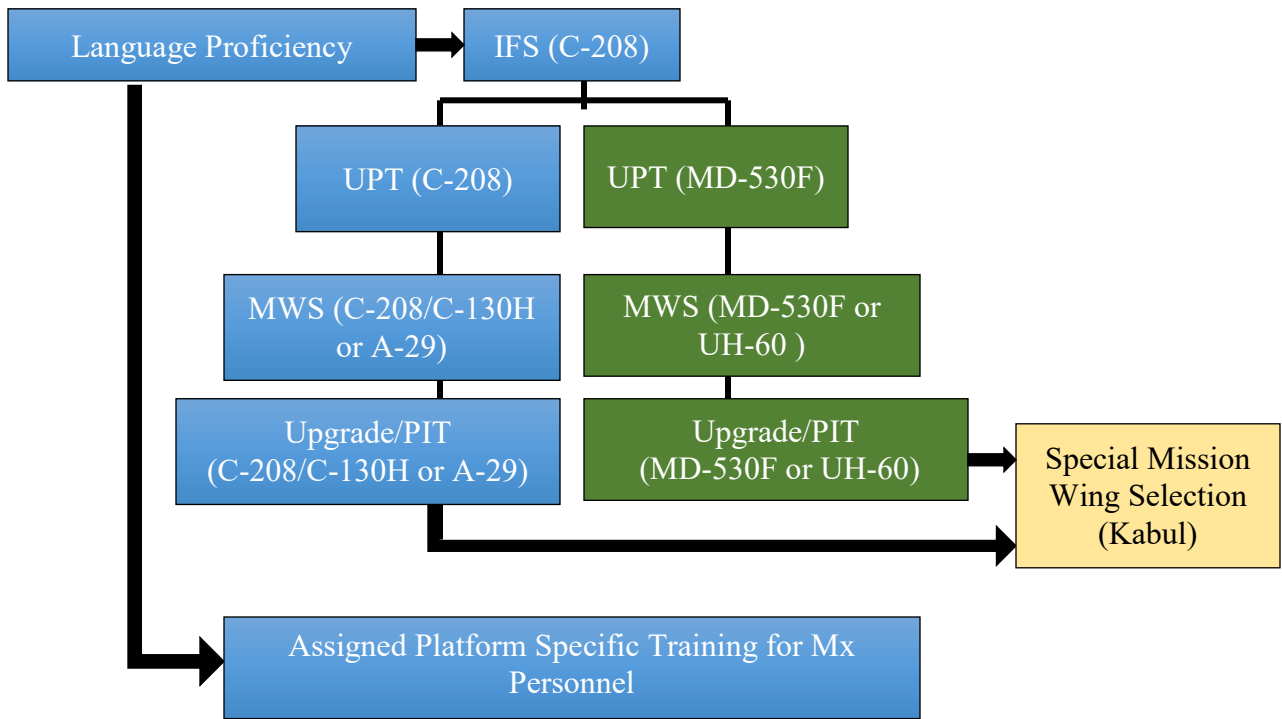


Figure 2. R1: Initial Personal Recommendation Training Progression

Source: Created by author.

Table 3. R1: Training Recommendations

Chief Decision Maker	R1: Training Recommendations
Commander of TAAC-A	Recommendation 7. Utilizing the structure recommended in Recommendations 3, 4, and 5, activate the single airframe pilot training program to train new pilots and maintainers.
Commander of TAAC-A	Recommendation 8. Increase English proficiency training availability for AAF Maintenance personnel.
Commander of TAAC-A	Recommendation 9. Relocate A-29 training from the United States to Afghanistan to support Recommendation 5.

Source: Created by author.

## Materiel

In the author's opinion, the selection of the UH-60 to replace the Mi-17 in Afghanistan creates a gap in their mid to heavy lift capability provided by rotary-wing aircraft. The ability of the Blackhawk to conduct the mission in high altitude and high-temperature environments significantly reduces its lift capability and will require more aircraft to perform the same missions. The increased number of aircraft needed will result in the requirement for more landing zones and increased time required to airlift sufficient forces into remote locations within Afghanistan. The extended time and increased number of aircraft increase the potential risk of ground forces while also reducing the element of surprise that could result in aircraft losses. The AAF will require a rotary wing platform capable of mid to heavy airlift to replace the gap created by the conversion from Mi-17s to UH-60s.

The MD-530F and A-29 provided options for CAS that Afghanistan greatly needed. MD-530F and A-29 programs were rushed to compensate for the withdrawal of aviation assets by coalition forces before the transition to Operation Resolute Support. The AAF is better suited to operate a select number of platforms that have multiple role capabilities. An example is the AC-208 utilized in Iraq and around the world to conduct Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance while having the ability to forward fire using the Air to ground missile (AGM-114).<sup>20</sup> Another option is to utilize the current C-208 aircraft equipped with the jump doors as gunship options using a removable .50 Caliber Machine Gun and mount designed for integration into the pre-existing seat track

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<sup>20</sup> Air Force Technology, "AC 208 Combat Caravan Light Attack Aircraft," accessed 23 August 2017, <https://www.airforce-technology.com/projects/ac-208-combat-caravan/>.

system in the C-208 floor.<sup>21</sup> The capability to rapidly install weapons onto the C-208 will allow for smooth transition between mission sets and increase the AAF capabilities without generating additional logistic, maintenance, training, and supply requirements. Ultimately, the utilization of preexisting platforms that are multirole capable provides affordable options that reduce the timeline of training, the increased demands on maintenance and logistics to support numerous different platforms, while still providing the asymmetric advantage provided by the AAF.



Figure 3. R1: Initial Personal Recommendation Materiel  
Multirole Platform Iraq AC-208

*Source:* David Brown, “State Approves Attack Aircraft, Missile Warning Systems Sales to Iraq, Egypt,” *Washington Examiner*, 7 October 2016, accessed 23 August 2017, <https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/state-approves-attack-aircraft-missile-warning-systems-sales-to-iraq-egypt>.

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<sup>21</sup> The concept developed by 803 AEAS Advisors in June of 2014.

Table 4. R1: Materiel Recommendations

Chief Decision Maker	R1: Materiel Recommendations
Commander of TAAC-A	Recommendation 10. Determine future medium to heavy lift requirements for ANDSF and recommend platform to Commander of Resolute Support.
Commander of TAAC-A	Recommendation 11. Develop multi-role options for C-208 platform to include gunship option.
Commander of TAAC-A	Recommendation 12. Request Foreign Military Sales purchase of AC-208 for AAF.

Source: Created by author.

### Leadership and Education

Corruption is common practice in the Afghanistan government and military, gaining them international attention. As recent as March 2017 Afghanistan took action to start the removal of corrupt military leaders and members firing 1,394 personnel. Among those fired were eight Generals, 11 Commanders of detachments and 296 additional officers for various crimes including bribery, theft, and murder. Corruption in Afghanistan is part of their culture and standard practice in every facet of the Afghan government.<sup>22</sup> The Afghan government needs to recognize that operating through corruption only leads to further lawlessness, which leads to subversion, support to terrorism and insurgencies and undermines the efforts made by the people of Afghanistan to have a free and independent democratic society. There are two approaches to this problem that must be addressed simultaneously; the external and internal.

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<sup>22</sup> Sharif Walid, “Afghan Generals Face Charges in Crackdown on Military Corruption,” *The Washington Post*, 29 March 2017, accessed 28 December 2017, [https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/afghan-generals-face-charges-in-crackdown-on-military-corruption/2017/03/29/9d6c0dca-1480-11e7-bb16-269934184168\\_story.html?utm\\_term=.f3fa2d9a052b](https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/afghan-generals-face-charges-in-crackdown-on-military-corruption/2017/03/29/9d6c0dca-1480-11e7-bb16-269934184168_story.html?utm_term=.f3fa2d9a052b).

The external example by the United States and Coalition Governments who identify corruption within their governments and prosecute violators within the view of the international community. Practices are different in each country and what is considered corruption in one is not in another. Similar to the development of doctrine, efforts need to be made to assist the Afghan government with their definition of corruption and how they will prosecute offenders. For the military and mainly within the AAF, this must be a top-down approach. A metered approach to funding similar to that used with Partner Nations in South America would provide the oversight required and provide realistic opportunities for the Afghan government to meet goals and receive additional financial support.

Internally to Afghanistan, they must select candidates that are least likely to participate in corruption and promote an environment of Afghanistan first and not based on tribal affiliation and social status of family members within the Afghan government. Military Advisors must engage at every level and identify where corruption is taking place and elevate their findings to senior leaders in both countries for action. The individuals that are found guilty of corruption must be publically identified and the Afghan government to maintain their legitimacy with the Afghan people must announce their punishment. This approach is in direct conflict with their current cultural values of public ridicule, but essential to transitioning the country toward a democratic society with a legitimate legal system supportive of their governing body. This cultural norm will require active engagement and potentially take generations to change.

Senior Leaders within the advising mission are critical to advising and assisting Afghan military leaders to develop solutions and alternate operating models than those



offered by Afghan society. Further education into the culture, religion, and geography of Afghanistan for advisors will aid in determining where the opportunities for corruption exist within the services, foster communication with their Afghan counterparts, and validate their recommended solutions to eliminating actions that ultimately hinder the progress of their nation's efforts. The continued corruption only undermines the efforts of the Afghan military and that of the Afghan government. Senior Advisors should utilize the Kotter Eight Step Change Model to assist Afghan leadership with developing their approach to professionalizing the Afghan military.<sup>23</sup>

Using the above approach by senior leaders will provide the opportunity to build the guiding coalition required to assist in the development of the vision and communicate the urgency in developing this vision for utilization throughout the entire organization. Connecting this vision to national pride is essential and will assist the Afghan people with the transition from a tribal-based society to one that includes everyone. The concept of Afghanistan as a "nation" is still foreign to most Afghans, especially those who do not live in Kabul. Afghanistan must build on the short-term gains they have achieved with the successful execution of combat, humanitarian and Counter-Insurgency Operations. Increased engagement with Afghan leaders will develop their willingness to participate, empower them to take action and generate new short-term gains that are essential to implementing and sustaining change. NATO Advisors can assist the Afghan military with becoming the example for how Afghanistan can operate without corruption, which will gain the national military support and influence the government to follow their example.

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<sup>23</sup> John P. Kotter and Dan S. Cohen, *The Heart of Change* (Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 2012), 20-21.

Failure of the Afghan military and government to eliminate corruption will result in the collapse of Afghanistan. It is in the best interest of the NATO advising mission to work with the Afghan leadership to enable success. Without it, all efforts of reconstruction and development will fail. The Afghan people must also be willing to embrace nationalism and transition their society and culture to enable progress and legitimacy.

Table 5. R1: Leadership and Education Recommendations

Chief Decision Maker	R1: Leadership and Education Recommendations
Afghan Air Force	Recommendation 12. Work with TAAC-A Senior Leaders to develop a Course of Action for detection, reporting, investigating, and prosecution of corruption.
Commander of TAAC-A	Recommendation 13. Assist and Advise the AAF Senior Leaders on Recommendation 12.
Commander of TAAC-A	Recommendation 14. Add advising objective to train, advise, and assist the AAF on Course of Action decided in Recommendation 12.

*Source:* Created by author.

### Personnel

NATO Advising Command–Afghanistan will have to increase the number of advisor billets within TAAC-A to meet the requirements of this recommendation. Manning solutions must include utilizing members of the AAF to integrate their efforts fully. Similar to advising operations under NATC-A, operational contract support can be used to conduct portions of the training but must be structured to include coalition partners as participants in the programs. The Facilities section of R1 addresses the location for this training. Additional security requirements and base support functions will also require consideration when increasing the advising mission to support the needs

of Afghanistan and the investment in materials and advising efforts up to this point. Recommend that NATO consider requesting additional personnel through regionally aligned forces within the U.S. Army and those with previous advising experience operating in Afghanistan. Recommend the United States Air Force develop a program for Air Advising in Afghanistan that is structured similarly to that of Afghanistan-Pakistan Hands Program providing continuity within the program and an opportunity for continued engagement with Afghan Counterparts for extended durations. Combining this program with the new Security Force Assistance Brigade would further increase the interoperability and coordination of mission with the U.S. Army. These options generate the opportunity for rotation of U.S. advisors; specialized training focused on Security Force Assistance, creates the opportunity for increased advising during the transition of forces, and provides the necessary positions to train new advisors as they arrive at the unit.

Qualified and dedicated personnel must fill advisor positions. Filling these positions with unqualified personnel or those that do not have an interest in the mission create obstacles to the advising efforts and create security risks for personnel committed to enabling the AAF in conducting their mission. The interview process and qualification requirements must be similar to that established in the recruitment of 6th Special Operations Squadron and that being implemented by Air Mobility Command and United States Air Forces in Europe to fill the Air Advising Squadrons with competent and capable personnel.

Table 6. R1: Personnel Recommendations

Chief Decision Maker	R1: Personnel Recommendations
Commander of TAAC-A	Recommendation 15. Determine how the Afghan Air Force Academy can produce more English proficient candidates for Initial Pilot and maintenance training programs.
United States Air Force	Recommendation 16. Research the development of a 4-year program for Air Advising in Afghanistan (Similar to AFPAK-HANDS and MSAS assignments) that will provide continuity and continued contact supporting Building Partner Capacity through the AAF.
Department of Defense	Recommendation 17. Combine advising efforts in Afghanistan in one Joint regionally aligned force.

*Source:* Created by author.

### Facilities

Coordination with the Host Nation to re-establish operations at Shindand Air Base will provide the necessary facilities to conduct training operations identified previously in this paper. Shindand was constructed as the Afghan Training Base for the AAF and includes facilities capable of supporting every area of the Aviation Enterprise and Training Programs. Additional facilities were built to support the A-29 and their training program (known as Phase B) but were terminated with the announcement of the transition of authority and decision to conduct A-29 training in the United States. Additionally, the Coalition occupied the east side of the runway and had a combination of permanent and contingency structures capable of supporting over 5,000 personnel. The Ministry of Defense took possession of these structures in November of 2014. Additional factors that promote this location are the previous establishment of air space for training, preexisting security plans and requirements to facilitate a rapid return to operations, utilizing facilities that were initially constructed to conduct training missions for both

rotary and fixed-wing platforms, and the ability to build new facilities as the mission expands.

Table 7. R1: Facilities Recommendation

Chief Decision Maker	R1: Facilities Recommendation
Commander of TAAC-A	Recommendation 18. Determine location best suited to support increase in advising mission as identified in Recommendations 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 15, and 17.

*Source:* Created by author.

### Definitions of Key Terms

Air Advising: A category of related activities that provide the basic operational methods used by United States Air Force personnel to work with partner nations to develop, sustain, and employ their aviation enterprise to meet their national security needs, in support of U.S. interests. In essence, it is the act of communicating professional knowledge and skills to partner nations personnel. Air Advising occurs within the following five core tasks: assessing, training, advising, assisting, and equipping.<sup>24</sup>

Aviation Enterprise Development: Defines the plans, programs, and activities undertaken to develop the system or systems necessary for a nation to optimize employment of national aviation resources. The total aviation resource capacity and capability of a nation are defined by the sum total of all air domain resources including humans, aircraft, processes, and infrastructure in both civilian and military/security

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<sup>24</sup> Secretary of the Air Force, Air Force Instruction 10-4201 Volume 3, *Air Advising Operations* (Washington, DC: AF/A3OM, June 2015), 43.

sectors. Modern standards that function to provide efficient, safe and, effective employment of national aviation resources calls for infrastructure development that considers the civilian aviation sector and military/security aviation sector of a nation as mutually supportive systems of an integrated air domain in developing nations.<sup>25</sup>

Capability: The ability to achieve a desired effect under specified standards and conditions through a combination of means and ways to perform a set of tasks.<sup>26</sup>

Capability-Based Assessment (CBA): The analysis portion of the Joint Capabilities Integration and Development System (JCIDS) process. The CBA provides recommendations to pursue a material or non-material solution to an identified capability gap that meets an established capability need. The analysis contains the Functional Area Analysis (FAA), Functional Needs Analysis (FNA) and Functional Solution Analysis (FSA).<sup>27</sup>

Capability Gap: The inability to execute a specific course of action. The gap may be the result of a no existing capability, lack of proficiency or sufficiency in an existing capability solution, or the need to replace an existing capability solution to prevent a future gap.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Department of the Air Force, *Global Partnership Strategy* (Washington, DC: Secretary of the Air Force, 2011), 38.

<sup>26</sup> Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS), Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff Instruction (CJCSI), *Joint Capabilities Integration and Development System (JCIDS)* (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, January 2015), GL-5.

<sup>27</sup> Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS), *Capabilities Based Assessment (CBA) User Guide, Version 3* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2009).

<sup>28</sup> Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS), *Manual for the Operation of the Joint Capabilities Integration and Development System* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, January 2012).

Counterinsurgency (COIN): A comprehensive civilian and military effort designed to simultaneously defeat and contain an insurgency and address its root causes.<sup>29</sup>

Doctrine: The fundamental principles that guide the employment of the U.S. military forces in coordinated action toward a common objective.<sup>30</sup>

Facilities: Real property consisting of one or more of the following: buildings, structures, utility systems, associated roads and other pavements, and underlying land.<sup>31</sup>

Functional Area Analysis (FAA): The Functional Area Analysis (FAA) identifies the operational tasks, conditions, and standards needed to achieve military objectives. The FAA uses the national strategies (National Military Strategy, National Defense Strategy, National Security Strategy), the Family of Joint Future Concepts, and other assigned missions to arrive at a prioritized list of capabilities and tasks that must be accomplished by all functional areas to achieve these military objectives.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> U.S. Agency for International Development, Department of Defense, and Department of State (USAID/DOD/DOS), *U.S. Government Counterinsurgency Guide* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2009), 2.

<sup>30</sup> Office of Aerospace Studies, *Capabilities-Based Assessment (CBA) Handbook; A Practical Guide to the Capabilities-Based Assessment* (Kirtland AFB, NM: Air Force Materiel Command (AFMC) OAS/A5, March 2014), 29.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 30.

<sup>32</sup> Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS), Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Instruction (CJCSI) 3170.01G, *Joint Capabilities Integration and Development System* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2009).

Functional Needs Analysis (FNA): A Functional Needs Analysis (FNA) assesses current and future capabilities to meet the military objectives of the scenarios chosen in the Functional Area Analysis (FAA) and is an output of the CBA.<sup>33</sup>

Functional Solution Analysis (FSA): The operationally based assessment of potential Doctrine, Organization, Training, Materiel, Leadership and Education, Personnel and Facilities (DOTMLPF) approaches to solving (or mitigating) one or more of the capability gaps identified in the Functional Needs Analysis (FNA).<sup>34</sup>

Initial Capabilities Document (ICD): A central output document of the JCIDS process. The ICD is used by the Department of Defense to define gaps in a functional capability area and define new capabilities required.<sup>35</sup>

Joint Capabilities Integration and Development System (JCIDS): The process used by Joint Requirements Oversight Council (JROC) to fulfill its advisory responsibilities to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in identifying, assessing, validating, and prioritizing joint military capability requirements.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> CJCS, CJCSI 3170.01G.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> MAJ Bryan D. Main, USAF, CAPT Michael P. Kretser, USAF, Joshua M. Shearer, and Lt Col Darin A. Ladd, USAF, "Initial Capabilities Documents: A 10 Year Retrospective of Tools Methodologies, and Best Practices," *Defense ARJ*, 21, no. 3 (July 2014): 716-748, accessed 23 August 2017, <http://dau.dodlive.mil/2014/07/01/initial-capabilities-documents-a-10-year-retrospective-of-tools-methodologies-and-best-practices-2/>.

<sup>36</sup> CJCS, JCIDS.



Kandak: The basic fighting unit of the ANA, equivalent to a battalion, consisting of 600 personnel. Commando Kandaks have been assigned to every ANA Corps.<sup>37</sup>

Leadership and Education: Professional development of the joint leader is the product of a learning continuum that comprises training, experience, education, and self-improvement.<sup>38</sup>

Materiel: All items necessary to equip, operate, maintain, and support joint military activities without distinction as to their application for administrative or combat purposes.<sup>39</sup>

Organization: The joint unit or element with varied functions and structures.<sup>40</sup>

Personnel: The personnel component primarily ensures that qualified personnel exist to support joint capability requirements.<sup>41</sup>

Policy: Any DoD, interagency, or international policy issues that may prevent effective implementation of changes in the other seven DOTMLPF-P elemental areas.<sup>42</sup>

Special Mission Wing: Afghanistan's aviation special mission unit, provides Night Vision Capable air assault and Afghanistan's traditional intelligence, surveillance,

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<sup>37</sup> Tim Mahon, "Basic Steps: Afghan Army and Police Trainer and Trainees See Progress," *Training Simulation Journal* (February 2010): 1-56.

<sup>38</sup> Office of Aerospace Studies, *CBA Handbook*, 30.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 29.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 30.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*

and reconnaissance. Focused on supporting the Ministry of Defense and Ministry of Interior (MoI) conducting counter-narcotics and counter-terrorism missions.<sup>43</sup>

Stakeholders: Any agency, service, or organization with a vested interest (a stake) in the outcome of the pre-acquisition analysis.<sup>44</sup>

Tashkil: “Organization” in Dari (Afghan language) and refers to the official list of personnel and equipment requirements used by the MoD and MoI to detail authorized staff positions and equipment items for each unit.<sup>45</sup>

Tasks: Directed friendly actions.<sup>46</sup>

Training: Training of individuals, units, and staffs addresses the use of joint doctrine or joint tactics, techniques, and procedures.<sup>47</sup>

### Limitations

These following limitations have been applied:

1. This paper will contain UNCLASSIFIED information only, limiting the number of resources available to write this paper.

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<sup>43</sup> COL Donald G. Fallin and CPT Lisa Becker, “The Afghanistan Special Mission Wing,” *Army Aviation*, accessed 27 December 2017, <http://www.armyaviationmagazine.com/index.php/archive/not-so-current/748-the-afghanistan-special-mission-wing>.

<sup>44</sup> Office of Aerospace Studies, *Analysis of Alternatives (AoA) Handbook: A Practical Guide to the Analysis of Alternatives* (Kirtland AFB, NM: HQ Air Force/A5R-OAS, July 2016), 13.

<sup>45</sup> Department of Defense (DOD), *Enhancing Security and Stability in Afghanistan* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, June 2017), 14.

<sup>46</sup> Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS), Joint Publication (JP) 3-0, *Joint Operations* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2008).

<sup>47</sup> Office of Aerospace Studies, *CBA Handbook*.

2. The research will primarily be limited to a NATO Air Advisor point of view.

The Air Advising mission is conducted mainly and led by the United States Air Force and therefore has shaped the doctrine to be used in the development of this thesis.

3. Information on the Special Mission Wing will be used to support the findings, but their counter-narcotics and counter-terrorism mission will not be covered in this paper.

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### Introduction

Chapter 1 introduced the AAF, the Air Advising mission, the current situation, and explained the purpose of this study. Chapter 1 also identified the primary and secondary research questions, assumptions, biases, limitations, and scope and delimitations. These sections of the thesis were used to develop the author's Initial Personal Recommendation, identified as (R1) throughout the thesis. Chapter 2 provides a thorough literature review of published works related to the AAF and the Air Advising mission in Afghanistan. Further, chapter 2 reviews strategic documents, doctrine, and government reports on the Special Mission Wing and current Train, Advise, and Assist mission conducted by TAAC-A. This literature review will provide the knowledge that will be carried into the Research Methodology and Analysis conducted in chapters 3 and 4.

Chapter 1 identified that the mission of Air Advising in Afghanistan is not a new concept. Unfortunately, the list of scholarly sources available to research the multiple attempts to establish a sustainable AAF does not exist. Information on the topic is provided through Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction Reports (SIGAR) and recent Department of Defense (DoD) Inspector General (IG) reports. Additional information available through After Action Reports and documents within the NAC-A and TAAC-A command, however, remain classified at this time and identified has been redacted. Research in this thesis will primarily focus on recent assessments of the Train, Advise, and Assist mission being conducted by U.S. and Coalition partners

under TAAC-A. The MoI (now MoD) Special Mission Wing, identified several times in these reports, is closely aligned with the conventional AAFs, thus similar successes and failures can be derived and applied to the Capabilities-Based Assessment. This thesis adopts the language and definitions used in the reviewed literature.

The reviewed literature is divided into three parts:

1. The first part focuses on the strategic doctrine from the key stakeholders of the United States, NATO, and Afghanistan. The focus will be on the National Security Strategies, their defense objectives, missions and tasks that evolved from 2013 to the start of Operation Resolute Support in 2015. The year 2013 was selected because the United States and NATO shifted their focus on the Air Advising mission in Afghanistan.
2. The second part is literature describing the current status of the Air Advising mission in Afghanistan utilizing recent DoD IG and SIGAR reports.
3. The third part of the literature review focuses on the future of the Air Advising mission in Afghanistan and the challenges they are facing. This category includes third-party review articles focused on materiel purchased through Foreign Military Sales and the future development of AAF capabilities supporting ANA and ANSF forces conducting Internal Defense and Counter-Insurgency Operations.

These parts will provide the necessary information for the Functional Area Analysis in the Capabilities-Based Analysis conducted in chapter 4 of this thesis.

## Strategic

Recently the United States shifted their National Security Strategy focusing on America First, however, recognizes that their current engagements demand their sustained commitment and future attention.<sup>48</sup> President Trump has highlighted the importance of advancing American influence and encouraging aspiring partners.<sup>49</sup> One of the Priority Actions is focused on fragile states explicitly mentioning Afghanistan and their continued efforts to prevent the reemergence of terrorist safe havens.<sup>50</sup> The strategy reaffirms their commitment to the Afghan people and their support to the government and security forces engaged in combat with the Taliban, al-Qa'ida, ISIS and other transnational terrorists. The strategy for the United States is to continue to increase the combat capabilities of the Afghan security forces to convince the Taliban to discontinue attacks and seek diplomatic solutions facilitating peace within Afghanistan.<sup>51</sup>

In June of 2017, the DoD released a comprehensive report to Congress focused on enhancing security and stability in Afghanistan. The focus of the strategy for the United States is focused on our continued coordinated efforts with NATO allies, operational partners and the international community in achieving the goals outlined in the National Security Strategy. The United States' objectives in Afghanistan are to support the ANDSF, the people of Afghanistan and defeat al-Qa'ida. In supporting these objectives, the United States Military will continue their efforts with NATO and operational partners

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<sup>48</sup> U.S. President, NSS, 3-5.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 38.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 38-39.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 50.

conducting the Train, Advise, and Assist mission with a tactical focus on the AAF and the ASSF recognizing the critical asymmetric advantage they provide to the ANDSF.<sup>52</sup>

NATO as the lead for Operation Resolute Support identifies eight essential functions that are required to develop the Ministry of Defense, Ministry of Interior and ANDSF. The eight Essential Functions (EF) and respective focus areas are:

EF 1. Plan, Program, Budget, and Execute

1. Focus on building donor confidence
2. Develop a national defense strategy
3. Resource Management/Procurement within Afghan laws, policies, and regulations
4. Personnel management and payroll

EF 2. Transparency, Accountability, and Oversight

1. Third party oversight for continued funding
2. Internal control and accountability
3. Agreements associated to performance
4. Develop and implementation of the Counter- and Anti-Corruption Plan

EF 3. Rule of Law

1. ANDSF adherence to Afghan Constitution, domestic laws, and international obligations
2. Response to corruption and gross human rights violations

EF 4. Force Generation

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<sup>52</sup> DOD, *Enhancing Security and Stability in Afghanistan*, 6-7.

1. Build combat power through recruiting, training, retaining, managing, and developing a professional security force.

2. Tashkil development

EF 5. Sustain the Force

1. Maintenance, medical, and logistics

2. Communication, information, and infrastructure

EF 6. Plan, Resource, and Execute Effective Security Campaigns

1. Strategic Planning and Policy with the Office of National Security Council

2. Execution of employment of the force

3. Coordinate, plan and execute support to national-objectives

EF 7. Develop Sufficient Intelligence Capabilities and Processes

1. Intelligence integration with operations

2. Intelligence cycle development

3. Training self-sufficiency

4. Sustainment of intelligence capabilities

EF 8. Maintain Internal and External Strategic Communications Capabilities

1. Counter-Insurgency Messaging

2. Improving internal communication between the Ministry of Defense, Ministry of Interior and the ANDSF

3. Focused on human capital and institutionalizing processes.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> DOD, *Enhancing Security and Stability in Afghanistan*, 10-13.



TAAC-A is responsible for advising the AAF and is focused on the following priorities:

1. AAF personnel flow into training programs
2. Command and Control
3. Force management of flying hours program
4. Maintenance and logistics
5. Fully integration of aviation platforms.<sup>54</sup>

Afghanistan's President Ashraf Ghani released the 4-year ANDSF roadmap early in 2017 highlighting several developmental initiatives to be implemented by 2020. The DOTMLPF elements include the release of this strategic document, development of a selection process for leadership and management positions, resource management process improvement, unity of command and effort, reduction of corruption, mission reassignment of the Afghan national police and most related to this thesis is the focus on increasing the size of the ASSF and future development of the AAF and their capabilities.<sup>55</sup> The ANDSF roadmap has been reviewed by United States Forces in Afghanistan and has agreed that the objectives are aligned with the strategic framework of the National Security Strategy, but highlights that the plan focuses on operational and structural concepts with an end state of 80 percent government control.<sup>56</sup> NATO has

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<sup>54</sup> DOD, *Enhancing Security and Stability in Afghanistan*, 15-16.

<sup>55</sup> Spearhead Research, *Afghan National Defense Security Forces: Issues in the Train, Advise and Assist Efforts*, September 2017, 5, accessed 28 December 2017, <http://spearheadresearch.org/index.php/researchopinions/andsf-issues-in-the-train-advise-and-assist-efforts>.

<sup>56</sup> DOD, *Enhancing Security and Stability in Afghanistan*, 19.

agreed with the lines of effort in President Ghani's 4-year roadmap and has highlighted the requirements to concentrate efforts on development of the AAF CAS capabilities while adjusting the focus of the train, advise, and assist mission.<sup>57</sup>

NATO remains committed to Operation Resolute Support and has secured funding until the end of 2020. NATO has identified three significant areas that will present challenges in their execution of the mission. The current combat operations have been defined as a stalemate and have stifled any real progress on bringing the Taliban to seek diplomatic options for peace. Efforts to support combat operations have been plagued with shortfalls reducing the ANDSF capabilities to effectively, efficiently, and independently conduct internal defense and counter-insurgency operations on their own. Further complicating the issues is the overwhelming corruption experienced in every organization and at every level. Corruption has been linked to unsuccessful mission execution, poorly equipped fighting forces, and combat deaths related to incompetent commanders.<sup>58</sup> NATO is adapting the support to Operation Resolute Support to focus on successes experienced in the train, advise, and assist mission. By developing the expeditionary advising teams, they will be able to continue to provide support to ANDSF's evolving mission and current combat operations.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), "NATO-Afghanistan Relations," May 2017, accessed 13 May 2018, [https://www.nato.int/nato\\_static\\_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf\\_2017\\_05/20170523\\_1705-backgrounder-afghanistan-en.pdf](https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf_2017_05/20170523_1705-backgrounder-afghanistan-en.pdf).

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 14.

## SMW SIGAR Findings

Though the missions of the SMW and AAF are different, their similarities across the DOTMLPF-P spectrum provide valuable insight and researched recommendations for solutions that can be applied to capability gaps and shortfalls identified during the analysis of the AAF.

The SMW SIGAR report for 2013 determined that the AAF are deficient in experienced personnel to operate and maintain the aircraft. In 2013, the findings identified that NATC-A lacked a plan that set decision points for the development of the SMW and their capabilities. Recruitment of qualified personnel and Afghan Ministry of Defense and Ministry of the Interior inability to determine Command and Control authority are both negatively impacting the ability to build the SMW, challenge Afghanistan. Civilian contractors are currently conducting SMW aircraft maintenance and logistics. Additionally, the Advisors are flying a majority of the missions due to a lack of AAF pilots qualified on night vision goggles. With the issues highlighted, the DoD elected to continue to build the SMW by purchasing 48 new platforms while extending the civilian contracts for maintenance and logistical support.<sup>60</sup> The report also identified that the DoD lacked the qualified personnel to oversee the contracts.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> The increase in the SMW/ANASOC mission was the number one priority for the ISAF Commander during this time. Thus, the demand for an increase in personnel and materiel to support the mission.

<sup>61</sup> Special Inspector General Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR), SIGAR Audit 13-13, *Afghan Special Mission Wing: DOD Moving Forward with \$771.8 Million Purchase of Aircraft that the Afghans Cannot Operate and Maintain* (Arlington, VA: SIGAR, June 2013).

The 2016 SIGAR focused on facilities and infrastructure. In general, the facilities built to support the growing SMW were found to have been constructed to contract requirements and specifications. A number of the facilities were found to be underutilized but were in generally good condition. The underutilization of the facilities is expected to decrease as the number of SMW personnel is expected to grow. Negative findings were related to one company that did not fully comply with the contract or safety specifications resulting in concerns for health and safety.<sup>62</sup>

#### SMW SIGAR Recommendations

The recommendations related to materials and personnel in the 2013 SIGAR were not favorable to further advancement of the AAF and the SMW in particular. The inspection recommended for the Under Secretary of Defense to suspend contracts for new platforms until the Ministry of Defense and Ministry of Interior were able to address personnel and policy issues within the Afghan government. Additionally, the report recommends that the maintenance and supporting logistic contracts be transferred to the Afghan government. All parties involved responded that actions were being taken to work with the Afghan government in resolving the issues that were identified. SIGAR maintained its position and determined that aircraft were purchased while the report was in draft.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> Special Inspector General Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR), SIGAR 17-03 Inspection Report, *Special Mission Wing Facilities at Kandahar Airfield: Construction Generally Met Contract Requirements, but Problems with Noncompliance, Maintenance, and Quality Assurance Need to be Addressed* (Arlington, VA: SIGAR, October 2016).

<sup>63</sup> SIGAR, SIGAR Audit 13-13.

The 2106 SIGAR inspection of facilities at Kandahar Air Base recommended two courses of action for the Commander, Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan. The first was to correct all safety violations and the second was to pursue compensation from the company that was responsible for these contractual violations. There were several disagreements with the findings from USACE and as of September 27, 2016, they had not provided any documentation to support their position.<sup>64</sup>

### SIGAR: Lessons From The U.S. Experience in Afghanistan

In this comprehensive review of Afghanistan and the United States' efforts to stabilize the country, doubt remains that the ANDSF will be able to defend themselves from the Insurgency and the Taliban. The Afghan Government has had difficulties in many of the essential functions that are required for independent operations. Several areas of concern include Plan, Programming, Budget and Execution, Corruption, Force Generation, Sustainment, Intelligence efforts, maintenance and their planning of operations. These have all contributed to the loss of territory and added to the stalemate with the Taliban. Other contributing factors are the withdrawal of United States combat forces and the first downsizing of NATO advising efforts. The review highlights a few overarching issues with the Afghan Government and people including a need to professionalize the Ministry of Defense and a poorly educated population resulting in a lack of qualified personnel to fill much-needed roles in the AAF.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> SIGAR, SIGAR 17-03.

<sup>65</sup> Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR), SIGAR 17-62, *Reconstructing the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces: Lessons from the U.S. Experience in Afghanistan* (Arlington, VA: SIGAR, September 2017), Chapter 5.

The report highlights the United States government again was not prepared to conduct stability operations in a foreign country, lacking the understanding of the scope and a clear understanding of the cultures that are unique to Afghanistan. This initial approach created friction that has proven challenging to recover from; when working with the ANDSF. Like Iraq, the initial focus was on military operations and failed to consider how Afghanistan would look following combat operations. The alignment with militias to counter terrorism undermined the role of the ANA and ANP combined with a lack to consider critical capabilities such as aviation, intelligence, force management, and Special Forces in the beginning. The United States also did not include Coalition partners until 2009 further delaying the structure and framework to be used during the reconstruction of Afghanistan. <sup>66</sup>

Across all AAF functions throughout the Aviation Enterprise, the United States created deficiencies in capabilities by delivering Technologies and Management Systems that exceed the literacy and education of the force resulting in the need for extensive training and created long-term dependencies, resulting in lack of government capabilities and the mis-prioritization of priorities for force building within the ANP. Large turnover rates of advisors led to a lack of consistency in training and failed to develop the long-term relationships required for a stability mission. Focus on quantifiable outputs during evaluation was unable to recognize Afghan leadership corruption and inclusion of United States Intelligence gathering. <sup>67</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> SIGAR, SIGAR 17-62, 165-167.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., 168-170.

Often efforts were restricted by arbitrary timelines resulting in an overestimation of ANDSF capabilities and at the same time, an underestimation of the enemies resolve. As enemy activity intensified, the mission of professionalizing and sustaining the ANDSF often suffered. Ultimately the United States failed to recognize what 30 years of war and effects can do to a country and its people. Efforts from both governments to address and rectify past errors have been made recently, potentially paving the way for future developments. Efforts to ensure Afghanistan remains an environment uninviting to terrorist organizations are in line with the United States' National Security objectives.<sup>68</sup>

#### Current Status of Afghan Air Force Advising Efforts

The June 2017 DoD Report, *Enhancing Security and Stability in Afghanistan*, determined that the AAF has made significant progress in planning for and providing mission support for logistics, resupply, humanitarian relief efforts, Dignified Human Remains Transfer, Medical Evacuation, Casualty Evacuation, non-traditional-ISR, air interdiction, armed overwatch, and aerial escort service.<sup>69</sup> TAAC-A has continued to expand training opportunities for Afghan pilots and maintenance personnel utilizing external locations in the United States, Czech Republic, and the United Arab Emirates. The AAF continues to benefit from the high retention and low attrition, experiencing less than 1 percent attrition and 89 percent retention rates for pilots and maintenance personnel at the end of their contract. These numbers have enabled the AAF to fill 7,952 of the 8,626 manning positions on the Tashkil. As a result of continued efforts to

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<sup>68</sup> SIGAR, SIGAR 17-62, 170-172.

<sup>69</sup> DOD, *Enhancing Security and Stability in Afghanistan*, 53.

establish gender equality in Afghanistan, the AAF has allowed fifty-four recently graduated Afghan women officers to test with the intent of hiring thirty-four of the candidates. The challenges for training still include the highly technical courses for pilots and maintenance personnel, language proficiency training, the vetting process for external training, and the duration of these courses. These factors are delaying the AAF's ability to increase crew ratios across all platforms and with any unexpected increase in attrition will continue to impact the progress of the AAF negatively. Additional challenges are being experienced in the Flight Engineer and Load Master career fields, which are further limiting the ability to support the ANA.<sup>70</sup> As of May 2017, the AAF operated 118 fixed and rotary wing aircraft not related to Special Mission Wing Operations.

The fixed wing platforms are operating at the following crew ratios:

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<sup>70</sup> DOD, *Enhancing Security and Stability in Afghanistan*, 53-55.



Table 8. Afghan Air Force Fixed-wing Platforms

<b>Platform</b>	<b>Authorized</b>	<b>Inventory</b>	<b>Qualified Aircrews</b>	<b>Crew Ratio</b>
C-130	4	4	4	1.0
C-208	24	24	16	.75
AC-208	32	0	0	0
A-29	25	12	14	1.1

Source: Department of Defense, *Enhancing Security and Stability in Afghanistan* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, June 2017), 55.

The rotary wing platforms are operating at the following crew ratios:

Table 9. Afghan Air Force Rotary-wing Platforms

<b>Platform</b>	<b>Authorized</b>	<b>Inventory</b>	<b>Qualified Aircrews</b>	<b>Crew Ratio</b>
Mi-17	56	46	37	.80
MD-530	56	25	20	.80
Mi-35*	N/A	4	N/A	N/A
Cheetah*	N/A	3	N/A	N/A

\* No coalition Train, Advise, and Assist associated with these platforms

Source: Department of Defense, *Enhancing Security and Stability in Afghanistan* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, June 2017), 55.

Current crew ratios highlight the significant shortfall in available crews for both fixed and rotary wing aircraft hindering the AAF's ability to support the ANDSF. Current delivery rates for additional aircraft have the inventory of A-29s increasing by 13, and the

32 AC-208 listed in the chart above, will further increase the demand for qualified crew members and generate significant crew ratio impacts as the AAF balance experience across the platforms. Similar issues with maintenance are being experienced across all platforms requiring substantial Contract Logistic Support and contracted maintenance that need significant efforts for restructure to increase aircraft sortie generation.<sup>71</sup>

New AAF leadership recognize the shortfalls and have started to address these issues by exploring options within their training pipelines that will increase the number of qualified and capable pilot candidates. As of this report, 200 Air Force Academy, 22 A-29, and 14 rotary wing students were attending training. Even with these hopeful candidates the bulk of these potential pilots will experience extremely long training and qualification programs and will not provide a short-term gain for the AAF and the ability to meet the demands of the ASSF and ANA.<sup>72</sup>

The AAF has made progress in providing new asymmetric advantages as options for the ANDSF. New missions include the development of the Afghan Tactical Air Controller program, airdrop for resupply, increased Medical Evacuation capabilities, ISR, and the capability to deliver laser-guided munitions from the A-29.<sup>73</sup> TAAC-A reevaluates progress on each airframe and their unique mission sets, refocusing efforts each reporting period. Overall the assessment of the AAF's role in the ANDSF strategic plan has become more significant recently, highlighting the asymmetric advantage the MD-530 and A-29 platforms provide. Future operations under the 4-year roadmap

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<sup>71</sup> DOD, *Enhancing Security and Stability in Afghanistan*, 53-61.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, 61.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, 62.

underline the need to gain and hold key terrain while the ANDSF executes their restructure plan, heavy dependence on ISR and aerial fires are critical to their success.<sup>74</sup>

### DoD IG Report Findings 2018

In January of 2018, the DoD IG released a report on the progress of the United States and Coalition efforts to train, advise, and assist the AAF. The purpose of the report was to evaluate the progress made by TAAC-A in training, advising and assisting the AAF to become a professional, sustainable, and capable force. The AAF showed significant improvement in their ability to integrate the A-29 platform into current combat operations, successful utilization of night vision technology across multiple platforms, and integration of Afghan Tactical Air Controllers within the AAF and ANA. Deficiencies, however, were highlighted with TAAC-A and their ability to efficiently conduct the train, advise and assist mission.<sup>75</sup>

At the time of the report, TAAC-A did not have a plan that was nested within the end state identified by NATO's Operation Resolute Support campaign plan. This creates the inability for TAAC-A to track their progress and that of the AAF, provide metrics on AAF capabilities and capacity to conduct their mission. This has a direct impact on TAAC-A ability to perform their assigned mission and results in the inefficient and ineffective use of assigned advisors. Further areas of concern included Contract Logistic Support and long-term integration of Afghan maintenance personnel, the priority of

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<sup>74</sup> DOD, *Enhancing Security and Stability in Afghanistan*, 1.

<sup>75</sup> Inspector General, Department of Defense (IG DOD), *Progress of U.S. and Coalition Efforts to Train, Advise, and Assist the Afghan Air Force*, Report, DODIG-2018-058 (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, January 2017), i.

training for AAF maintenance personnel, ANA reliance rates exceeding programmed flight hours for the Mi-17, and identified inadequate training for Advisors assigned to AAF.

### DoD IG Recommendations

Strategic recommendations included continued engagement by the Commander of Operation Resolute Support with the MoD and General Staff focused on institutional aviation-specific and mission support training to support the AAF and future mission requirements. Additional advising and assistance will be required to ensure the MoD correctly implements the Afghan directive across the ANDSF. Further, it was recommended for the Commander of Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan to conduct a cost analysis comparing internal and external training pipelines to identify potential areas for savings and increased support options. Recommendations for the TAAC-A Commander included implementation of its Strategic Plan that is nested within higher headquarter plan. Vital to this is the necessity to ensure TAAC-A lines of effort directly support those identified in Operation Resolute Support. Parallel lines of effort at the Operational and Tactical levels include modification of Contract Logistic Support contracts to allow for increased responsibility of AAF maintenance personnel and to conduct TAAC-A specific training for inbound advisors. The report also recommends that Air Education and Training Command conduct periodic assessments and solicit feedback from TAAC-A Advisors on recommendations for adjustments to the Air Advising Academy and curriculum used to train TAAC-A advisors.<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> IG DOD, DODIG-2018-058, ii.

## Response to Recommendations

Upon release of the report, all recommendations were agreed with except for that about conducting the cost analysis of the internal and external training pipelines. The Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan suggested that TAAC-A should be the organization to perform the analysis, as they are the requirements owner.<sup>77</sup>

## Stakeholders

Reviewing the stakeholders and their missions provides the opportunity for the author to view the research through the lens of the individual stakeholders and their missions. This approach considers invested interest of each stakeholder and helps frame the recommendations that will be provided in the analysis section in chapter 4 of this thesis. By understanding the stakeholders' missions, the recommendations can focus on what is mutually beneficial and can be cross-compared providing maximum opportunity for all those who have shared interest in the AAF and their success in supporting the ANDSF conducting internal defense and counter-terrorism operations in Afghanistan. Identifying recommendations that are mutually beneficial will increase the stakeholders' willingness to pursue recommended changes across the DOTMLPF spectrum through funding, resources, and personnel support.

## NATO Mission

Resolute Support is a NATO-led, non-combat mission. It was launched on January 1, 2015, following the conclusion of the previous NATO-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) mission, and the assumption of full security responsibility by the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces (ANDSF). Its purpose

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<sup>77</sup> IG DOD, DODIG-2018-058, iv.

is to help the Afghan security forces and institutions develop the capacity to defend Afghanistan and protect its citizens in a sustainable manner.<sup>78</sup>

### CENTCOM Mission

CENTCOM has aligned their mission with NATO and expanded it to include the eight focus areas listed earlier in this chapter.<sup>79</sup>

### TAAC-A Mission

The mission of TAAC-Air is to train, advise, and assist Afghan partners to develop a professional, capable, and sustainable air force. TAAC-Air leverages train, advise and assist activities in concert with strong personal relationships, to create professional Afghan Airmen capable of planning, leading, employing, and sustaining decisive airpower operations.<sup>80</sup>

### AAF Description of Mission

The Afghan Air Force is responsible for air mobility and close air attack in a country defined by large mountains in the north and wide-open plains in the south. Helping reach some of the most remote regions of Afghanistan, the AAF provides air assets for logistics, resupply, humanitarian relief efforts, human remains return (HeRo), casualty evacuation, non-traditional ISR, air interdiction, close air attack, armed overwatch and aerial escort.<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> NATO, Resolute Support Afghanistan, “Operation Resolute Support,” accessed 4 February 2018, <https://www.rs.nato.int/about-us/leadership/resolute-support-headquarters/rsm-commander.aspx>; NATO, Resolute Support Afghanistan, “NATO Mission ORS,” accessed 4 February 2018, <https://www.rs.nato.int/about-us/mission.aspx>.

<sup>79</sup> U.S. Central Command, “Resolute Support,” accessed 4 February 2018, [http://www.centcom.mil/OPERATIONS-AND-EXERCISES/RESOLUTE-SUPPORT./](http://www.centcom.mil/OPERATIONS-AND-EXERCISES/RESOLUTE-SUPPORT/)

<sup>80</sup> NATO, Resolute Support Afghanistan, “TAAC-A NATO,” accessed 4 February 2018, <https://www.rs.nato.int/rs-commands/train-advise-assist-command-air.asp>.

<sup>81</sup> NATO, Resolute Support Afghanistan, “Operation Resolute Support,” accessed 4 February 2018, [http://www.rs.nato.int/images/media/PDFs/RSM/20150204\\_aaf\\_trifold\\_finalpdf](http://www.rs.nato.int/images/media/PDFs/RSM/20150204_aaf_trifold_finalpdf).

### Special Mission Wing Mission

Though excluded from this study it is essential to define the mission of the SMW for clarity in the research and to address the difference in mission from the AAF. “The Special Mission Wing or SMW provides the Afghan Special Security Forces (ASSF) with the operational reach and manned Intelligence, Surveillance, Reconnaissance capability to support counter-terrorism and counter-narcotics missions.”<sup>82</sup>

### Chapter Summary

The literature review, conducted in this chapter, was focused on the sources necessary to provide knowledge across the DOTMLPF spectrum on the AAF and TAAC-A mission. To fully understand the scope of the research, strategic documents, military doctrine, reports, and the interests of the stakeholders were reviewed. The range of materials provides the opportunity to view the perceived problems, identified in the primary and secondary research questions, in an unbiased manner. The literature reviewed was intentionally selected from a wide-range of sources for the purpose of establishing credibility and allowing ease of access to the materials for future study. All sources are Unclassified and available on the Internet.

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<sup>82</sup> Afghan War News, “Afghan Air Force (AAF) Special Mission Wing SMW,” accessed 10 January 2018, <http://www.afghanwarnews.info/air/smw.htm>.

## CHAPTER 3

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### Introduction

Chapter 2 consisted of a thorough literature review covering the AAF, the Train, Advise, and Assist mission, strategic documents, military doctrine, and the missions of the stakeholders utilized to build the author's knowledge and provide the foundation for further analysis. Chapter 3 outlines the Research Methodology for conducting qualitative research on the AAF and the Train, Advise, and Assist mission in Afghanistan.

#### Research Methodology

This study intends to persuade the Chief Decision Maker (CDM) that the recommendations contained in chapter 5 are suitable, feasible, and acceptable solutions mitigate shortfalls by reducing the capability gaps experienced under the current operational structure. The main concerns of the CDM include the inability to train sufficient numbers of personnel to support the AAF and their mission, increased variations in the amount of platforms operated by AAF, the findings of the DoD IG report which identified TAAC-A did not have a strategic plan nested within higher headquarters' security in the operational environment, and the necessity for their mission to achieve success in support of Afghanistan and their 4-Year Roadmap.

A CBA will be conducted across the DOTMLPF spectrum to answer the primary research question. From these findings, secondary research questions will be determined and included in the recommendations provided in chapter 5.



The author conducted an applied professional case study methodology for this thesis, which is classified as qualitative research. Qualitative research focuses on meaning, process analysis, focused sampling, data collection, inductive and comparative data analysis, which will support the recommendations provided in the conclusion of this thesis.<sup>83</sup> That being stated the author conducted a thorough review of the following areas:

1. Available sources on the Air Advising Mission and its evolution throughout the history of Afghanistan.
2. Relevant sources on the progress of the Air Advising Mission in Afghanistan.
3. United States, NATO, and Afghanistan Strategic documents and doctrine related to national interests, defense objectives, mission, and tasks related to Air Advising.
4. Technical data, mission utilization, and training programs related to aircraft, pilots, maintenance, and other aircrew member positions.
5. Related sources identifying future fixed and rotary wing platforms that will be added to the AAF fleet of aircraft.
6. CBA guides and handbooks to provide structure for the study and provide the foundation for the research conducted in chapter 4 and recommendations presented in chapter 5 of this thesis.

To correctly understand the requirements of the Air Advising Mission conducted by TAAC-A, the author has studied materials related to the evolving mission in Afghanistan. Combining the author's previous advising experience, the results of the

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<sup>83</sup> Sharon B. Merriam and Elizabeth Tisdell, *Qualitative Research: A Guide to Design and Implementation* (San Francisco, CA: Josey-Bass, 2015), 42.

CBA will provide recommendations for how NATO and the United States Advisors can support the increased demands of the TAAC-A mission to support the ANA and ANDSF in their efforts to conduct internal defense and counter-insurgency operations within Afghanistan.

This thesis is an applied qualitative professional case study utilizing modified CBA that focused on the professional body of knowledge. The product of the CBA will include required capabilities and their associated operational characteristics and attributes, identify capability gaps and related risks, prioritize these gaps, conduct an initial assessment of viable solutions, and provide recommendations for both materiel and non-materiel solutions that can be utilized to mitigate shortfalls.<sup>84</sup> The materiel and non-materiel solutions are related to the DOTMLPF-P elements. A modified CBA was applied to the NATO and United States Advising mission to identify potential gaps in their ability to support the AAF and their mission.

The Functional Area Analysis (FAA) is the first research phase of a CBA and describes the operational environment, timeframes, operational construct of the organization, its required capabilities, and its defining physical and operational characteristics.<sup>85</sup> The research conducted in chapter 1 and chapter 2 includes a review of the background and current status of the Air Advising Mission in Afghanistan. The analysis presented in the R2 Informed Position is cross-compared to the R1 Initial Recommendations in chapter 4.

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<sup>84</sup> Office of Applied Studies, *CBA Handbook*, 1.

<sup>85</sup> U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, Department of Logistics and Resources Operations, (CGSC DLRO) F100, *Managing Army Change* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: CGSC, August 2018), F102 RA-14.

The second phase of the CBA is to conduct a Functional Needs Analysis (FNA), which will be used to assess current capabilities of the assigned forces to meet the potential gaps identified in the FAA. The findings of the FNA identify capability gaps and prioritize those gaps in operational terms. The output of the Functional Solution Analysis (FSA) provides a list of capability gaps, areas of redundancies, shortfalls, and an estimate on the timeline of solution requirements.<sup>86</sup>

The Third and final phase of the CBA is the FSA. The outputs from the FNA are analyzed across the DOTMLPF-P elements. For this research, the potential solutions are evaluated in all aspects of the DOTMLPF and Policy is not addressed as the research in chapters 1 and 2 provided clear guidance on the United States and NATO's policies related to the topic of this thesis. The following table provides a visual description of research approach applied by the author.

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<sup>86</sup> CGSC DLRO, F100, *Managing Army Change*.

Table 10. Author’s Approach to Conduct of the Research

Chapter 1	Chapter 2	Chapter 3	Chapter 4	Chapter 5
Background Initial Personal Recommendation (R1)	Literature Review	Methodology	Analysis (R2)	Recommendation for CDM (R3)
Modified Capabilities-Based Assessment (CBA)				
Phase One FAA			Phase Two FNA	Phase Three FSA
Modified DOTMLPF Analysis				
	Review of materials related to the Afghan Air Advising Mission		Analysis of required TAAC-A capabilities related to DOTMLPF elements	Proposed solutions for the NATO-led air advising mission across the DOTMLPF elements
	Review of Stakeholders requirements		R2 improved by Stakeholder Analysis–basis for R3	

*Source:* Discussion held with Dr. Long, 19 December 2018. Example of chart was modeled after those contained in Major Jure Himelrajh, “Basic Combat Units of the Slovenian Armed Forces” (Master’s thesis, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, Ft Leavenworth, KS, 2017).

The Personal Initial Recommendation (R1) will be evaluated in chapter 4 utilizing the table below to provide an informed position and output of R2. R2 will be assessed with the perspective of the CDM and stakeholders to provide recommended solutions (R3) in chapter 5.

Table 11. Research Model

Initial Personal Recommendation	Evaluated Through		Informed Position	Evaluated Through	Recommended Solution
R1	National strategic documents	National interests		CDM Perspective	
		Defense objectives			
		Mission			
		Tasks			
	Military doctrine			Stakeholders' Perspective	
	Air advising				
	Resources available				
	TAAC-A organization				
Reports on air advising mission and SMW (2013-2018)					

*Source:* Conversation with Dr. Long, 19 December 2018. Example of chart was modeled after those contained in Major Jure Himelrajh, “Basic Combat Units of the Slovenian Armed Forces” (Master’s thesis, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, Ft Leavenworth, KS, 2017).

### Chapter Summary

This chapter described the applied professional case study and utilization of a CBA to answer the primary research question and develop the secondary research questions to be used in the recommendations provided in chapter 5. It also addressed the literature reviewed and how it is applied during the research phase of this thesis. It concluded with the author’s approach to conduct the research and the framework of the research model to be used in the analysis chapter of this thesis.

## CHAPTER 4

### ANALYSIS

#### Introduction

In chapter 3, the Research methodology for conducting a modified Capabilities-Based Assessment (CBA) was outlined. This approach to the analysis will facilitate the qualitative research required to provide an Informed Position (R2) in chapter 4. This chapter is the analysis of the knowledge gained during the literature review from chapter 2 and how it impacts the Initial Personal Recommendations (R1) addressed in chapter 1. The utilization of the CBA to analyze the AAF and the Train, Advise, and Assist Command-Afghanistan (TAAC-A) will facilitate a cross-comparison of R1 and the stakeholders. This cross-comparison combined with the conducted CBAs will result in R2.

The analysis of this research topic is divided into two separate analyses; one for the AAF and their current and future operations and the second is that of TAAC-A mission. Utilizing the Joint Capabilities Integration and Development System (JCIDS) as the foundation to analyze the AAF Air Force and the TAAC-A Mission, the Initial Capabilities Document (ICD) presents thirteen questions to frame the analysis across the DOTMLPF-P spectrum. P-Policy is not part of this analysis and related questions are not covered in the research. The analysis conducted in this chapter will then be applied to the Initial Personal Recommendation (R1) from chapter 1 to produce the Informed Recommendation (R2), which will be applied through the lens of the stakeholders to create the final recommendation in chapter 5. Additionally, the analysis, utilizing the

JCIDS format, secondary questions essential to providing recommended problem statement will identify solutions in chapter 5.

### AAF Analysis

As identified in chapter 2, the AAF is responsible to perform air mobility and close air attack in support of ANDSF. The AAF does this through various missions including logistics, resupply, humanitarian relief efforts, human remains return (also referred to as Dignified Human Remains Transfer), casualty evacuation, non-traditional ISR, air interdiction, close air attack, armed over-watch, and aerial escort.<sup>87</sup>

### Doctrine

The purpose of doctrine is to provide fundamental sets of principles, which guide the employment of military forces in coordinated action toward common objectives.<sup>88</sup>

Is there existing doctrine that addresses or relates to the business need?  
Is it Joint? Service? Agency?

In June 2017, President Ashraf Ghani released his 4-Year Roadmap for the future of Afghanistan's ANDSF. Though the document remains classified, the release of the key elements has been reported. With an end state of the ANDSF to control 80 percent of the country by 2020, the focus is on increasing the capability and capacity of the AAF, doubling the number of ASSF forces, reducing corruption, professionalizing the Afghan Leaders and training pipelines and creates an environment that fosters unity of effort and

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<sup>87</sup> NATO, Resolute Support Afghanistan, "Operation Resolute Support."

<sup>88</sup> Office of Aerospace Studies, *CBA Handbook*, 29.

command.<sup>89</sup> NATO leaders for Operation Resolute Support have been engaged with the MoD through this process and will continue to advise and assist with the integration of the 4-Year Roadmap into the Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures to be used by the ANDSF conducting Internal Defense and Counter-Insurgency missions.

Are there operating procedures in place that are NOT being followed which contribute to the identified need?

Continued development of doctrine is required to correctly integrate the capabilities and platforms discussed in the materiel section of this chapter. The AAF, with advice and assistance from TAAC-A, continues to develop a joint implementation of the new capabilities and integration of platforms into their operations. The approach to development and integration of these capabilities must be through the lens of an AAF that stands on its own and is capable of conducting operations in an environment that promotes interoperability with coalition forces while meeting the requirements of the end users. One example of an area where doctrine does not support the mission is with the ANA's utilization of the Mi-17 in a direct-support role. The policy is written to help Army Commanders but ignores the AAF's ability to maintain, support, and operate within the AAF regulations. This has created an environment where AAF operators and maintainers are jeopardizing safety to support their users, while ANA operations tempo is creating a crisis where the AAF will not be able to provide future medium to heavy rotary wing airlift support.<sup>90</sup> Failure to correct the discrepancies within the two services

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<sup>89</sup> "4-Year ANDSF Roadmap," *Afghan War* (blog), 11 June 2017, accessed 13 May 2018, <http://www.afghanwarblog.com/2017/06/4-year-andsf-roadmap.html>.

<sup>90</sup> IG DOD, DODIG-2018-058, 29.



doctrine will result in a culture that is accepting of disregard for regulations, jeopardizes the safety of flight, allows short-term gains in tactical operation at the expense of strategic capabilities and capital to operate in the future.

One area to highlight is the success of the integration of ATACs with A-29 CAS operations. This program has integrated the air-ground functions to submit target packages, seek and gain higher headquarters approval and tasking of strike aircraft, to communication between the controllers and pilots conducting the fires.<sup>91</sup> Afghanistan's leadership (discussed in the Leadership and Education section) must address concerns about integration and ensure that expectation management is controlled and understood at the strategic level. Failure to recognize the importance of developing, maintaining, and implementing doctrine will result in an AAF that fails to operate at maximum capacity, continue to fail to meet mission requirements, and compromise Afghanistan's ability to achieve their end state objectives.

### Organization

Where is the problem occurring? What organization is the problem occurring in?

The AAF does not have an organic pilot generating capability. Current Instructor Pilots are focused on conducting upgrade and difference training for qualified AAF pilots. Similar to the issues with pilot generation is that of maintenance personnel due to the structure of operational CLS contracts. Training issues are discussed in the next

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<sup>91</sup> Daniel Wasserbly, "Afghan JTACs have Trained to Call Support from A-29s Aircraft, MD 530 Helicopters," *IHS Jane's Defence Weekly*, 6 September 2017, accessed 13 January 2018, <http://www.janes.com/article/73589/afghan-jtacs-have-trained-to-call-support-from-a-29s-aircraft-md-530-helicopters>.

section. The AAF is entirely reliant on Coalition Forces and external training to produce basic qualified pilots. Additionally, the AAF requires a majority of the major weapons system qualification to be conducted outside of Afghanistan in the United States, United Arab Emirates, and the Czech Republic. The AAF could organically produce pilots from August through December of 2014. Under ISAF and NATC-A mission they established a pilot training program located at Shindand Air Base. Under the 3<sup>rd</sup> Wing structure, there was a Group focused on training with Tashkil positions dedicated to conducting pilot training. With the downsizing of forces, the Advisors were required to accelerate the AAF capability to produce pilots. The AAF did a proof of concept and achieved their goal of conducting training without the aid of coalition advisors in August of 2014. Due to the requirement for CAS, maintenance issues, and the lack of qualified personnel in the pipeline, the training unit was depleted of their capability. As of January 2015, the AAF could not organically generate pilots, which is critical to the success of their Air Force.

Is the organization properly staffed and funded to deal with the issue?

As identified above, the AAF is not adequately staffed to fill the gap in capability. Experienced pilots from the C-208 and Mi-17 programs are needed to fill positions in the C-130, A-29, Blackhawk, MD-530, and SMW missions. Funding under NATO and U.S. has dedicated money to training contracts from third-party defense contractors and focused on developing the capabilities for use in combat missions. Without continued coalition financial support, the AAF will not be able to maintain their current support to the ANDSF. Additionally, the AAF relies support of coalition aircraft to augment their CAS mission. Without the coalition support the AAF would not be able to maintain and

operate their aircraft nor provide the required support to the ANDSF removing their asymmetric advantage from the battle space.

### Training

Is the issue caused, at least in part, by a complete lack of or inadequate training?

The AAF cannot conduct initial pilot and maintenance training at this time. Coalition forces continue to lead this training for the AAF through the train, advise, and assist mission utilizing third party contractors and CLS. Adjustments to the CLS contracts are underway which will allow for more integration of AAF maintenance personnel and eventual transfer of maintenance functions.<sup>92</sup> Pilot training programs utilized under NATC-A were given International Traffic in Arms Regulation (ITAR) release in July of 2014, which included a fixed-wing single platform (C-208) pilot training program. This program included Initial Flight Screening (rotary and fixed wing), Unqualified Pilot Training, Pilot Instructor Training, Mission Qualification, and Aircraft Commander Upgrade.<sup>93</sup>

The AAF, with the continued assistance of TAAC-A Advisors, is able to produce Instructor Pilots that are conducting training across the platforms, for pilots and crewmembers. However, the AAF is heavily reliant on TAAC-A to conduct training across the entire aviation enterprise. Failure to focus on developing and transferring

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<sup>92</sup> IG DOD, DODIG-2018-058.

<sup>93</sup> Assigned as Team Lead responsible for modifying previously existing training (under TORP 252) to meet single aircraft requirement. Performed as the Action Officer for gaining ITAR 126.6 release of pilot training programs for the AAF Schoolhouse July 2014.

training plans to the AAF will create a capabilities gap when NATO concludes Operation Resolute Support. The current training needs to be improved to allow for a scheduled transition across the aviation enterprise that allows for AAF personnel to become the trainers and integrates with future interoperability plans. Additionally, the transition of platforms, additional mission sets, and further integration with other ANDSF forces, training programs must be holistic in their approach and contain a plan for development to AAF fostering future independent core operations.

The AAF also lacks the private institutions to produce language proficient and technically trained personnel. In addition to relying on Coalition training pipelines, the AAF relies on the ANA schools to train support personnel. This training approach often results in the AAF not receiving training priority. Engineering, logistics, and English proficiency training for aviation and maintenance candidates are among the most challenged areas within the AAF training programs.<sup>94</sup> Additionally, security vetting requirements for candidates attending training outside of Afghanistan further delays the availability of technically capable personnel from entering training.

Does training exist which addresses the issue?

Fortunately, training does exist for all areas under the Aviation Enterprise umbrella. Through the utilization of preexisting courseware, training programs and efforts to develop training plans that meet the operational requirements of the AAF, the AAF will have the training available to develop and maintain their Air Force. The caveat is that the owner of the programs and TAAC-A needs to be diligent in completing the

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<sup>94</sup> IG DOD, DODIG-2018-058, 21-23.

release authority allowing for the transfer of resources to the AAF. Without these releases, the AAF will be required to develop their training and or continually rely on coalition support for training. Currently, Coalition forces contribute \$74 million a year to conduct AAF training outside of Afghanistan to meet the requirements for aircrew and maintenance personnel.<sup>95</sup>

### Materiel

Is the issue caused, at least in part, by inadequate systems or equipment?

The AAF is currently increasing their platform numbers, which in- turn enhances their capability to support ANDSF forces. The below chart depicts the current AAF platforms compared to the projected AAF end strength with current Foreign Military Sales approved purchases.

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<sup>95</sup> IG DOD, DODIG-2018-058, 23.

Table 12. Afghan Air Force Current (May 2018) and Future Platform Numbers

Rotary Wing Platforms	Current Inventory/Authorized	Forecasted Inventory
Mi-17	46/56	0
MD-530	28/56	182
Mi-35	4/Pre-existing	0
Cheetah	3/Pre-existing	?
UH-60	8/159	159
Fixed Wing Platforms	Current Inventory/Authorized	Forecasted Inventory
C-130	4/4	4
C-208	24/24	24
AC-208	0/32	32
A-29	12/25	32

Caveats: does not include SMW aircraft/Does not include UH-60 allocation for SMW

Source: Department of Defense, *Enhancing Security and Stability in Afghanistan* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, June 2017), 55.

Increase in CAS and light lift capabilities will continue to increase concurrently with the transition from the Mi-17 and Mi-35 to the UH-60. With the introduction of the AC-208, the AAF will be able to conduct real-time ISR with a forward firing capability providing an asymmetric advantage for ground forces. The foreseeable gap in the AAF's ability to support ANDSF forces as soon as the summer of 2018, is the inability to conduct medium to heavy rotary wing airlift.<sup>96</sup> The removal of the Mi-17 from the AAF

<sup>96</sup> IG DOD, DODIG-2018-058; Mi-17 Maintenance rates, 29-31.

inventory based on numerous logistics and maintenance issues is a gap that is not met by the performance capabilities of the UH-60. The AAF's ability to provide rotary airlift and meet the direct-support demands of the ANA, requires new tactics, techniques, and procedures to meet these requirements. The U.S Army has identified the UH-60 lacks sufficient performance in the operational environment of Afghanistan.<sup>97</sup>

The AAF is currently experiencing a gap in readiness and shortage of parts required for the Mi-17. Coalition aircraft to support ongoing operation fills additional deficiencies identified in the AAF CAS capabilities. However, the current coalition support cannot be the long-term solution if Afghanistan is going to conduct internal defense and counterinsurgency operations on their own. The above chart reflects the forecasted aircraft inventory to fill the current materiel AAF gaps.<sup>98</sup>

Materiel solutions have been applied to support nighttime operations with the ongoing Night Vision Goggle Training Program and recent demonstration of the ability to deliver laser-guided munitions from the A-29 program are efforts in the right direction enable the AAF to conduct night time operations and deliver precision munitions.<sup>99</sup>

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<sup>97</sup> Warzone, "The US Plan to Give Afghanistan a Fleet of Black Hawks is Deeply Flawed," Thedrive.com, accessed 28 December 2017, <http://www.thedrive.com/the-war-zone/10413/the-us-plan-to-giveafghanistan-a-fleet-of-black-hawks-is-deeply-flawed>.

<sup>98</sup> DOD, *Enhancing Security and Stability in Afghanistan*, 55.

<sup>99</sup> IG DOD, DODIG-2018-058.

## Leadership and Education

Does the leadership understand the scope of the problem?

Recently President Ashraf Ghani stated, “we will not be able to support our army for six months without U.S. support, and U.S. capabilities.”<sup>100</sup> Further recognition of the problems of Afghanistan led to the development of the 4-Year Roadmap and the recent movement by the Afghan government across the ANDSF to remove the ineffective top leaders and replace them with new energetic and hopeful replacements is a move in the right direction. The MoD plan retires 2,264 officers within 18 months.

New Afghan leaders recognize the requirement to defend their country in support of their national strategy but are trying to build new capabilities while conducting combat operations. Afghan military leaders understand the importance of working with the coalition to develop a sustainable AAF and meet the objectives of the 4-Year Roadmap. However, each day presents new challenges, emerging threats and engagements focused on Afghanistan leaders and their complex combat operating environment. This environment combined with a culture lacking focus on the future presents challenges for the AAF. The decision to utilize the removed military leaders in the civilian government will create problems for future development. Retired officers failed to understand the equipment and the tactics, techniques, procedures used, ignored or refused to apply the doctrine, and have received blame for numerous failures within the ANDSF. MoD removed officers from their positions due to corruption and ineffectiveness but placed them in positions to influence policy and budget within the government. This cultural

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<sup>100</sup> CBS News, “16 Years Later, Afghan Capital under Siege,” 11 January 2018, accessed 15 April 2018, <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/16-years-later-afghan-capital-under-siege/>.



necessity to save one's reputation will prove problematic for future development of the ANDSF.<sup>101</sup>

Does the leadership have resources at its disposal to correct the issues?

The AAF has the coalition and TAAC-A Advisors to assist in the transition to becoming independent and meeting the goals of the 4-Year Roadmap. The AAF also has a group of young officers who have tactical and operational experience. This pool of talented, young officers provides the AAF their best chance to achieve their goals. Manning issues (discussed in the Personnel section) requires these capable young officers to remain in tactical and operational positions necessary to conduct combat operations. This presents future challenges for the development of the AAF and their Leaders.

#### Personnel

Is the issue caused, at least in part, by inability or decreased ability to place qualified and trained personnel in the correct occupational specialties?

Afghanistan is currently unable to produce enough qualified personnel to fill the Tashkil positions for aircrew and maintenance. Further complicating this issue was the NATO Commanding General's decision to man the SMW to 100 percent by the end of 2014. This pulled many qualified and experienced pilots from the AAF into the SMW creating gaps in the qualification level and experience of the remaining AAF pilots. Currently Afghanistan is also trying to fill positions across the government with higher educated young Afghans. This lack of qualified personnel combined with the current

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<sup>101</sup> Hamid Shalizi, "Afghan Army Shake-up to Push Out Old Guard I Fight Against Taliban," *Reuters World News*, 13 February 2018, accessed 10 March 2018, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-afghanistan-military/afghan-army-shake-up-to-push-out-old-guard-in-fight-against-taliban-idUSKCN1FX23I>.

threat environment and lack of training positions within the Air Force Academy hinders future capabilities of the AAF. The issues addressed in the Training section of this analysis highlight the numerous training requirements for pilot and maintenance candidates. Due to the lack of training opportunities, the AAF will not be able to provide the required aircrew to operate the aircraft nor the maintainers to maintain them. The lack of qualified personnel will impact future development of leaders by stagnating their career advancement based on operational requirements.

As new platforms are introduced the requirement to transition experienced personnel to new platforms will have to be done in a way that does not produce experience gaps in current platforms. One example was the transition of C-208 Instructor Pilots and Aircraft Commanders into the A-29.<sup>102</sup> The pilots were the most technically skilled and experienced in C-208 operations, which resulted in an experience gap within the C-208 community. This gap drove the necessity to upgrade crewmembers with less experience, which is directly linked to the cause of two C-208 crashes, resulting in the death of one pilot, one passenger, and the loss of two aircraft.<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>102</sup> Capt Eydie Sakura, “Afghan Air Force Receives First Four A-29 Attack Aircraft” Air Education and Training Command, 18 January 2016, accessed 10 March 2018, <http://www.aetc.af.mil/News/Article/643498/afghan-air-force-receives-first-four-a-29-attack-aircraft/>.

<sup>103</sup> Aviation Safety Network, “Data Base,” accessed 10 March 2018, <https://aviation-safety.net/database/record.php?id=20151012-1>; News24 Aviation, “Cessna 208B Grand Caravan Operated by Afghan Air Force was Crashed,” posted 14 October 2015, accessed 10 March 2018, <http://aviationnews24.com/2015/10/14/cessna-208b-grand-caravan-operated-by-afghan-air-force-was-crashed/>.

Are the right personnel in the right positions (skill set match)?

The AAF currently has their qualified aircrew and maintenance personnel in the correct positions for their operating capabilities, but must be cognizant of how they will move their experienced personnel to new platforms as they become operational. AAF personnel who are English proficient, meet mandatory physical requirements, and are technically qualified are considered for entry into flight and maintenance training programs. Once identified, these candidates go through a very lengthy vetting process, delaying their acceptance to participate in training programs outside of Afghanistan. While these candidates wait for their security vetting to be completed, they are often utilized elsewhere in the Afghan Wings filling positions in the Tashkil. Though this exposes them to AAF operations, they are not in training for their identified qualifications. Once approval is granted these individuals vacate the Tashkil position, leaving a new vacancy for awaiting AAF personnel or one that goes unfilled.<sup>104</sup>

### Facilities

Is there a lack of operations and maintenance?

The AAF received more facilities than required as a result of the drawdown of forces experienced in 2014. The gap in both operations and maintenance is currently filled by Coalition support and through CLS and OCS. Without this direct support, the AAF has significant gaps in their ability to conduct missions. Similar to the issues

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<sup>104</sup> During my time in Afghanistan it was practice for NATC-A to track the location of all candidates in the vetting process. Once cleared, the candidate would prepare for departure and training attendance. This often left gaps in other areas across the aviation enterprise requiring a degradation in mission capabilities in the respective function and increased training and advising in the area where the gap was created.

identified with the SMW and AAF, CLS support for the readiness of the aircraft.<sup>105</sup> The transition to the AAF will require significant contracting and acquisition advising and assistance to enable a successful transition from current contracts to local companies near the bases.

Is the problem caused, at least in part, by inadequate infrastructure?

The AAF has adequate infrastructure to support their current and expanding mission. Determination of force bed-down should consider types of platforms when determining basing locations. Infrastructure exists that currently support coalition forces. These structures may require modifications as the coalition forces transition the mission to the AAF.

#### AAF Analysis Summary

Current AAF Doctrine and strategic guidance is new and will have to be implemented from the top down. The introduction of the 4-Year Roadmap creates the requirement to ensure all doctrine is nested within this plan and can facilitate the Afghan government to meet their desired endstates. The AAF is already experiencing difficulties with conflicting doctrine that is producing inefficiencies and long-term costs that further hinder their ability to support their users. The AAF currently relies on coalition support for CAS and ISR, CLS, external training pipelines, and constant engagement with TAAC-A Advisors to conduct current operations. The AAF is currently undermanned and struggling to support current ANDSF operations. With the planned modernization of

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<sup>105</sup> IG DOD, DODIG-2018-058, 17-20.

the AAF platforms, ongoing operations will continue to challenge the AAF. The AAF will require Coalition support for many more years.

The AAF lacks the required technical and English proficiency training programs necessary to produce qualified pilots and maintenance personnel. Further, the AAF relies on ANA training facilities and positions for a number of their other functional requirements. These positions are often unfilled and or leaders have misidentified priority of student training resulting in the loss of the training. The AAF has worked with TAACA to produce Instructor Pilots capable of conducting recurrent and upgrade training across both the rotary and fixed wing platforms. The AAF does not contain the capability or capacity to perform organic pilot and maintenance training and relies on the coalition to fund and conduct external training pipelines to produce qualified personnel. As part of the 4-Year Roadmap, the AAF is adding new platforms that will fill gaps that are currently filled by coalition platforms. Unfortunately, the AAF will continue to experience capacity gaps due to the projected increase in aircraft inventory. The AAF currently operates 129 aircraft and the modernization plan has an end strength of 433 aircraft. This increase in platforms doubles the number of fixed-wing aircraft and almost quadruples the rotary-wing inventory. In this modernization the AAF loses the medium and heavy lift rotary wing capability provided by the Mi-17, resulting in a capability gap that will have to be offset by the UH-60 and other platforms. The introduction of these assets continues to increase the AAF's asymmetric advantage over the enemy.

Afghanistan leadership is currently in transition and continues to experience challenges with ethnic tensions, corruption, and political strife hindering progress and jeopardizing the success of achieving their desired endstates. Related to the AAF in

particular, the capacity issues generated by the introduction of new aircraft and the inability to produce technically skilled personnel to operate and maintain them will impact the ability to move experienced personnel into leadership positions. The AAF will have to rely on TAAC-A Advisors to assist with the development of leaders. The AAF challenge will be to determine how to capitalize on the experience of their junior officers without reducing their ability to conduct current operational and tactical missions.

As previously identified, the AAF will continue to be challenged by personnel issues. The current mission will require constant coalition support until a solution can be determined, implemented, and produce results that will enable the AAF to conduct their mission without augmentation. The AAF will have to be diligent in their force structure realignment to ensure their moves do not create experience gaps in preexisting platforms during the transition. Complementing these decisions will be the need to adequately address basing options for new platforms that utilize preexisting structures enabling a rapid transition and continued support of the ANDSF.

#### TAAC-A Analysis

As identified in chapter 2, TAAC-A is responsible for training, advising, and assisting the AAF in developing a professional, capable, and sustainable Air Force led by professional Afghan Airmen who are capable of planning, leading, employing, and sustaining decisive airpower operations.<sup>106</sup>

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<sup>106</sup> NATO, Resolute Support Afghanistan, “TAAC-A NATO.”

## Doctrine

Is there existing doctrine that addresses or relates to the business need? Is it Joint? Service?

Each Service has doctrine associated with the Train, Advise, and Assist mission. As of February, 2014, TAAC-A developed a plan nested within Operation Resolute Support, which aligns with the Afghan 4-Year Roadmap. The plan includes Lines of Effort and metrics for tracking the progress of the AAF capabilities and capacity as identified by the 2018 DoD IG report.<sup>107</sup> Additional doctrine and guidance referred to in the reviewed literature either remains classified or the redacted information that was exempt from mandatory disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act.

Are there operating procedures in place that are NOT being followed, which contribute to the identified need?

The analysis did not identify operational procedures violations but did determine that there lacked clear guidance and understanding of the plan that was in place and Lines of Effort among the different advising units. Steps have already been taken to correct this and ensure future inbound advisors understand their mission, nesting within higher headquarters plan, and objectives outlined as Lines of Effort including tracking the AAF through metrics.

## Organization

Where is the problem occurring? What organizations is the problem occurring with?

TAAC-A does not currently have an organizational structure that internally controls the production of initial pilot and maintenance personnel. Relying on external

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<sup>107</sup> IG DOD, DODIG-2018-058.

sources, such as A-29 training conducted at Moody Air Force Base, Georgia, to train candidates under the current construct, has produced a slow and inefficient pipeline.

Is the organization properly staffed and funded to deal with the issue?

TAAC-A currently has the support of 13 coalition partners conducting the train, advise, and assist mission within Afghanistan. Determination of increased number of advisors will have to be determined and elevated through NATO for Host Nation agreement. Operational Contract Support and CLS fill the current gaps. TAAC-A conducted a cost analysis comparing existing training pipelines to determine where savings can be produced and benefits to the training program can be identified.<sup>108</sup>

### Training

Is the issue caused, at least in part, by a complete lack of or inadequate training?

Training issues identified in January of 2018 have been corrected and implemented by TAAC-A and Air Education and Training Command. Quality control measures have been applied to ensure the Air Advisor Academy remains current with ongoing conditions in Afghanistan.

Does the training exist which addresses the issue?

Air Advisors attend the Air Advisor Academy for theater or location specific training. This training includes three functional areas:

1. Air-advising core skills.
2. Language, regional, and culture.

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<sup>108</sup> IG DOD, DODIG-2018-058, ii.



### 3. Advanced force-protection skills.<sup>109</sup>

Qualified Air Advisors complete platform-specific training needed for advising the AAF in the combat environment. Combined with their previous technical training and experience Air Advisors arrive in the Area of Operation to support the Geographic Combatant Command and NATO. Advisors from other coalition countries attend their country's version of training before arriving in Afghanistan.

#### Materiel

Is the issue caused, at least in part, by inadequate system or equipment?

Foreign Military Sales cases have been approved to fill the capability gaps currently conducted by coalition aircraft, and CLS contracts are in place to support. TAAC-A Advisors operate the same systems and equipment that are utilized by the AAF and assist in the development of Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures for their application in the operational environment.

#### Leadership and Education

United States military and some civilian leaders (Government Service) attend Air Advisor Academy and an additional in-country Key Leadership course. All Officers and Non-Commissioned Officers assigned to TAAC-A have attended rank equivalent professional military education training enhancing their ability to lead.

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<sup>109</sup> Maj Gen Michael A. Keltz, "Getting Our Partners Airborne: Training Air Advisors and Their Impact In-Theater," *Air and Space Power Journal* (May-June 2014): 5-28, accessed 10 March 2018, [http://www.airuniversity.af.mil/Portals/10/ASPJ/journals/Volume-28\\_Issue-3/SLP-Keltz.pdf](http://www.airuniversity.af.mil/Portals/10/ASPJ/journals/Volume-28_Issue-3/SLP-Keltz.pdf).

Does the leadership understand the scope of the problem?

TAAC-A leadership understands the scope of the problem with the AAF's ability to perform their mission in support of ANDSF. Additionally, leadership has directed studies to determine how future training can be conducted that is more cost effective and increases the benefit to the AAF. One area of concentration is how to restructure CLS contracts to allow for more interaction with AAF maintainers and begin the transition of those capabilities to the AAF.<sup>110</sup> TAAC-A has not determined the way ahead for reducing the reliance on CLS to maintain current operations or developed a plan similar to the United States Air Forces' skill-level qualification for enlisted personnel. TAAC-A has not prioritized the modification to current CLS contracts and development of Afghan maintenance personnel.<sup>111</sup>

Does the leadership have the resources  
at its disposal to correct the issue?

NATO has agreed to fund Operation Resolute Support through 2020, and addressed additional financial support beyond 2023. Additionally, NATO can coordinate with the Afghan Government to increase the number of TAAC-A advisors supporting the AAF and their increases in capabilities and capacity.

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<sup>110</sup> DOD, *Enhancing Security and Stability in Afghanistan*, 17.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*, 19.

### Personnel

Is the issue caused, at least in part, by inability or decreased ability to place qualified and trained personnel in the correct occupational specialties?

NATO has the participation of 13 countries supporting the TAAC-A mission and 100 nations providing support to the Afghan Government and their efforts. Coalition partners with expertise in their assigned areas fill TAAC-A positions for six months to one year. The coalition provides qualified advisors to fill positions across the aviation enterprise. Based on the experience level in these advisors' career fields and their military background, advisors are assigned to advise in their core areas. However, upon completion of the advisors deployment, they often do not return to Afghanistan in that role again. This creates a gap in continuity with AAF counterparts and wastes the training and experience gained during the deployment.

Are the right personnel in the right positions (skill set match)?

The selection process for Air Advisors is different with each country. As identified in the previous question all advisors are experienced in their core functions and bring their military experience to the advising mission. The individuals are selected for their exact specialties to fill deployed manning requirements. This is often a one for one swap for each position on a 6 to 12 month rotation. No deficiencies in the skill set match were determined during the literature review and analysis.

### Facilities

Is there a lack of operations and maintenance?

There are no known deficiencies in operations and maintenance that are not covered by CLS.

Is the problem caused, at least in part, by inadequate infrastructure?

Inadequate infrastructure is not a significant factor contributing to the problem under the current mission.

#### TAAC-A Analysis Summary

TAAC-A has recently implemented a plan to focus Advising efforts to support the Operation Resolute Support Plan. Though the actual Lines of Effort remain classified, the command is working to achieve those efforts and developed metrics to track the AAF's capabilities and capacity. TAAC-A is organizationally structured to support current missions and contract support augments Contract Logistic Support and training pipelines. Air Advisors assigned to TAAC-A receive adequate training from their home nations and additional training within the theater when required. TAAC-A operates the same equipment utilized by the AAF to conduct their mission. Leadership has excellent education and resources to perform their mission. NATO can expand the mission as required to meet the requests of the TAAC-A leadership through their partners and funding sources. Personnel are highly trained and competent in their designated technical skillsets to include leadership and management. TAAC-A has the infrastructure required to support the mission.

Stakeholders

Table 13. United States Objectives in Afghanistan

<b>United States Objectives in Afghanistan</b>
Objective No.1: Defeat threat posed by al Qa-ida
Objective No. 2: Support the ANDSF
Objective No. 3: Give the Afghan people the opportunity to succeed and stand on their own.
Objective No. 4: United States Counterterrorism Mission (Prevent Afghanistan from becoming a safe-haven for terrorists to plan attacks against U.S. homeland, U.S. interests overseas, and allies and partners).

*Source:* Department of Defense, *Enhancing Security and Stability in Afghanistan* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, June 2017), 7.

Table 14. NATO Operation Resolute Support Essential Functions

<b>NATO Operation Resolute Support Essential Functions</b>
Essential Function No. 1: Plan, Program, Budget, and Execute
Essential Function No. 2: Transparency, Accountability, and Oversight
Essential Function No. 3: Rule of Law
Essential Function No. 4: Force Generation
Essential Function No. 5: Sustain the Force
Essential Function No. 6: Plan, Resource, and Execute Effective Security Campaigns
Essential Function No. 7: Develop Sufficient Intelligence Capabilities and Processes
Essential Function No. 8: Maintain Internal and External Strategic Communications

*Source:* Department of Defense. *Enhancing Security and Stability in Afghanistan* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, June 2017), 10-13.

Table 15. Afghanistan’s Key Components of their 4-Year Roadmap

<b>Afghanistan’s Key Components of the 4-Year Roadmap</b>
Component No. 1: Double the Size of the Afghan Commando Kandaks
Component No. 2: Increase the Capabilities of the AAF
Component No. 3: Reduce corruption
Component No. 4: Professionalize the Afghan senior security leadership and training
Component No. 5: Create an environment that fosters unity of effort and command

*Source:* Department of Defense, *Enhancing Security and Stability in Afghanistan* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, June 2017), 30-31.

Table 16. Afghan Air Force Mission

<b>Afghanistan Air Force Mission</b>
Component No. 1: Provide Mobility Operations
Component No. 2: Provide Close Air Support

*Source:* NATO, Resolute Support Afghanistan, “Operation Resolute Support,” accessed 4 February 2018, [http://www.rs.nato.int/images/media/PDFs/RSM/20150204\\_aaf\\_trifold\\_finalpdf](http://www.rs.nato.int/images/media/PDFs/RSM/20150204_aaf_trifold_finalpdf).

Table 17. TAAC-A Priorities

<b>TAAC-A Priorities</b>
Priority No. 1: AAF personnel flow into training programs
Priority No. 2: Command and Control
Priority No. 3: Force management of flying hours program
Priority No. 4: Maintenance and logistics
Priority No.5: Fully Integration of aviation platforms

*Source:* Department of Defense, *Enhancing Security and Stability in Afghanistan* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, June 2017), 15-16.

The following table is a consolidated list of the Initial Personal Recommendations (R1) from chapter 1 and will be compared to the stakeholder’s objectives, essential functions, key components, mission and priorities from tables 13 through table 17. They are then cross-compared in table 19. R1: Initial Personal Recommendation Stakeholder Comparison.

Table 18. R1: Initial Personal Recommendations Consolidated List

Chief Decision Maker	R1: Initial Personal Recommendations Consolidated List
Commander of TAAC-A	Recommendation 1. Work with Afghan Air Force Commander of AAF to ensure doctrine being utilized at the tactical level is nested within the strategic level across the ANDSF.
Commander of TAAC-A	Recommendation 2. Develop doctrine that focuses on the integration of conventional and unconventional ANDSF.
Commander of Resolute Support	Recommendation 3. Determine the personnel requirements to meet increase in TAAC-A support required to train, advise, and assist the AAF.
Commander of Resolute Support	Recommendation 4. Coordinate with Host Nation for Status of Forces Agreement and increase in coalition forces required to support Recommendation 3.
Commander of TAAC-A	Recommendation 5. Consolidate AAF pilot training under TAAC-A utilizing the structure recommended in Figure 1. R1: Initial Personal Recommendation Organization Structure.
Commander of TAAC-A	Recommendation 6. Determine if the United States Air Force is the appropriate service to lead TAAC-A based on the significant increase in rotary wing platforms.
Commander of TAAC-A	Recommendation 7. Utilizing the structure recommended in Recommendations 3, 4, and 5, activate the single airframe pilot training program to train new pilots and maintainers.
Commander of TAAC-A	Recommendation 8. Increase English proficiency training availability for AAF Maintenance personnel.
Commander of TAAC-A	Recommendation 9. Relocate A-29 training from United States to Afghanistan to support Recommendation 5.
Commander of TAAC-A	Recommendation 10. Determine future medium to heavy lift requirements for ANDSF and recommend platform to Commander of Resolute Support.
Commander of TAAC-A	Recommendation 11. Develop multi-role options for C-208 platform to include gunship option.



Commander of TAAC-A	Recommendation 12. Request Foreign Military Sales purchase of AC-208 for AAF.
Afghan Air Force	Recommendation 13. Work with TAAC-A Senior Leaders to develop a Course of Action for detection, reporting, investigating, and prosecution of corruption.
Commander of TAAC-A	Recommendation 14. Assist and Advise the AAF Senior Leaders on Recommendation 13.
Commander of TAAC-A	Recommendation 15. Add advising objective to train, advise, and assist the AAF on Course of Action decided in Recommendation 13.
Commander of TAAC-A	Recommendation 16. Determine how the Afghan Air Force Academy can produce more English proficient candidates for Initial Pilot and maintenance training programs.
The United States Air Force	Recommendation 17. Research the development of a 4-year program for Air Advising in Afghanistan (Similar to AFPAK-HANDS and MSAS assignments) that will provide continuity and continued contact supporting Building Partner Capacity through the AAF.
Department of Defense	Recommendation 18. Combine advising efforts in Afghanistan in one Joint regionally aligned force.
Commander of TAAC-A	Recommendation 19. Determine location best suited to support increase in Advising mission as identified in Recommendations 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 16, and 18.

*Source:* Created by author.

Table 19. R1: Initial Personal Recommendation Stakeholder Comparison

R1 Initial Personal Recommendations Table 18.	U.S. Objectives Table 13.	NATO/ORS Essential Functions Table 14.	Afghan Key Components Table 15.	AAF Mission Figure Table 16.	TAAC-A Priorities Table 17.
Recommendation 1	1, 2, 3, 4	6, 8	1, 2, 4, 5	1, 2	1, 2, 5
Recommendation 2	1, 2, 3, 4	6, 7, 8	1, 2, 4, 5	1, 2	2, 3, 5
Recommendation 3	1, 2, 3, 4	1, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	1, 2	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
Recommendation 4	1, 2, 3, 4	4, 5, 8	2, 4, 5	1, 2	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
Recommendation 5	1, 2, 3, 4	1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 8	2	1, 2	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
Recommendation 6	2, 3	1, 4, 5, 6, 8	2, 4, 5	1, 2	1, 2, 3, 5
Recommendation 7	2, 3, 4	1, 2, 4, 5, 6	2	1, 2	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
Recommendation 8	2, 3	4, 5, 6	2, 3, 4	1, 2	1, 3, 4, 5
Recommendation 9	1, 2, 3, 4	1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 8	2	1, 2	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
Recommendation 10	1, 2, 3, 4	1, 2, 4, 5, 6	1, 2, 5	1, 2	1, 4, 5
Recommendation 11	1, 2, 3, 4	1, 5, 6, 7	2, 5	1, 2	1, 3, 4, 5
Recommendation 12	1, 2, 3, 4	1, 5, 6, 7	2, 5	1, 2	1, 3, 4, 5
Recommendation 13	3	2, 3, 6	3, 4, 5		2, 5
Recommendation 14	3	2, 3, 6	3, 4, 5		1, 2, 5
Recommendation 15	3	2, 3, 6	3, 4, 5		1, 2, 5
Recommendation 16	2, 3	1, 4, 5, 6, 8	2, 4, 5	1, 2	1, 3, 4, 5
Recommendation 17	2, 3	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8	2, 3, 4, 5	1, 2	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
Recommendation 18	1, 2, 3, 4	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	1, 2	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
Recommendation 19	2, 3	1, 2, 4, 5, 6	2, 4, 5	1, 2	1, 2, 3, 4, 5

Source: Created by author.

R2 Informed Position

R2 is the result of R1 evaluated utilizing the Research Model outlined in chapter 3. After conducting the literature review (conducted in chapter 2) and executing the analysis of both the AAF and TAAC-A (performed in the first part of this chapter), modifications to the original Initial Personal Recommendation (R1) are required. Those modifications are identified in table 20.

Table 20. R2: Informed Position

R1: Initial Personal Recommendations Consolidated List	R2: Informed Position Modifications
Recommendation 1. Work with Afghan Air Force Commander of AAF to ensure doctrine being utilized at the tactical level is nested within the strategic level across the ANDSF.	Combine Recommendations 1 and 2. Based on the combined effort of the Advisor and their assistance with Afghanistan’s 4-Year Roadmap. Reflect the need to continue the integration of requirements and capabilities as they become available to the ANDSF.
Recommendation 2. Develop doctrine that focuses on the integration of conventional and unconventional ANDSF.	See above.
Recommendation 3. Determine the Personnel requirements to meet increase in TAAC-A support required to train, advise, and assist the AAF.	Consideration of the size of force required to support the consolidation of a majority of the pilot and maintenance training inside Afghanistan is required to support the transition of the mission to the Afghan Air Force in the Future. Additional TAAC-A advisors and contractors will be needed to support the additional mission recommended.
Recommendation 4. Coordinate with Host Nation for Status of Forces Agreement and increase in coalition forces required to support Recommendation 3.	Consolidate with Recommendation 3.
Recommendation 5. Consolidate AAF pilot training under TAAC-A utilizing the	Location and unit depicted in Figure 1. R1. Initial Recommendation is

<p>Structure recommended in Figure 1. R1: Initial Personal Recommendation Organization Structure.</p>	<p>presented for framework and site must be determined in line with Recommendation 19.</p> <p>TAAC-A is currently conducting a study on internal and external training pipelines looking to identify cost savings and benefits. One recommended consideration is the ability to transition the mission to the AAF in the future.</p>
<p>Recommendation 6. Determine if the United States Air Force is the appropriate service to lead TAAC-A based on the significant increase in rotary wing platforms.</p>	<p>Requirements generated by rotary-wing platform selection and transition away from Mi-17s has left a gap in medium and heavy lift requirements. The lack of a platform capable of medium to heavy lift has generated the need to operate more rotary-wing aircraft to complete the current missions. Additionally, the selection of the UH-60 to support the ANDSF air movement of personnel, equipment and supplies, evacuate wounded or recover isolated personnel, mission command over extended ranges and complex terrain, and air assault missions will require more massive formations to accomplish these missions.<sup>112</sup> The United States Army executes the identified requirements for these platforms.</p>
<p>Recommendation 7. Utilizing the structure recommended in Recommendations 3, 4, and 5 activate the single airframe pilot training program to train new pilots and maintainers.</p>	<p>TAAC-A is reviewing internal and external training pipelines.<sup>113</sup> Combine with Recommendations 2, 3, 4, 8, and 9.</p>
<p>Recommendation 8. Increase English proficiency training availability for AAF Maintenance personnel.</p>	<p>Required to support Recommendation 7. Combine with Recommendations 2, 3, 4, 7, and 9.</p>

<sup>112</sup> Headquarters, Department of the Army (HQDA), Field Manual (FM) 3-04, *Army Aviation* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2015), accessed 14 May 2018, <https://fas.org/irp/doddir/army/fm3-04.pdf>.

<sup>113</sup> IG DOD, DODIG-2018-058, iv.

Recommendation 9. Relocate A-29 training from United States to Afghanistan to support Recommendation 5.	Provides the recently qualified AAF A-29 Instructor Pilots the ability to integrate within the training pipeline. Supports Recommendations 2, 3, 4, 7, and 8.
Recommendation 10. Determine future medium to heavy lift requirements for ANDSF and Recommend platform to Commander of Resolute Support.	Still a concern. Modify recommendation to reflect Resolute Support Staff conduct a study to determine future ANDSF medium and heavy lift requirements that cannot be filled by fixed-wing platforms. Once the gap is identified, recommend conducting a CBA to determine if an Urgent Operational Need is required.
Recommendation 11. Develop multi-role options for C-208 platform to include gunship option.	No changes. Similar to the Air Drop and Non-Traditional ISR missions added to the platform, the C-208 and available air crew provide a lost cost option to increased capabilities for the AAF mission to support the ANDSF with mobility operations and Close Air Support.
Recommendation 12. Request Foreign Military Sales purchase of AC-208 for AAF.	Delete. Foreign Military Sales purchase of 32 AC-208 <sup>114</sup> has been approved.
Recommendation 13. Work with TAAC-A Senior Leaders to develop a Course of Action for detection, reporting, investigating, and prosecution of corruption.	Combine Recommendations 13, 14, and 15. Include the requirement to develop senior leaders and officer development by having TAAC-A advisor utilize already developed Professional Military Education. Will require coordination with Headquarters Air Force, Secretary of the Air Force International Affairs Office, Air Force Security Assistance and Training Squadron for ITAR release.
Recommendation 14. Assist and Advise the AAF Senior Leaders on Recommendation 13.	Combine with Recommendations 13 and 15.
Recommendation 15. Add advising objective to train, advise, and assist the AAF on Course	Combine with Recommendations 13 and 14.

<sup>114</sup> DOD, *Enhancing Security and Stability in Afghanistan*, 55.

of Action decided in Recommendation 13.	
Recommendation 16. Determine how the Afghan Air Force Academy can produce more English proficient candidates for initial pilot and maintenance training programs.	Recommend TAAC-A add a priority to include the increased development of the Air Force Academy and recommend an organizational framework to support the requirements identified in Recommendations 5, 8, and 13. Additional consideration should be given to including an additional TAAC-A Squadron that can focus on the development of Professional Military Education programs and institutions.
Recommendation 17. Research the development of a 4-year program for Air Advising in Afghanistan (Similar to AFPAK-HANDS and MSAS assignments) that will provide continuity and continued contact supporting Building Partner Capacity through the AAF.	No changes. This model allows for continued engagement before, during, after deployments. Dedicates some advisors to the mission while reducing the number of pilots that will need to be trained on Afghan Platforms and then retrained on their primary weapons system when they return. This option provides continuity in deployment by dedicating a force of advisors on a rotational basis.
Recommendation 18. Combine advising efforts in Afghanistan in one Joint regionally aligned force.	Based on the research and decision in Recommendation 6, this will become essential if the United States Air Force will maintain the development of the Aviation Enterprise and Fixed wing platforms and the United States Army becomes the lead based on rotary wing requirements.
Recommendation 19. Determine location best suited to support increase in Advising mission as identified in Recommendations 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 16, and 18.	R1. Recommended Shindand Air Base as the location for implementing the Recommendations. Consideration should be given to current Operation RESOLUTE SUPPORT locations and facilities available.

Source: Created by author.

## Chapter Summary and Conclusion

The utilization of the ICD to analyze the AAF and TAAC-A mission across the DOTMLPF spectrum provided a holistic review of the available material. The recommendations from R1 combined with the results of the analysis in this chapter produced the Informed Position (R2). Through the analysis, the author has established that the AAF will require significant support to achieve their key objectives outlined in the 4-Year Roadmap. Afghanistan will require the United States' and NATO's continued support for the foreseeable future. The AAF currently lacks the resources required to increase their capacity and capabilities to support the ANDSF without the significant support provided by TAAC-A. TAAC-A's mission will have to evolve to meet the new requirements generated by the introduction of new platforms and mission sets. TAAC-A recently aligned their efforts with that of the Operation Resolute Support Plan and had nested their Lines of Effort to meet the objectives of the 4-Year Roadmap. TAAC-A is currently conducting studies to address the issues identified in the DoD IG Report from 2018.

The initial personal recommendations (R1), when viewed through the lens of the stakeholder, produced the modifications recommended in the Informed Position (R2). The R2 adjustments will deliver the Recommended Solution (R3) in chapter 5. Through the analysis, the following Secondary Research Questions were identified.

### Secondary Questions

1. What are the doctrinal changes required for AAF's utilization in combat operations that NATO and TAAC-A could assist the Afghan government with developing?

2. What organization structure changes will TAAC-A need to support the growing Air Advising mission in Afghanistan?
3. What training functional areas can TAAC-A provide the AAF that will posture them for success in the future?
4. What materiel will be required to conduct the Train, Advise, and Assist mission?
5. How can NATO and TAAC-A advise and assist AAF Leadership to be more efficient in the execution of their support to the ANDSF?
6. What personnel will be required to conduct the Train, Advise, and Assist mission?
7. What facilities will be required to support the Train, Advise and Assist mission?



## CHAPTER 5

### RECOMMENDATION AND CONCLUSIONS

In the previous chapter, the analysis of the AAF and TAAC-A was conducted across the DOTMLPF spectrum. An analysis of the stakeholders and their interests was then cross-compared to the author's Initial Personal Recommendations (R1). The combined analysis produced the author's Informed Position (R2). This chapter utilizes the R2 to produce the Recommend Solutions (R3) to be provided to the Chief Decision Makers (CDM). Additionally, this chapter provides recommendations for the CDMs, areas for further study, and the personal learning reflections of the author.

#### Recommended Solution (R3)

To produce the Recommended Solution (R3), the author conducted the analysis of R1 through the lens of the stakeholders to present recommendations through the lens of the (CDM). The CDMs identified in this thesis are the Department of Defense, Commander of Operation Resolute Support, United States Air Force, Air Education and Training Command, and Commander TAAC-A. When considered by the CDMs, the recommended solutions (R3) provide solutions to ensuring that NATO and U.S. advisors can support the growing AAF requirements generated by ANDSF and their missions conducting Internal Defense and Counter-Insurgency operations. Table 21 R3: Recommended Solutions is a consolidated list of the recommendations provided to the respective CDMs.

Table 21. R3: Recommended Solutions

CDM	R3: Recommended Solutions
Staff of RESOLUTE SUPPORT	Recommend conducting to determine ANDSF’s future heavy lift requirements - If gap is determined, assess current fixed-wing platform capabilities to conduct mission
Department of Defense	Recommend consolidating all Advising under one Joint Command
United States Air Force	Recommend developing 4-Year program for Air Advisor support to TAAC-A. This option should be structured similar to the Mobility Support Advising Squadrons and the 6 <sup>th</sup> Special Operations Squadron. Program should resemble Afghanistan-Pakistan HANDS enabling continuity and opportunity for long term relationship building
Commander of TAAC-A	Recommend conducting location study to determine where additional Advising Units could operate from (Considerations Operational Environment, Security and current Force Protection capabilities)
Commander of TAAC-A	Recommend including new Objective to plan covering development of AAF Senior Leaders (Utilization of PME and IMET programs either external or internal)
Commander of TAAC-A	Recommend developing a C-208 gunship option utilizing the installed jump door and a .50 caliber machine gun expanding the platforms multi-role capabilities with minimum requirements for additional training of AAF forces
Commander of TAAC-A	Recommend relocating A-29 initial training to Afghanistan
Commander of TAAC-A	Recommend comprehensive analysis to determine appropriate service lead for the Train, Advise, and Assist mission. Consideration should be given to platform selection and alignment with current service conducting the missions to be employed by the AAF.
Commander of TAAC-A	Recommend Force Structure in Figure 4. R3: Recommended TAAC-A Organizational Structure to allow for new alignment of training mission and additional personnel required to support ORS mission (Includes study on personnel requirement, HN coordination, and SOFA)

Source. Created by author.

### Recommendations for the Chief Decision Maker

The following recommendations are a combination of the author's experience and Professional Military Education received, Professional Body of Knowledge that exists on the AAF, United States Air Force, Joint Capabilities, Integration and Development System, Air Advising Mission, extensive literature review, and the analysis of that literature utilizing the Research Model.

The TAAC-A should establish an additional objective to include the continued development of AAF doctrine that reflects the integration of ANDSF requirements and AAF Capabilities as they become available. This doctrine should integrate ANDSF strategic level conventional and unconventional missions. TAAC-A Advisors should advise AAF Senior Leaders on how to develop their doctrine and implement it throughout their Air Force.

Commander of TAAC-A should determine the personnel requirements necessary to provide continued support to the AAF with a focus on education and training of technically qualified aircrew and maintenance personnel. Consideration should be given to consolidating pilot and maintenance training within Afghanistan enabling AAF Instructors and Maintenance personnel to integrate within the training program for future transition to organic capabilities within the AAF. The Coalition and Operational Contract Support can provide additional TAAC-A personnel until the AAF can accomplish their training mission without assistance. Commander of Operation Resolute Support coordination with Host Nation will be required to increase TAAC-A personnel and Status of Forces Agreement may need to be addressed. Further, research needs to be accomplished and combined with the results of TAAC-A's study on internal and external

training pipelines.<sup>115</sup> Consideration should be given to including a single airframe pilot training program for Initial Flight Screening and utilizing the C-208 for fixed wing and the MD-530 for rotary wing Unqualified Pilot Training, similar to the program used from 2010-2014 at Shindand Air Base. The single aircraft pilot training program received ITAR release in August of 2014. This program and the MD-530 program present the best option for organic pilot generation and reduced cost based on current platforms. The selection of the C-208 and MD-530 are the correct choice based on the current fleet, established maintenance and logistics, and the number of available platforms available. Additional consideration should be given to reinstating the English proficiency program utilized during the same time and include Afghan leadership and maintenance personnel requiring initial, refresher and advanced language training.

Commander of TAAC-A should consider the structure of the forces represented in Figure 4. R3: Recommended TAAC-A Organizational Structure. The graphic depicts the addition of a Flight (identified as 438 AEW AAF Training Flight) that can focus on and assist the AAF Academy in developing a program that produces English proficient and technically qualified candidates for follow-on aircrew and maintenance training. The graphic depicts the addition of an Air Expeditionary Advising Group (identified as 838 AEAG) that can focus on the training of AAF operators and maintenance personnel.

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<sup>115</sup> DOD, *Enhancing Security and Stability in Afghanistan*, 27.

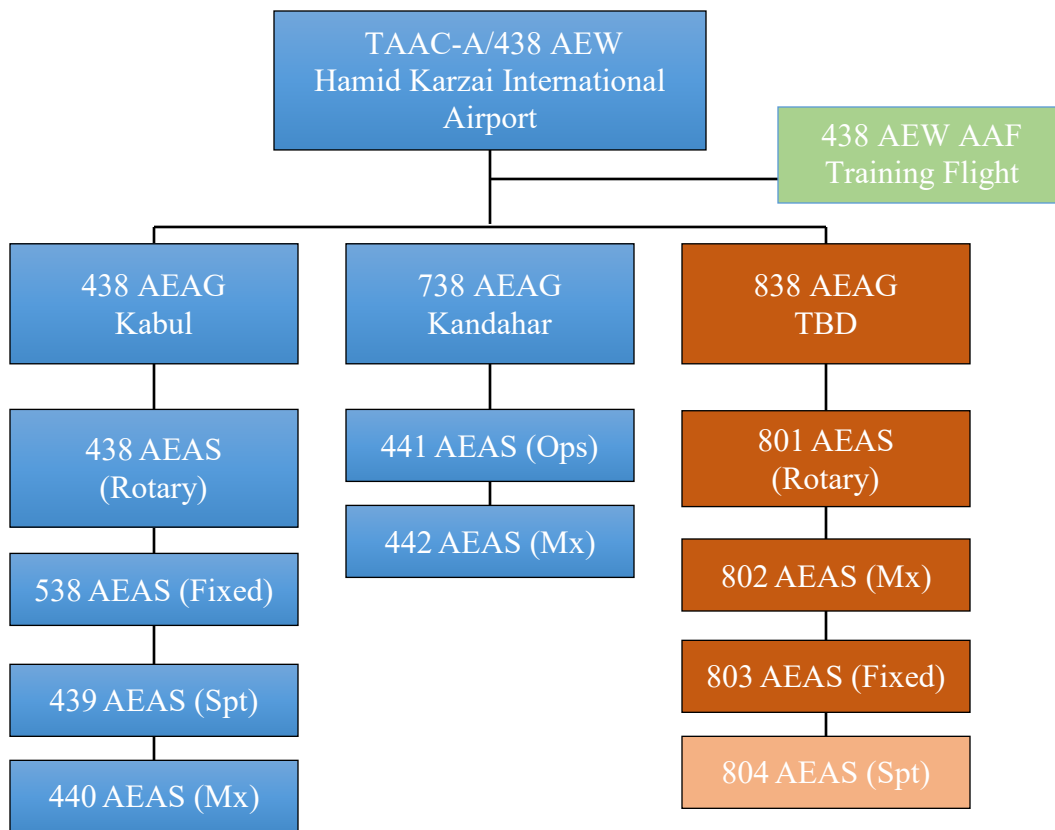


Figure 4. R3: Recommended TAAC-A Organizational Structure

Source: Created by author.

TAAC-A should conduct a comprehensive analysis to determine if the United States Air Force is the appropriate service to lead the train, advise, and assist mission with the AAF. Due to the selection of the UH-60 to replace the Mi-17 in Afghanistan, the AAF will continue to be rotary wing heavy and require more aircraft to conduct the current mission. The United States Army is responsible for performing the Air Assault and Rotary Wing Forward-Firing CAS mission.

TAAC-A should consider relocating the A-29 training from the United States to Afghanistan. On-going efforts to qualify the first AAF A-29 Instructor Pilots support the use of this program as the benchmark for future AAF operational pilot training programs. Many of the AAF A-29 pilots were the initial cadre of Pilot Instructor Training graduates that were responsible for conducting Initial Flight Screening and Undergraduate Pilot Training in the Afghan Pilot Training Schoolhouse located at Shindand Air Base. By gaining ITAR release for the A-29 training program, through the Air Force Security Assistance and Training Squadron, TAAC-A could integrate AAF Instructor Pilots into the training of future A-29 pilots.

Operation Resolute Support staff should conduct a study to determine future ANDSF medium to heavy lift requirements for rotary wing platforms. Upon completion of the study recommend accomplishing a CBA to access capabilities of current fixed wing platforms and determine requirements for an Urgent Operational Needs request if required.

TAAC-A should consider adding to the C-208s multi-role capability by adding a gunship option. Utilization of the jump door equipped aircraft combined with a floor mounted rig for a .50 caliber machine gun would provide immediate CAS and increased loiter time over rotary wing aircraft. The utilization of the C-208 offers additional options for supporting ANDSF requiring CAS.

TAAC-A should include another objective focused on the development of AAF Senior Leaders, which supports the Afghan 4-Year Roadmap Plan Key Component 4. Utilizing the 438 AEW AAF Training Flight to conduct the training and continued advising and assisting provided by TAAC-A advisors will enable the accomplishment of

the task to develop Senior Afghan Leaders. Additionally, the International Military, Education, and Training program should be revised to include more Senior Afghan Leaders.

The United States Air Force should develop a 4-year program based on the current AFPAK-HANDS program and Mobility Support Advising Squadrons. This approach will allow for continued engagement and continuity throughout the advising mission. By selecting Air Force personnel to participate in this mission, the Air Force will reduce the required training associated with Air Advisor Qualification and the multiple numbers of Aircraft qualifications required under the current model. Additionally, this model provides continuous support, enabling a rotational force that is supported by a United States based unit capable of deploying, conducting TDYs and development of the supported programs while at home station. This model provides the continuity, continued contact, and displays the commitment to building partner nation capacity.

The Department of Defense should determine if the results of these recommendations mentioned above justify the requirement to combine efforts under a Joint Command dedicated to supporting Afghanistan and the development of their AAF. Determination of the lead service will provide the necessary framework for supporting the development of their Aviation Enterprise and the support required to increase their capabilities and capacity to support the ANDSF.

TAAC-A should include a location study to determine where additional Advisor Units could operate inside Afghanistan to support the consolidation of AAF training and integration of AAF Instructor Pilots and maintenance personnel. Consideration should be

given to current security environment, facilities, airspace available, pre-existing and ongoing training programs, aviation enterprise capabilities to support additional sorties, and maintenance and logistics support.

### Recommendations for Further Study

First, policy was not addressed in this thesis. The Recommended Solutions (R3) will require continued analysis as the number of stakeholders and political influence could have significant impacts on NATO and TAAC-A to conduct their Train, Advise, and Assist mission with the AAF. Further research must be undertaken to include the current security environment and the impacts on TAAC-A's ability to conduct the mission.

Second, a follow-on study should be conducted to include literature and information available above the unclassified level. This thesis is the foundation for that research and provides a structure that can be modified to display the results of this advanced study.

Third, NATO should evaluate the current timeline and funding for Operation Resolute Support. Consideration should be given to the Afghan government's ability to produce aircrew members and maintenance personnel and the ability for the AAF to operate without assistance by the current deadline of 2020. This analysis could determine that an extended timeline is required to enable mission success and by identifying this now, it would produce a more realistic timetable and provide the Afghan government with the support necessary to continue to build their capability and capacity.

Finally, further analysis of the assumptions and their vulnerabilities should be researched utilizing the Assumption-Based Planning Process.



## Assumption-Based Planning

Assumptions-Based Planning aims to identify vulnerabilities within assumptions. Identifying assumptions assists an organization throughout the planning phase and is used to develop a planning horizon. This planning horizon can be used to provide the opportunity to execute the plan now and monitor for changes that impact the plan in the future. In this thesis, the planning horizon can be identified as end of current funding by NATO in 2020. Identifying the vulnerability of the assumptions, either to the planning horizon itself, plausibility of the planning horizon, and or how the assumption is nested within the plans becomes critical knowledge for planners.<sup>116</sup>

This knowledge affords planners the opportunity to highlight points where changes in vulnerability can occur related to the assumptions. This provides the opportunity to identify organizational action, or in-action, may lead to failure of the assumption or provide the necessary knowledge to develop an alternate Course of Action when the vulnerability becomes true. The use of Assumption-Based Planning enables planners and CDMs to execute an incomplete plan in uncertain conditions.<sup>117</sup>

Afghanistan's security environment and NATO's timeline challenges TAAC-A advisors to successfully complete their mission within the planning horizon. By researching and then applying Assumptions Based Planning to the assumptions identified in chapter 1, planners and CDMs can identify which assumption is most vulnerable and which one would cause failure of the Recommended Solutions (R3) and the overall plan. In this

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<sup>116</sup> James A. Dewar, Carl H. Builder, William M. Hix, and Morlie H. Levin, *Assumption-Based Planning: A Planning Tool for Very Uncertain Times* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 1993), xii-xv.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid.

thesis, the assessment of the AAF not having enough technically qualified personnel to operate the equipment has significant impact on tier ability to support the ANDSF. This lack of personnel has direct impact on all assumptions and the provided Recommended Solutions (R3).

### Personal Learning Reflection

By researching this thesis, the author has made substantial progress in the understanding of the AAF, NATO and United States Advising in support of the AAF, the CBA, JCIDS and ICD processes and how integrated the DOTMLPF-P spectrum can be. The research produced an understanding that under the NATO's current approach to advising the AAF, they will fall short of accomplishing their mission by 2020. Additionally, the author learned that there is no simple solution to complex problems and that utilization of timelines in strategies only further complicates mission success. Further appreciation was gained for the Research Methodology exercised in this thesis. This methodology allows one to determine requirements, assess current capabilities, and provide solutions to the CDMs to mitigate shortfalls in a structured and controlled approach.

This thesis has provided the author with the ability to contribute to the overall effort in determining the NATO's approach to advising the AAF in their efforts to support the ANDSF and their ability to conduct Internal Defense and Counter-Insurgency Operations.

Finally, the author has strengthened his sincere appreciation for professional research, research methodology, capability-based assessments, gained the knowledge of how to conduct research utilizing Joint processes with the hope to develop as a

professional military officer and potentially use the experience gained in the Joint environment.

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