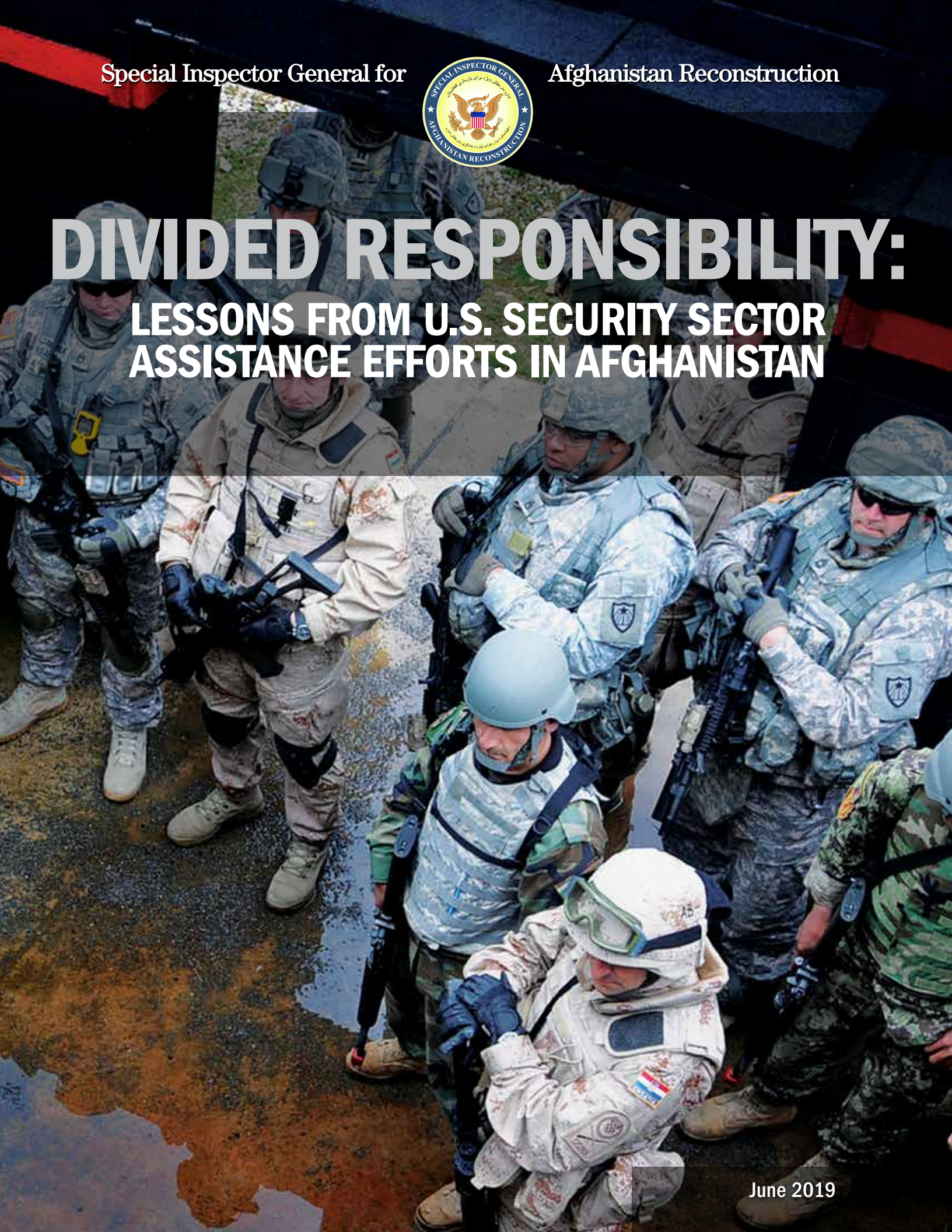


Special Inspector General for



Afghanistan Reconstruction

# DIVIDED RESPONSIBILITY: LESSONS FROM U.S. SECURITY SECTOR ASSISTANCE EFFORTS IN AFGHANISTAN



June 2019







Special Inspector General  
for Afghanistan Reconstruction

*Divided Responsibility: Lessons from U.S. Security Sector Assistance Efforts in Afghanistan* is the sixth lessons learned report to be issued by the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction. This report follows and expands upon a previous lessons learned report, *Reconstructing the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces: Lessons from the U.S. Experience in Afghanistan*. Specifically, *Divided Responsibility* examines the patchwork of security sector assistance programs undertaken by dozens of U.S. entities and international partners to develop the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces (ANDSF), Ministry of Defense (MOD), and Ministry of Interior (MOI) since 2001.

The report uses the Afghan experience to identify lessons that can inform U.S. policies and actions through each phase of a security sector assistance engagement in a foreign country. The report also provides recommendations for improving the impact of such efforts. These lessons are relevant for ongoing efforts in Afghanistan, where the United States may remain engaged for years to come, and for future efforts to rebuild security forces in states emerging from protracted conflict.

Our findings highlight the difficulty of conducting security sector assistance during active combat and the challenges of coordinating the efforts of an international coalition. In Afghanistan, no single person, agency, military service, or country had ultimate responsibility for all U.S. and international activities to develop the ANDSF, MOD, and MOI. The mission also lacked an enduring and comprehensive plan to guide its efforts. For the United States, security sector assistance activities largely rested with the U.S. military; however, no Department of Defense (DOD) organization or military service was assigned ownership of key aspects of the mission. Responsibilities for developing the ANDSF's capabilities were divided among multiple agencies and services, each of which assigned these tasks to advisors usually deployed for a year or less.

Unlike traditional U.S. security sector assistance activities conducted bilaterally through the U.S. Embassy, the United States' efforts in Afghanistan were conducted multilaterally under a NATO mission. This has had benefits and drawbacks. While it distributed the burden of building Afghan security forces among several nations, it complicated coordination of the effort, both internationally and among U.S. agencies. Moreover, even within the military command, the dual-hatted U.S.-NATO commander did not have absolute authority over how the ANDSF was trained and advised in different parts of Afghanistan. This created asymmetries in ANDSF development and impeded the standardization of security sector assistance programs.

This report also highlights positive steps taken by Congress, DOD, and the military services to improve security sector assistance in Afghanistan. For example, DOD's Ministry of Defense Advisors program has been largely effective in its development and deployment of civilian experts to advise the Afghan MOD and MOI. In addition, the U.S. Army has taken initial steps with its Security Force Assistance Brigades by incorporating combat advisor teams into its military structure. Both of these initiatives addressed critical deficiencies in the U.S. approach to security sector assistance.

SIGAR began its lessons learned program in late 2014 at the urging of General John Allen, Ambassador Ryan Crocker, and other senior officials who had served in Afghanistan. Lessons learned reports such as this one comply with SIGAR's legislative mandate to provide independent and objective leadership and recommendations to promote economy, efficiency, and effectiveness; prevent and detect waste, fraud, and abuse; and inform Congress and the Secretaries of State and Defense about reconstruction-related problems and the need for corrective action.

Congress created SIGAR as an independent agency. Unlike most inspectors general, SIGAR is not housed inside any single department. SIGAR is the only inspector general focused solely on the Afghanistan mission, and the only one devoted exclusively to reconstruction issues. While other inspectors general have jurisdiction over the programs and operations of their respective departments or agencies, SIGAR has jurisdiction over all programs and operations supported with U.S. reconstruction dollars, regardless of the agency involved. Because SIGAR has the authority to look across the entire reconstruction effort, it is uniquely positioned to identify and address whole-of-government lessons.

Our lessons learned reports synthesize not only the body of work and expertise of SIGAR, but also that of other oversight agencies, government entities, current and former officials with on-the-ground experience, academic institutions, and independent scholars. The reports document what the U.S. government sought to accomplish, assess what it achieved, and evaluate the degree to which these efforts helped the United States reach its reconstruction goals in Afghanistan. They also provide recommendations to address the challenges stakeholders face in ensuring efficient, effective, and sustainable reconstruction efforts, not just in Afghanistan, but in future contingency operations.

SIGAR's Lessons Learned Program comprises subject matter experts with considerable experience working and living in Afghanistan, aided by a team of seasoned research analysts. I want to express my deepest appreciation to the team members who produced this report. I thank the report team: James Cunningham, *Divided Responsibility* project lead; Zachary Martin, senior analyst; Brittany Gates, Samantha Hay, and Ashley Schortz, research analysts; and Brian Tarpley, student trainee. I also thank Nikolai Condee-Padunov, program manager; Tracy Content, editor; Vong Lim, senior visual information specialist; and Joseph Windrem, Lesson Learned Program director. In producing its reports, the program also uses the significant skills and experience found in SIGAR's Audits, Investigations, and Research and Analysis directorates, and the Office of Special Projects. I thank all of the individuals who provided their time and effort to contribute to this report.

In addition, I am grateful to the many U.S. government and military officials at the U.S. Army, U.S. Marine Corps, U.S. Air Force, U.S. Navy, Joint Chiefs of Staff, Defense Security Cooperation Agency, Office of the Secretary of Defense, and Department of State, and international partners at the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, who provided valuable insights and feedback. This report is truly a collaborative effort meant to not only identify problems, but also to learn from them and propose reasonable solutions to improve future reconstruction efforts.

I believe lessons learned reports such as this will be a key legacy of SIGAR. Through these reports, we hope to reach a diverse audience in the legislative and executive branches, at the strategic and programmatic levels, both in Washington and in the field. By leveraging our unique interagency mandate, we intend to do everything we can to make sure the lessons from the most ambitious reconstruction effort in U.S. history are identified, acknowledged, and, most importantly, remembered and applied not just to reconstruction efforts in Afghanistan, but also to future conflicts and reconstruction efforts elsewhere in the world.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John F. Sopko', with a long, sweeping horizontal stroke extending to the right.

John F. Sopko  
Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

After 17 years of U.S. involvement in Afghanistan and security-related U.S. appropriations totaling \$83.3 billion (approximately 63 percent of the nearly \$133 billion of U.S. reconstruction funding), there is not one person, agency, country, or military service that has had sole responsibility for overseeing security sector assistance (SSA).<sup>1</sup> Instead, the responsibility for security sector assistance was divided among multiple U.S. and international entities. This report examines how these divides had unintended consequences and created challenges to the effectiveness of the mission, as well as some benefits.

While the dual-hatted U.S.-NATO commander is largely responsible for reconstructing the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces (ANDSF), the Ministry of Defense (MOD), and the Ministry of Interior (MOI), the commander has no direct authority over civilian actors operating within embassies, the European Union, and other international organizations. Moreover, the commander does not have absolute authority to dictate the exact methods and activities NATO countries use to train and advise the ANDSF in different parts of Afghanistan. Rather the commander provides overarching guidance and coordinates the countries' various activities. This has created asymmetries in ANDSF development and has impeded the standardization of security sector assistance programs.

This report also highlights how the unity of command and effort was strained because no U.S. executive branch department or military service had full ownership of key components of the mission, responsibility for assessing progress toward meeting U.S. strategic objectives, or accountability for vetting and deploying experts to accomplish mission tasks. Within the NATO-led coalition, the United States implemented a patchwork of SSA activities and programs involving dozens of U.S. government entities and international partner nations.

In addition, the lack of institutional focus on developing a cadre of SSA professionals and the short-term nature of deployments created serious staffing challenges. For most of the conflict, the United States and NATO have deployed individual advisors or pickup training teams and assigned them to frequently shifting and temporary military command structures in Afghanistan. Most of these advisors came from backgrounds unrelated to advising foreign security forces and were often underprepared for their tours of duty. In addition, since these advisors and ad hoc training teams typically deployed for only six to 12 months, they had little opportunity to establish long-term rapport with their Afghan counterparts or take ownership of multi-year SSA programs. Following their deployments, most returned to unrelated careers.

In 2017, SIGAR published a lessons learned report, *Reconstructing the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces: Lessons from the U.S. Experience in Afghanistan*, which focused on the U.S. effort to develop the ANDSF. That report found:

- The U.S. government was ill-prepared to conduct SSA programs of the size and scope required in Afghanistan. The lack of commonly understood terms, concepts, and models undermined interagency communication and coordination, damaged trust, intensified frictions, and contributed to under-resourcing of the U.S. effort to develop the ANDSF.
- Initial U.S. plans for Afghanistan focused solely on U.S. military operations and did not include the construction of an Afghan army, police, or supporting institutions.
- Critical ANDSF capabilities, including aviation, intelligence, and special forces, were not included in early U.S., Afghan, and NATO force design plans.
- The lag in developing Afghan ministerial and security sector governing capacity hindered planning, oversight, and the long-term sustainability of the ANDSF.
- Providing advanced weapons and management systems to a largely illiterate and undereducated force without also providing the appropriate training and institutional infrastructure created long-term dependencies, required increased U.S. financial support, and hampered efforts to make the ANDSF self-sustaining.<sup>2</sup>

*Divided Responsibility* is a follow-on report that builds on SIGAR's earlier work.

As retired Lt. Gen. David Barno observed:

Arguably, the greatest flaw in our 21st-century approach to [counterinsurgency] is our inability to marshal and fuse efforts from all the elements of national power into a unified whole. This failure has resulted in an approach akin to punching an adversary with five outstretched fingers rather than one powerful closed fist.<sup>3</sup>

As this report shows, his concerns are just as applicable to SSA.

This report's five main chapters examine each of the core functions of the SSA mission in Afghanistan: field advising, ministerial advising, equipping the force, U.S.-based training, and coordination with NATO. In addition to identifying key stakeholders responsible for these efforts, each chapter examines how personnel were selected, trained, and organized to carry out each function. Where applicable, we identify coordination challenges and best practices. Each chapter ends with a list of key findings and recommendations specific to the core function being discussed. Essays between chapters provide a snapshot of specific coordination and synchronization issues. The conclusion, lessons, and recommendations comprise the final chapter. While each chapter can be read as a stand-alone product, taken together they illustrate the disjointed and complex matrix of activities the United States undertook to develop and support the ANDSF and the ministries that oversee it.

The introductory chapter examines the importance of security sector assistance to the success of all reconstruction activities, including economic development, building government capacity, and stabilization. However, understanding the United States'

approach to security sector assistance faces definitional challenges. While the term “security sector assistance” encompasses all U.S. government activities to develop a partner nation’s security forces and supporting ministries, many U.S. executive branch agencies use alternative terms to describe similar programs and activities. The introduction also covers the history of U.S. security sector assistance from the Revolutionary War to the post-9/11 era and the Global War on Terror.

Chapter 2 examines how the U.S. Army and U.S. Marine Corps deployed military advisors to train, advise, and accompany Afghan National Army (ANA) units at the tactical and operational level. The U.S. military’s approach to field advising underwent four iterations, each designed to improve on prior efforts. Despite these efforts, the U.S. military continues to struggle with staffing units, providing tailored predeployment training, and retaining personnel long enough to maintain expertise and long-term relationships with ANDSF partners. This chapter also discusses the selection and training of U.S. air advisors to the Afghan Air Force. Since most U.S. advisors were deployed individually or to temporary units, consistent historical data was often difficult or impossible to obtain. This chapter’s findings rely heavily on interviews conducted by SIGAR, the Center for Army Lessons Learned, the Government Accountability Office, and other government organizations. The essay following this chapter highlights the lack of coordination between the field advising and air advising missions, which at times resulted in advisors providing contradictory guidance.

Chapter 3 focuses on the U.S. advisory mission at the Afghan Ministries of Defense and Interior. While ground-based forces focused on improving Afghan war-fighting capabilities, U.S. advisors at the ministerial level were focused on developing systems and policies to govern the force. In Afghanistan, where literacy rates are low and education is limited, it was nearly impossible to recruit the necessary staff. Instead, U.S. advisors often performed critical functions themselves, such as developing policy, budgets, and human resources, and managing the design of the forces—rather than actually advising Afghans on how to do it. Moreover, the U.S. military had limited to no capability to train its own military officers on how to advise at the ministerial level, which resulted in untrained and underprepared U.S. military officers advising the highest echelons of both ministries. To address this issue, the U.S. Department of Defense (DOD) created the Ministry of Defense Advisors (MODA) program in 2010. MODA deployed civilian experts who received extensive predeployment training and served longer tours. However, MODA advisors never accounted for more than 15 percent of the advisory mission. The essay following this chapter discusses the evolution of command-and-control responsibilities for the SSA mission and the lack of a command structure linking advisors at the ministries and in the field.

Chapter 4 describes how the United States equipped the ANDSF and examines the effectiveness of equipping decisions. Specifically, the chapter considers the benefits and drawbacks of the equipping process used in Afghanistan and whether the right people and organizations were tasked with making equipping decisions. While the foreign military sales process used in Afghanistan allowed the United States to rapidly equip



the ANDSF, the United States often provided equipment without adequate training and sustainment, and provided equipment that did not meet ANDSF-identified needs. The essay that follows identifies the challenges associated with an equipping process that did not consistently integrate ministerial and operational advisory efforts.

Chapter 5 examines efforts to bring ANDSF personnel to the United States to receive advanced professional training. Since 2003, more than 3,000 ANDSF students have attended training in the United States, at a cost of approximately \$112.6 million.<sup>4</sup> While the U.S. Department of State traditionally authorized the training of foreign military personnel at U.S. military schools, in the 1980s Congress began to give DOD that authority, in coordination with State. But because DOD and State face challenges tracking alumni of U.S. training programs, they struggle to evaluate the effectiveness of U.S.-based training programs. While one of the primary goals of such programs is to build professional relationships with foreign military officers that will last as former students rise through the ranks, only 13 of the thousands of ANDSF students trained in the United States have risen to “positions of prominence” (loosely defined as senior ministerial officials or general officers), a key metric used to evaluate the impact of U.S.-based training.<sup>5</sup> While U.S.-based training programs were successful in professionalizing the ANDSF, Afghan military students absconded from training at a higher rate than students from any other country, putting the sustainability of U.S.-based training programs at risk. The essay that follows identifies best practices gleaned from the U.S. Air Force’s A-29 aviation program in choosing and developing advisors, making equipment and sustainment decisions, and linking U.S.-based aviation training with U.S. aviation training programs in Afghanistan.

Chapter 6 focuses on how the United States worked with NATO and the challenges related to NATO’s involvement in Afghanistan, such as strained unity of command and effort, varying restrictions placed by coalition nations on the use of their forces, and the lack of standardized predeployment training. This chapter also describes the various ways the United States enabled NATO’s involvement by providing coalition nations with financial support and, on occasion, providing intelligence and close air support for their advisors. Finally, this chapter examines the ways the United States could have better leveraged the support of other NATO countries. The essay following discusses the fractures in the U.S. and international effort to develop the ANDSF. Since 2001, there has been no command-and-control relationship between the most senior U.S. military commander in Afghanistan and the U.S. ambassador, nor is there an enduring mechanism in place to ensure effective coordination between the United States and other countries and international organizations.

While each chapter concludes with a list of key findings for each topic, below is a list of the major findings from this report:

1. No single person, agency, military service, or country has ultimate responsibility for or oversight of all U.S. and international activities to develop the ANDSF and the Ministries of Defense and Interior. Instead, the NATO-led Resolute Support

Mission relies on command directives and orders to provide overarching guidance and less formal mechanisms, such as weekly operations and intelligence briefings between Resolute Support and U.S. Forces – Afghanistan (USFOR-A), to coordinate military activities.

2. SSA efforts in Afghanistan have been hindered by the lack of clear command-and-control relationships between the U.S. military and the U.S. Embassy, as well as between ministerial and tactical advising efforts. This has resulted in disjointed efforts to develop ANDSF capabilities.
3. There is no formal mechanism to resolve conflicts between SSA activities led by the United States through the Combined Security Transition Command – Afghanistan (CSTC-A), and those conducted by other national embassies, international governmental organizations, or nongovernmental organizations working directly with the Afghan government. While international working groups and coordination boards have been created to resolve conflicts, they are often temporary and lack authority.
4. The SSA mission in Afghanistan lacked an enduring, comprehensive, expert-designed plan that guided its efforts. As a result, critical aspects of the advisory mission were not unified by a common purpose, nor was there a clear plan to guide equipping decisions over time.
5. DOD organizations and military services were often not assigned ownership of key aspects of the SSA mission. Responsibilities for developing ANDSF capabilities were divided among multiple agencies and services, each of which provided advisors who were usually deployed for no longer than one year.
6. Most predeployment training did not adequately prepare advisors for their work in Afghanistan. Training did not expose advisors to Afghan systems, processes, weapons, culture, and doctrine. It also did not expose advisors to other parts of the advisory efforts, nor did it link advisors who operated at different tactical, operational, and ministerial levels.
7. The U.S. government has taken incremental steps to improve SSA activities, such as creating the MODA program, implementing core aspects of defense institution building, and deploying advisor units like the Security Force Assistance Brigades (SFAB). However, these capabilities have not been fully realized.
8. The United States has not adequately involved the Afghans in key decisions and processes. As a result, the United States has implemented systems that the Afghans will not be able to maintain without U.S. support.
9. The NATO command structure had benefits and drawbacks. While NATO's command structure broadened international military SSA coordination, it complicated U.S. interagency coordination.

## LESSONS

This report identifies 10 lessons to inform U.S. policies and actions to improve the U.S. mission in Afghanistan and to better prepare for future SSA operations. These lessons are derived from the U.S. experience in Afghanistan but can be applied to any current SSA operation or at the start of any future SSA activities.

1. The lack of a comprehensive and consistent long-term plan to train, advise, assist, and equip a partner nation's military and security forces results in misalignment of advisors and ad hoc decision-making.
2. Conducting SSA activities while the United States is engaged in major combat operations fractures the traditional way the United States develops partner forces and creates a disjointed command-and-control relationship between the U.S. military and civilian leadership. A long-term vision is required in order to transfer responsibility from the senior military commander back to the embassy and ambassador.
3. SSA missions that involve NATO require a plan to improve coordination among all international stakeholders involved in the development of the host nation's defense and security forces.
4. Unless there is a plan to transition responsibilities to a partner nation, the foreign military sales process used in Afghanistan will likely limit the institutional development of a partner nation as well as that nation's ownership of and responsibility for its own resources.
5. U.S. financing of partner nation security forces may be a continued requirement even as their capabilities improve.
6. Creating professional military advisors requires long-term assignments, proper incentives, and the ability to refine advisor skills through multiple deployments and training cycles.
7. Advisors are best prepared when they are selected based on technical expertise, are trained and vetted for their ability to advise, and when they receive predeployment training focused on the partner nation's military structures, processes, culture, and equipment.
8. Filling advisor requirements strains the U.S. military and civilian agencies, as advisors are typically in high demand, yet there are very few trained and readily available. Special hiring authority allows the United States to recruit and retain civilian specialists and fill advisor requirements.
9. Equipping partner forces requires determining the capabilities the United States will train and advise on for the long term, versus those capabilities the United States will assist with in the short term to help the host nation reduce or remove a particular threat. Failure to determine this will result in equipping a partner nation with capabilities it may not need or be able to sustain.
10. Failure to establish lead organizations with unified command over SSA from the ministerial to tactical levels results in an inability to identify needs, fragmented command and control, and limited accountability and oversight.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Because SSA in Afghanistan has evolved from a secondary mission supporting counterinsurgency operations to serving as the cornerstone of the U.S. military effort in Afghanistan today, SIGAR provides actions that can be undertaken by Congress and executive branch agencies to improve the effectiveness of SSA activities. This report provides recommendations in each of its major chapters on ways to improve actions related to a specific core function. At the conclusion of this report, SIGAR provides overarching recommendations to improve coordination among U.S. agencies and other coalition nations.

### **Overarching Recommendations**

1. The Office of the Secretary of Defense for Policy (OSD-Policy), in coordination with the U.S. Central Command, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Defense Security Cooperation Agency (DSCA), State, and the National Security Council, should lead an interagency review to determine the long-term SSA posture for Afghanistan based on current and long-term programming. This review should determine if the United States will continue to engage in SSA activities as part of a NATO-led coalition, or if it will transition to a more conventional model led by the U.S. Embassy.
2. USFOR-A, in coordination with NATO, should conduct a review to determine which SSA activities are dependent on the current size of U.S. forces in Afghanistan and which activities can continue to be carried out with fewer U.S. security personnel.
3. OSD-Policy, in partnership with DSCA, Resolute Support Mission, and the NATO Joint Force Command, should conduct an assessment to determine where U.S. and other international advisors are currently located, how missions are organized, and the requirements to keep advisor positions filled. Based on the results of this assessment, Resolute Support should create a common advisory picture outlining U.S. and NATO efforts with the aim of standardizing the mission among all of the military services and NATO coalition countries. This will lower the risk of advisors working at cross purposes.
4. The Resolute Support Mission should create a command-and-control relationship among all elements of the advisory mission. This includes aligning the Train, Advise, and Assist Commands, regional task forces, and SFABs under the Deputy Chief of Staff for Security Assistance.
5. OSD-Policy should organize a group of U.S. military and civilian force management experts to partner with the Afghan government and NATO to develop an ANDSF force design plan based on expected long-term military, police, and ministerial capabilities. Based on this plan, the United States should validate advisor requirements and ensure the pipeline for equipment matches the current and future needs of the force.
6. The Joint Staff should create a DOD-led and Pentagon-based Security Cooperation Coordination Cell for Afghanistan with the mission of improving coordination of all SSA activities. The staff assigned to this organization should be required to serve at least a three-year tour with regular deployments into Afghanistan.



7. Resolute Support should host a quarterly SSA conference in Kabul for all civilian and military stakeholders with the intent of resolving conflicts that have a direct or indirect impact on the ANA, Afghan National Police, MOD, or MOI.
8. Predeployment training should expose attendees to all U.S. and international advisory efforts in Afghanistan and should be tailored to the Afghan context.

## **Field Advising**

9. The U.S. military should create a clear career path for combat advisors and continue to provide incentives to improve recruitment. Part of this career path should include postdeployment assignments at SSA commands and U.S. military training centers.
10. Congress should consider directing the military services to conduct an internal human capacity assessment of combat advisor requirements around the globe. This assessment should also consider U.S. military force readiness requirements to maintain combat capabilities, a top priority of the U.S. National Security Strategy. The assessment should pay specific attention to those positions in high demand, such as military officers with a specialty in intelligence, medical, and logistics.
11. In addition to training and building the SFABs, Security Force Assistance Command (SFAC) should also certify outgoing teams to ensure they are properly staffed, trained, and equipped; institutionalize a formal feedback mechanism to collect the SFABs' observations and formulate lessons learned; and create an assessment tool that SFAC can use to evaluate the effectiveness of SFAB units.
12. The military services should comply with DOD policies to track advisor experience, training, and deployments.
13. The Joint Readiness Training Center should institutionalize Theater-Specific Advisor Training (TSAT) for all advisors and should address country-specific command-and-control relationships, procedures, and military culture. All advisors should complete TSAT in order to properly advise their Afghan counterparts in the processes and systems the Afghans employ.
14. Resolute Support should create an independent assessment, monitoring, and evaluation division and create mobile assessment teams responsible for tracking ANDSF capabilities. The mobile teams should track the frequency in which tactical and operational training and advisory teams visit and engage with ANDSF units, as well as the core tasks advisors perform.
15. The Office of the Joint Chiefs of Staff should create a Joint Security Force Assistance Command to monitor advisor requirements among the different military services and provide a level of standardization in unit organization and predeployment training.

## **Ministerial Advising**

16. DSCA should take ownership of the ministerial development mission in Afghanistan and establish a cadre of civilian professionals for this task. The director of DSCA, in close coordination with the senior U.S. military commander in Afghanistan, should approve all U.S. candidates serving in senior leadership roles at CSTC-A, including the CSTC-A commander.
17. The U.S. Office of Personnel Management, in coordination with the U.S. military, should request that Congress reinstate special hiring authority allowing DSCA to

hire individuals outside of DOD. This would allow DSCA to capitalize on internal and external civilian expertise and fulfill its civilian requirements through the MODA program.

18. The Joint Readiness Training Center should institutionalize Senior Leader Advisor Training. This training should be conducted in close partnership with the MODA training center and take advantage of core aspects of the MODA program of instruction. USFOR-A should make this training a requirement for all military personnel deployed to serve as advisors at the ministerial level.
19. As with MODA, predeployment training academies should be empowered to vet and remove candidates who do not meet training qualifications.

### **Equipping the Force**

20. OSD-Policy, DSCA, and the military services should conduct a thorough analysis of U.S.-procured equipment for the ANDSF to determine short- and long-term security assistance. The analysis should consider how best to balance long-term sustainability against near-term threats.
21. Resolute Support, in coordination with the appropriate organizations in the ANDSF, should conduct an analysis of how ANDSF casualties occur and then work with the Afghan Ministries of Defense and Interior to make equipping decisions aimed at reducing casualties.
22. When the U.S. government empowers a temporary organization like CSTC-A to transfer equipment to a partner nation, DSCA must establish a formal process that ensures all relevant U.S.-based stakeholders approve of and provide input on equipping decisions.
23. DSCA should create a course that familiarizes U.S. personnel with the pseudo FMS process. To ensure that U.S. efforts are geared toward increasing partner nation capabilities, this course should educate U.S. personnel on how best to involve a partner nation in the equipping process over time.
24. CSTC-A should formalize Afghan involvement in the pseudo FMS process.
25. Congress should consider evaluating the benefits and challenges associated with using the pseudo FMS process and its impact on overall U.S. foreign policy objectives.

### **U.S.-Based Training**

26. DOD and State should develop new metrics of effectiveness for foreign military training. Current metrics of effectiveness are misleading, as they are often based on the future career prospects of students. This “position of prominence” criterion reflects a statistically insignificant number of Afghans who have trained in the United States.
27. DOD and State should track the performance of Afghan students trained in the United States by implementing a system to consolidate information and should inform advisors of its availability. This can be done through enhancing the existing Security Cooperation Training Management System.
28. State, in coordination with DOD, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, and state and local governments, should strengthen efforts aimed at preventing foreign

military students from going AWOL. This can include changing the visa status of AWOL students to make obtaining U.S. identity documents more difficult, and working with local authorities to ensure students only have access to limited or restricted documents.

### **By, With, and Through NATO**

29. DOD should establish a close working relationship with NATO SSA-related centers of excellence and schools to share best practices and lessons learned. DOD should also provide staff to SSA-related centers of excellence to leverage capabilities for future operations.
30. In planning the drawdown of U.S. forces, DOD should analyze NATO partner dependency on U.S. support of their operations in Afghanistan to determine how to maintain NATO support while the United States reduces its military forces.
31. The Office of the Joint Chiefs of Staff should update U.S. doctrine to clarify how the U.S. military conducts SSA efforts as part of a multinational coalition. The doctrine should provide clear guidance for establishing and maintaining coordination between U.S. departments and agencies operating at the embassy in the host country.
32. DOD and State, in coordination with NATO, should conduct an assessment of NATO's core functions and capabilities related to SSA efforts. This effort should determine which activities should be military-led and therefore under the purview of NATO and which are civilian-led and may be conducted outside of a NATO command. Based on this analysis, NATO should consider updating its doctrine on conducting SSA efforts in the future.







DOD photo

## CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

Since 2001, the United States has appropriated approximately \$133 billion for Afghanistan reconstruction, 63 percent of which (\$83.3 billion) has gone toward reconstructing the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces (ANDSF).<sup>6</sup> This investment not only supports the forces responsible for protecting the Afghan population and prevents the resurgence of terrorist safe havens, but is critical to the overall success of the U.S. reconstruction effort. Without security, the United States and its international partners cannot carry out other activities, such as building effective government institutions and promoting economic development. To help build a capable ANDSF, the United States has deployed tens of thousands of military, civilian, and contractor personnel as trainers and advisors. U.S. advisors have partnered with Afghan units and senior officials to improve warfighting functions and strengthen governance and oversight of the force. Security sector assistance (SSA) efforts in Afghanistan will likely continue in some form even as the U.S. military presence draws down.

### **WHY POLICY MAKERS SHOULD CARE**

SIGAR's audits, inspections, quarterly reports, and lessons learned reports have shown that security is necessary to the success of all other aspects of reconstruction, including economic development, building government capacity, and stabilization. In addition to its key role in battling the Taliban insurgency, the ANDSF is an important partner in the United States' global effort to counter terrorism and protect the U.S. homeland by battling al-Qaeda,

the Islamic State, and other international terrorist organizations. By looking at past and current efforts to develop the ANDSF, we can learn what has and has not worked over the past 17 years.

According to senior U.S. military officials, the ANDSF will require U.S. support for the foreseeable future, even if U.S. combat forces are drawn down.<sup>7</sup> The United States will likely continue to deploy advisors to partner with ANDSF units and provide guidance to senior Afghan officials. Moreover, the ANDSF will continue to require U.S. financial support and military equipment. Without support, the ANDSF would be unable to maintain its current capabilities and would be at risk of collapse. At the peak of the U.S. effort, the yearly budget for the U.S. command responsible for developing Afghan security forces was \$11 billion, more than the U.S. Missile Defense Agency's annual budget.<sup>8</sup> Learning from the past can improve the likelihood of achieving U.S. strategic goals at reduced costs to the U.S. taxpayer.

Like most SIGAR products, this report is for the U.S. Congress and Secretaries of State and Defense, and is also available to the public. It is also designed to inform the decisions of senior policy officials and those currently working on SSA. As the title notes, U.S. efforts are divided among many stakeholders. As a shared responsibility between the Department of State and the Department of Defense (DOD), security sector assistance requires a shared assessment of the effectiveness of our security cooperation and development programs. Yet most of those working on SSA are exposed to only one part of the effort and rarely get insight into how the mission works as a whole. As this report shows, that can lead to a number of problems. While SSA professionals may skip directly to the chapter that deals with their specific interest, there is value in seeing the effort as a whole and applying lessons and recommendations from a place of greater understanding.

## **WHAT IS SECURITY SECTOR ASSISTANCE?**

For the purpose of this report, SSA is defined as U.S. government efforts to “help foreign partners build and sustain the capacity and effectiveness of legitimate [foreign partner nation] institutions to provide security, safety, and justice for their people.”<sup>9</sup> While the term security sector assistance accounts for all activities taken on behalf of the U.S. government, U.S. agencies use a variety of terms when describing SSA-related programs and efforts: security cooperation; security force assistance (SFA); security assistance; train, advise, and assist; train and equip; building partner capacity; defense institution building; or by, with, and through. Ultimately for this report, SIGAR will examine the U.S. government's holistic approach to developing the ANDSF and supporting institutions.

## **SSA IN CONTEXT: ITS ROLE IN U.S. HISTORY**

The United States' experience with security sector assistance predates our founding as a nation. During the Revolutionary War, France provided the Continental Army with naval support and military advising from embedded military officers. This served French interests: France wanted the British military distracted so France could expand its own military and

commercial presence in Europe.<sup>10</sup> But it also helped the colonies win their independence from Britain. France supplied arms and other aid, and French troops provided military training to the Continental Army. The American victory at Yorktown would not have been possible without the support of French soldiers, who directed the siege, and French warships, which repelled the Royal Navy's attempt to rescue its forces.<sup>11</sup>

In the Civil War, British businesses privately provided ships to the Confederacy to keep Southern cotton flowing to Britain. Despite the British government's public declaration of neutrality, British shipbuilders circumvented laws by coordinating with Portugal to convert British-built civilian vessels into naval war ships. British ships ran naval blockades against Union ships to supply and arm the Confederacy, which had just 10 percent of the North's industrial capacity.<sup>12</sup> Historian Peter Tsouras estimates the Confederacy would have collapsed in 12 to 18 months had it not been for British aid. After the siege of Vicksburg, the Union Army found 30,000 surrendered Confederate fighters armed with new British Enfield rifles.<sup>13</sup>

During World War I, the United States emerged as the leading global supplier of arms, despite a declaration of neutrality at the beginning of the war. From August 1914 to March 1917, the United States exported around \$2.2 billion in war supplies to Europe.<sup>14</sup> By 1920, the United States accounted for more than 50 percent of all global arms exports—a development that prompted prominent international lawyer Charles Hyde to petition the Secretary of State to reduce arms sales.<sup>15</sup> Hyde wrote, “The success of armies, possibly the fate of empires, may ultimately rest upon the output of American factories.”<sup>16</sup> In the 1930s, Congress established the Special Committee on Investigation of the Munitions Industry to determine if commercial profit was a motive for continuing war. In response to the committee's findings, Congress created a munitions control board to strengthen oversight of the U.S. arms industry.<sup>17</sup>

Starting in 1939, despite President Franklin D. Roosevelt's public declaration of neutrality, Congress allowed the United States to sell arms to Britain and other allies then at war with Germany and Japan. Two years later, the United States passed the Lend-Lease Program, which lent arms, food, and other aid to Britain and its allies with the understanding that they would pay it back over time.<sup>18</sup> In reality, the \$50 billion loan was mostly a gift; U.S. allies repaid less than \$10 billion.<sup>19</sup>

During the Cold War, to counter Soviet expansionism and the propagation of communist ideology, the United States used security assistance to increase its sphere of influence and prevent the rise of pro-Soviet regimes. Under the Truman Doctrine, the United States sought to contain Soviet expansion by providing hundreds of millions of dollars in aid to Greece and Turkey, mostly for security assistance.<sup>20</sup> The United States also sent military personnel to advise and assist the Turkish and Greek armed forces. This marked a new chapter in security sector assistance: the creation of advisory units to support the development of foreign military forces.<sup>21</sup> By 1949, the United States had 527 military advisory personnel in Greece and 410 in Turkey.<sup>22</sup>

In 1948, Congress passed the Foreign Assistance Act (FAA), which authorized the United States to enter into collective agreements with foreign nations “based on continuous and effective self-help and mutual aid.”<sup>23</sup> A few months later, the United States signed the North Atlantic Treaty, which led to the creation of NATO. To meet U.S. obligations under the North Atlantic Treaty, Congress authorized the Mutual Defense Assistance Act of 1949, which authorized the United States to provide military assistance to NATO countries, and provided funds to Greece, Turkey, Iran, Korea, and the Philippines.<sup>24</sup>

In 1954, in response to burgeoning Cold War foreign aid spending, Congress enacted the Mutual Security Act, aimed at increasing congressional oversight.<sup>25</sup> “Even strong supporters of foreign aid,” wrote Senator John Sparkman of Alabama, “had become more than a little disgusted with what seemed to be the self-perpetuating activities of the ever-growing foreign assistance bureaucracy.”<sup>26</sup> The legislation established the Foreign Military Sales program, which allowed the United States to provide military equipment via grants or loans over a three-year period.<sup>27</sup>

Yet the increasingly tangled web of foreign assistance bureaucracy prompted one administration official of the early 1960s to say, “We are tackling 20-year problems with five-year plans, staffed with two-year personnel working with one-year appropriations.”<sup>28</sup> Congress passed the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, which consolidated multiple authorities—Foreign Military Sales, the Economic Support Fund, and the Military Assistance Program—and transitioned the three-year credit period for repaying the United States for military equipment to a system of long-term loans repayable on agreed-upon terms.<sup>29</sup> Because the Senate Foreign Relations Committee believed that poor countries could not absorb large amounts of aid, the FAA provided recipient countries with low-interest loans for up to 50 years.<sup>30</sup> The act also provided two-year authorization for military assistance.<sup>31</sup>

To streamline legislation related to military exports, Congress enacted the Foreign Military Sales Act of 1968. The act authorized the United States to sell military equipment to allies that had enough resources to sustain the equipment without putting a strain on the economy of the recipient nation, and divided foreign military sales into two categories: cash and credit.<sup>32</sup> For sales that relied on credit, the President of the United States could authorize the financing and purchasing of defense articles and services under terms set by the United States, as long as those terms did not exceed 10 years.<sup>33</sup>

The Vietnam War marked another transformation in the way the United States distributed security assistance. To support the war effort in Vietnam, Congress created the Military Assistance Service Fund (MASF), a special account that was a part of the regular Department of Defense appropriation.<sup>34</sup> For more than a decade (1964–1975), MASF received almost double the U.S. military assistance than the rest of the world combined, and from 1966 to 1976, the United States exported as many weapons as the rest of the world collectively.<sup>35</sup> In reaction to regional arms races and national debates over U.S. foreign policy, and as a means to control the export of defense articles and services, Congress passed the International Security Assistance and Arms Export Control Act in 1976.<sup>36</sup> The legislation amended the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, consolidated existing legislation pertaining to arms sales, and



applied additional regulation.<sup>37</sup> It further called for the dissolution of the Military Assistance Program and included provisions to create the International Military Education and Training program. The act also stipulated that Congress approve all military assistance advisory groups' missions or any other organization of the U.S. armed forces that deployed personnel to carry out advisory duties after September 1977.<sup>38</sup>

President Jimmy Carter, a vocal critic of the unrestrained spread of the global arms industry, put new restrictions on providing U.S. security assistance abroad, albeit with notable exemptions in the Middle East, Africa, and Afghanistan.<sup>39</sup> President Ronald Reagan revitalized security assistance. His administration worked with Congress to increase security assistance funding levels in reaction to Soviet military expansion, Soviet influence in Afghanistan, and the Soviet threat to Poland. Between 1981 and 1986, security assistance funding grew by 84 percent.<sup>40</sup>

The United States faced new challenges in the early 1990s: the spread of democracy and capitalism throughout former Soviet-controlled territory, the restart of talks between Israel and Palestine, and the expulsion by U.S. forces of Saddam Hussein's Iraqi army in Kuwait. By 1990, security assistance to Israel, Egypt, Turkey, Greece, and Pakistan accounted for 88 percent of all foreign military spending.<sup>41</sup>


President Bill Clinton's administration saw the sale of U.S.-made military equipment as a means of boosting the U.S. domestic economy. By 1993, foreign military sales hit a record high of \$33 billion.<sup>42</sup> At the same time, the United States became heavily involved in armed humanitarian missions in Haiti, Somalia, Bosnia, and Kosovo.<sup>43</sup> In 2000, then-candidate George W. Bush campaigned on a platform against U.S. involvement in nation-building activities and opposed armed humanitarian actions taken by the previous administration.<sup>44</sup>

The 9/11 terrorist attacks introduced new complexities into security sector assistance. No longer was the United States reconstructing security forces in post-war countries such as Korea, Japan, and Germany. In Afghanistan and Iraq, it was engaged in active combat against terrorist groups who had little regard for national borders.

Following the collapse of the Saddam Hussein and Taliban governments, the United States committed to building Iraqi and Afghan security forces and supporting ministerial institutions. Recognizing that the U.S. Department of State was unprepared to respond rapidly to complex threats against the United States, Congress passed the 2005 National Defense Authorization Act, which created the Afghanistan Security Forces Fund (ASFF). A DOD-run program that requires only concurrence from the Secretary of State, ASFF is authorized to provide funds for DOD to offer equipment, supplies, services, training, and transportation to the Afghan security forces.<sup>45</sup>

In addition to the more than \$83 billion the United States has appropriated to reconstruct security forces in Afghanistan, it provides approximately \$5 billion annually in security sector assistance to Afghanistan, and deploys thousands of American soldiers to train, advise, and assist these forces.<sup>46</sup>





## CHAPTER 2

# FIELD ADVISING

U.S. Army photo

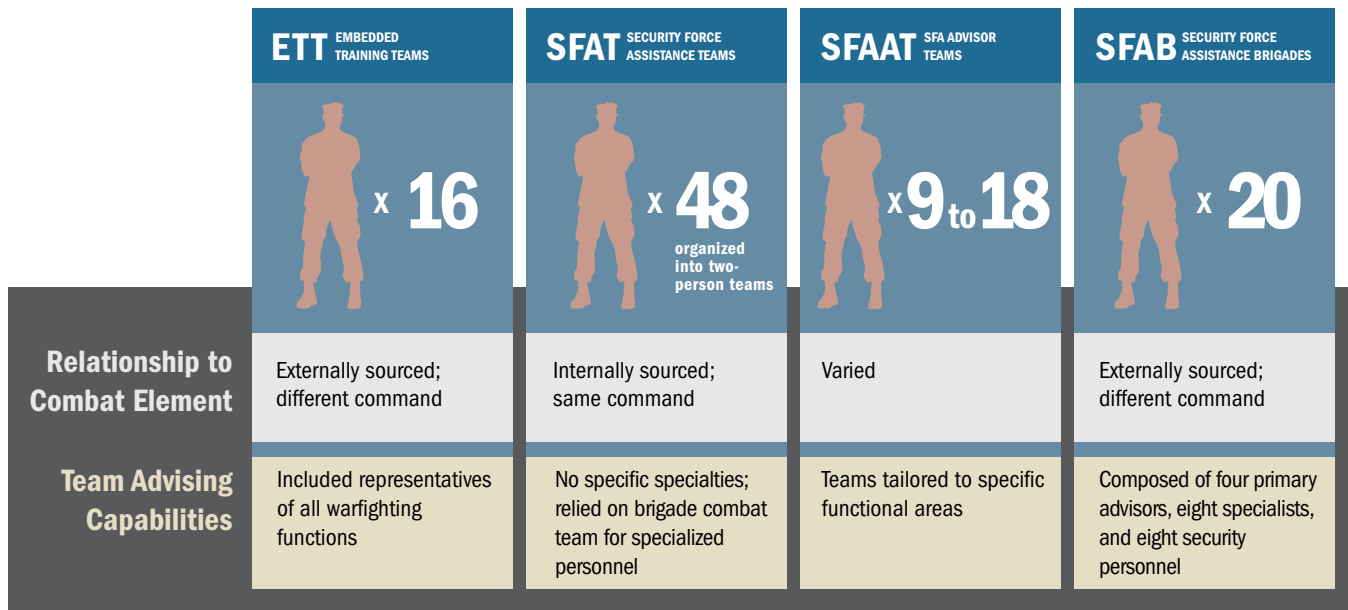
The U.S. military has long considered advising critical to the continued development and professionalization of a partner nation's security forces following basic training.<sup>47</sup> In 2003, to ensure the continued development of fielded ANDSF units, the United States began advising at the tactical and operational level.<sup>48</sup> This chapter describes the four field advising models implemented in Afghanistan, and examines the challenges, lessons learned, and best practices associated with each model. Specific attention is paid to how advisors were selected, trained, and organized.

Generally, field advising involves a team of U.S. soldiers working directly with an Afghan unit to advise on decision-making and to provide access to U.S. resources and combat enablers.<sup>49</sup> While the basic theory behind advising partner nation security forces has remained relatively unchanged, the U.S. approach to advising ANDSF units has not. Specifically, the U.S. military's approach to field advising in Afghanistan has gone through four iterations: Embedded Training Teams (ETT), Security Force Assistance Teams (SFAT), Security Force Assistance Advisor Teams (SFAAT), and Security Force Assistance Brigades (SFAB) (See Figure 1.). These changing approaches reflected attempts within DOD to address challenges associated with each advisor model, especially as it related to command-and-control issues, staffing, and training concerns.

Recently, as DOD requirements have increased, the U.S. military has taken steps to apply best practices and institutionalize tactical and operational advising teams.

FIGURE 1

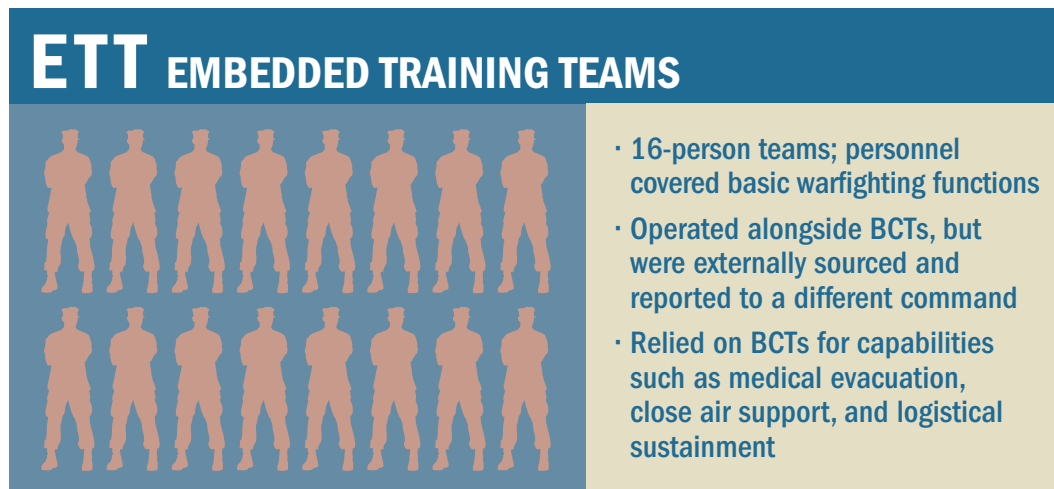
COMPARISON OF FIELD ADVISING TEAM MODELS



In 2017, the U.S. Army announced the creation of SFABs.<sup>50</sup> While institutionalizing the concept of advisor teams within the military is a step forward, several challenges remain. As it has in past advising efforts, the U.S. Army continues to struggle with staffing these units with the required number of skilled personnel, and with keeping personnel assigned to these units long enough to create enduring partnerships with a foreign force.<sup>51</sup> Recruiting soldiers in unique military specialties (for example, logistics, intelligence, and medical) at the right rank remains a challenge, since those soldiers are in high demand and there are relatively few in the military. Senior officers and noncommissioned officers (NCO) do not serve in advisory billets long-term because of career progression concerns, so attrition rates for these advisor units will likely continue to be high, potentially hindering the building of long-term relationships and theater-specific knowledge.<sup>52</sup> While predeployment training now focuses more on advisor-specific skills, there still is not enough theater-specific training focused on the host nation’s security institutions, systems, processes, and weapons.

Further, it is worth noting that while some of the advisor models suggest a specific focus on training partner forces rather than advising partner forces and vice versa, these activities often occurred simultaneously. This happened for several reasons. First, while the U.S. Army distinguishes between training (which focuses on refining basic skills such as marksmanship and tactics) and advising (which focuses on improving decision-making, systems, and processes), this distinction was often not emphasized even when advising was the primary effort.<sup>53</sup> Absent clear guidance, advisors defaulted to training, a task military leaders are more familiar with, rather than advising.<sup>54</sup> Often, advisor teams felt the need to both train and advise their Afghan counterparts—a situation 1st SFAB’s advisor teams found themselves in after being partnered with Afghan units that had been without a U.S. or coalition partner for several years.<sup>55</sup>

FIGURE 2



## EMBEDDED TRAINING TEAMS

The U.S. military began fielding ETTs as early as 2003. Responsible for providing in-field mentoring and training to Afghan National Army (ANA) units, ETTs were seen as critical to the continued development of the ANDSF.<sup>56</sup> In addition to providing mentoring and training, ETTs provided ANDSF units direct access to U.S. resources and enablers (such as close air support, medical and casualty evacuation, and intelligence) and assessed ANDSF unit capabilities, strength, and shortfalls.<sup>57</sup> At full strength, ETTs were composed of 16 personnel, a mix of officers and middle- to senior-grade noncommissioned officers.<sup>58</sup> ETTs were also designed to be largely self-contained units, with assigned personnel covering each of the basic warfighting functions: mission command, movement and maneuver, intelligence, supporting arms, sustainment, and protection (See Figure 2).<sup>59</sup>

ETTs were considered external to the U.S. **brigade combat teams** (BCT) operating in Afghanistan. Even though ETTs operated alongside BCTs, ETTs were not considered part of the formal BCT structure. As Brig. Gen. James Yarbrough, a former commander of the Joint Readiness Training Center (JRTC), described it, ETTs “were a different entity, trained differently. . . . [ETT and BCT] met on the battlefield.”<sup>60</sup> Problems with this command-and-control arrangement would drive later changes to the overall advisory model.

## U.S. Military Struggles to Staff ETTs

Because ETTs did not exist as units in any of the services’ force structures and were not staffed with BCT personnel, each ETT had to be individually sourced and staffed.<sup>61</sup> According to the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) in 2011, the number of individually sourced advisors required to fill training teams in Iraq and Afghanistan for the Army at any one time totaled about 8,000 personnel.<sup>62</sup>

The U.S. military was generally unable to meet these personnel requirements, however. In 2008, for example, the Army was able to fill only 50 percent of the training team

The **brigade combat team** is the U.S. Army’s basic deployable combined arms warfighting unit. BCTs often operated as part of a division or joint task force and were assigned responsibility for a specific area of operations.

Source: U.S. Army, *Brigade Combat Team*, FM 3–96, October 2015, p. 1-1.

### Police Mentoring Teams Complicate Staffing

Personnel challenges increased significantly in 2005 when the United States took over primary responsibility for training and equipping the Afghan National Police (ANP) in addition to the ANA.<sup>63</sup> As it had with ETTs, the U.S. military struggled to staff **Police Mentoring Teams** (PMT). In May 2009, for example, the Combined Security Transition Command – Afghanistan (CSTC-A) identified the required number of PMTs as 635, but had only 90—most of which were understaffed. As a result of team shortages, commanders were frequently forced to cut down on their training and mentoring missions. CSTC-A was also often forced to transfer personnel from the already short-staffed ETTs to PMTs.<sup>64</sup>

**Police Mentoring Teams** was a term used to refer to embedded training teams that advised the ANP rather than the ANA.

Source: DOD OIG, *Report on the Assessment of U.S. and Coalition Plans to Train, Equip, and Field the Afghan National Security Forces*, SPO-2009-007, September 30, 2009, p. 39.

requirements in Afghanistan.<sup>65</sup> The following year, the Department of Defense Office of Inspector General (DOD OIG) noted that of 3,313 personnel required for U.S. ETTs in Afghanistan, only 1,175 had been assigned.<sup>66</sup>

Personnel shortfalls often resulted in significantly understaffed teams. While teams were supposed to be composed of 16 members, most teams did not meet this requirement. In May 2009, the DOD OIG reported that many ETTs assigned to advise Afghan military units were at less than 50 percent strength, with some having only four to six personnel, far short of the 16 required.<sup>67</sup> The same issue had been identified one year earlier in a U.S. Army unit after-action report, which noted that ETTs operating in central Afghanistan were often below the required 16 personnel mark.<sup>68</sup>

Understaffed teams faced several operational and advising challenges. For example, ETTs that were unable to meet the minimum number of force protection personnel required to move off a U.S. base were unable to mentor their Afghan counterparts in the field. Attempts to mitigate shortfalls included borrowing additional security personnel and support from nearby combat units.<sup>69</sup>

U.S. Central Command's (CENTCOM) requirement for officers and middle- to senior-grade noncommissioned officers further complicated staffing efforts. While this rank requirement often resulted in leaders being pulled from other units or commands to fill ETTs, higher command elements, such as Task Force Phoenix and CSTC-A, often reassigned these personnel to their headquarters in Afghanistan.<sup>70</sup> As one 2008 Regional Corps Advisory Command after-action report on the ETT mission noted, "CSTC-A [and Task Force] Phoenix . . . routinely siphoned personnel from incoming ETTs for their own staffs. Teams are routinely stripped of [military occupational specialty] skill sets to augment or fill vacancies in the above-mentioned staffs, often to the detriment of the ETTs."<sup>71</sup>



## U.S. Military Unable to Source Teams with Desired Personnel

In theory, ETTs were supposed to be staffed with people with the appropriate experience, expertise, and mindset. As the U.S. Army's *Security Force Assistance* field manual states:

Not every soldier is well suited to perform advisory functions; even those considered to be the best and most experienced have failed at being an advisor. Effective advisors are only the most capable individuals. . . . Recognizing that not all soldiers are capable of performing as advisors, leaders should immediately remove advisors who do not exhibit these qualities.<sup>72</sup>

The U.S. Army's purported emphasis on filling training teams with highly qualified individuals was also highlighted in a 2007 U.S. Army briefing, which stated that "resourcing [training] teams with the right soldiers is one of the Army's top priorities. . . . Only fully qualified officers and NCOs are chosen to fill these critical positions, based upon their grade, skill, and experience match, balanced with [time spent between deployments]."<sup>73</sup>

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*"Recognizing that not all soldiers are capable of performing as advisors, leaders should immediately remove advisors who do not exhibit these qualities."*

—U.S. Army's *Security Force Assistance* field manual

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In reality, past experiences and relevant skills were not primary factors when selecting personnel. While efforts were made to ensure that ETT leaders were selected based on experience, this was not the case when it came to the selection of a team's other members. Because the U.S. Army was focused on producing and fielding ETTs, volunteers were readily accepted and officers were assigned to teams based on availability.<sup>74</sup> A DOD civilian involved in the eventual creation of the SFABs described the creation of ETTs as "sheer ad hoc," with people "thrown in" teams that were dissolved upon returning to the United States.<sup>75</sup> In 2009, it was reported that many of the regional commands in Afghanistan lacked ETT personnel with the skills required for their positions.<sup>76</sup> The U.S. Marines had the same problem. Prior to 2013, the U.S. Marines did not track advising experience, so personnel selection was often haphazard.<sup>77</sup>

Further, the advising effort was generally perceived to be a low staffing priority. As one former ETT member remarked in a postdeployment survey, "In general, it seems the army is selecting the bottom [third] of its majors, colonels, and senior NCOs to lead [training teams]. This must end. If [training teams] were properly resourced and supported in addition to properly led, the effectiveness of the mission would skyrocket."<sup>78</sup> This was echoed by another former ETT member, who stated, "My impression from the past 15 months is that the military is dredging the bottom of both the officer and NCO ranks to fill ETT slots."<sup>79</sup>



A U.S. Navy sailor assigned to a U.S. Marine Corps ETT speaks with an ANA partner. (Photo by Lance Cheung)

### **Predeployment Training Not Afghanistan- or Advisor-Specific**

Before 2006, advisor teams were trained at several U.S. Army installations. In 2006, the U.S. Army formally consolidated predeployment training and preparation for all military personnel assigned as advisors to the Afghan and Iraqi security forces at Fort Riley, Kansas.<sup>80</sup>

While predeployment training at Fort Riley was intended to prepare personnel for an advising mission, the 72-day program of instruction focused primarily on combat skills, force protection, and tactical training. It placed little attention on developing culture, language, and counterinsurgency (COIN) training. Only 12 of 105 of the course's tasks covered mentoring and advising skills.<sup>81</sup>

The focus on combat skills likely stemmed from the fact that a considerable number of personnel assigned to serve on ETTs had been out of a tactical unit for some time. To mitigate advisor shortfalls, the U.S. Army looked to the other military services. As one DOD OIG report noted, most military personnel assigned to ETTs and PMTs before 2009 were U.S. Army reservists, National Guardsmen, or active-duty personnel from the U.S. Navy or U.S. Air Force.<sup>82</sup> One former ETT member, for example, described himself as an “Air Force guy advising an Afghan Army guy on how to be an Army guy.”<sup>83</sup> Such mismatches meant that training often had to be, as one former ETT member described, “lowest-common-denominator training . . . geared for Navy and Air Force personnel with no combat or operational experience.”<sup>84</sup>

Predeployment training at Fort Riley was heavily criticized by ETT members who served in Afghanistan, who often described it as irrelevant or not applicable to their assignment in country. Language training was often in Dari, even though some units that operated in southern and eastern Afghanistan spoke Pashto, and training was largely based on

U.S. military experience in Iraq, not Afghanistan.<sup>85</sup> This was reflected in comments from postdeployment surveys, where respondents noted, “All Riley talked about was Iraq,” “They kept on referring to Iraq when they knew we were going to [Operation Enduring Freedom],” and “Reading materials on combat advisors/ETT activities were amply available only for [Operation Iraqi Freedom].”<sup>86</sup>

The limited focus on Afghanistan was noted in other critiques as well. For example, field advisors often did not receive foreign weapons training and received no information on Afghan systems or processes. One advisor commented that predeployment training “did not teach [U.S. advisors] anything about the systems that the [ANA and ANP] use for personnel, intelligence, operations or supply. 90 percent of mentoring is spent working with [their] systems.”<sup>87</sup> To some, these training gaps hindered their ability to be immediately effective in the field. As one advisor noted, “Many [advisors] do not feel comfortable with [foreign weapons and vehicles] in the field, and we have to teach these.”<sup>88</sup> Personnel also often did not know where they were going in Afghanistan prior to deployment, or if they would be advising the ANA or ANP. As one DOD OIG report noted, “In many instances, personnel who were trained at Fort Riley did not know whether they would be assigned as ETTs or PMTs until arrival in country.”<sup>89</sup>

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*“Many [advisors] do not feel comfortable with [foreign weapons and vehicles] in the field, and we have to teach these.”*

—Former ETT member

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Many ETT members also believed not enough attention was paid to advising during training. One former ETT member described training at Fort Riley as “100 percent irrelevant to advising,” while another wrote that training “was relevant to combat [operations] but lacked anything to do with mentoring.”<sup>90</sup> Another former ETT advisor told SIGAR that he did not receive any training on how to be an advisor. The advisor recalled only one session on how to use an interpreter, little to no language training, and no cultural training. The advisor was “thrown a couple of books” for help with cultural awareness.<sup>91</sup> Multiple responses from the ETT survey described training as “half-hearted” and “check-the-box” in its execution.<sup>92</sup> It was not until March 2009, over two years after the U.S. Army consolidated training for advisors deploying to Iraq and Afghanistan, that Fort Riley’s program of instruction was modified to increase the amount of advisor-specific training and COIN training from three days to 12.<sup>93</sup>

At least some of these training gaps can be attributed to the fact that trainers assigned to Fort Riley had never been advisors themselves, and instructors had limited experience or expertise in the content they were teaching.<sup>94</sup> In 2007, while in command of a unit at Fort Riley, U.S. Army Lt. Col. John Nagl noted that soldiers had been posted to the training unit on an ad hoc basis, and that few of the officers selected to train had previously served in advisor roles.<sup>95</sup> Poor communication and coordination between Fort Riley and the training command in Afghanistan also limited the feedback received from teams in Afghanistan.

While 1st Brigade, the unit responsible for training at Fort Riley, was closely linked with the Iraq Assistance Group and had a system in place to receive feedback from personnel deployed to Iraq, no such relationship or mechanism was in place for personnel deployed to Afghanistan.<sup>96</sup> As a result, CSTC-A did not consistently send training information and lessons learned back to Fort Riley, and Fort Riley did not actively seek out this information.<sup>97</sup>

Some ETT members received no predeployment training whatsoever. One former ETT member told SIGAR that everything he learned about Afghanistan or the advisory mission he learned on his own.<sup>98</sup> Another former ETT advisor told SIGAR that he did not receive any advisor-specific predeployment training because his team changed from a security force and personal security detail mission to an advisory mission en route to Afghanistan.<sup>99</sup>

### **Challenges in Country: Team Cohesion, Command and Control, and Resource Allocation**

ETTs faced several challenges in Afghanistan. While ETTs were supposed to train and mobilize as a team to ensure cohesion and enhance effectiveness, training teams were often split up when they arrived in Afghanistan. According to postdeployment surveys and SIGAR-led interviews, ETT personnel rarely stayed with their original team for the duration of their tour; one team, for example, was split up three different times while in country.<sup>100</sup> In some instances, team leaders were unable to deploy with their teams.<sup>101</sup> This directly contradicted claims made by one general, who testified to Congress in 2007

#### **Marine Corps ETTs Implement Separate Advisor Training**

The U.S. Marine Corps did not attend U.S. Army-led training and instead institutionalized its own process to prepare units for deployment. Initially, the majority of predeployment training for U.S. Marine ETTs occurred at Twentynine Palms, California. However, some U.S. Marine ETTs received mountain warfare training at Bridgeport, California, and Hawthorne, Nevada, where conditions more closely resembled Afghanistan's more mountainous terrain.<sup>102</sup>

Like their U.S. Army counterparts, U.S. Marine ETT members generally found that predeployment training did not adequately prepare them for the advisor mission. Language training was often irrelevant to their assigned area of operation, and insufficient attention was placed on weapons and equipment used by the ANA. The Afghan interpreters and role-players assisting with training also lacked relevant experience.<sup>103</sup> One anthropologist who studied the U.S. military's reliance on Afghan-Americans to provide cultural knowledge told SIGAR that most Afghan-Americans supporting predeployment training had no recent experience living or working in Afghanistan.<sup>104</sup>

Given the U.S. Marines' purported focus on advising, U.S. Marine ETT advisors often found the selection, assignment, equipping, and sustaining of U.S. Marine ETTs surprisingly poor.<sup>105</sup> For example, at a 2006 Marine Corps Center for Lessons Learned conference on foreign military advising, U.S. Marine advisors expressed concern over the ad hoc manner in which training teams were sourced and trained. Almost all participants relayed stories of last-minute selection and notification of assignment to training teams, which prevented teams from training together before deployment.<sup>106</sup>



A senior U.S. Marine Corps ETT advisor discusses operational tactics with an Afghan battalion commander and company commander. (Photo from OSD Public Affairs)

that “the Army is ensuring that all deploying units are manned not less than 90 percent of their authorized strength 90 days prior to their Mission Rehearsal Exercise in order to allow them to train together and form a cohesive unit.”<sup>107</sup>

ETTs in Afghanistan also faced several command-and-control challenges. Because ETTs operated externally from major combat units operating in the same area and reported to a different command structure, coordination and communication issues between training teams and combat units were common.<sup>108</sup> Additionally, because the command responsible for U.S. and NATO combat units had no responsibility to support advisors, it was often a challenge for training teams to acquire necessary resources and support.<sup>109</sup> As one report stated, “ETTs do not have on-site support staff. The primary mission of ETTs is to train and advise the [ANA]. Currently, far too much time is spent trying to support/sustain [themselves] when [their] focus should be on the ANA.”<sup>110</sup> Another advisor wrote, “Teams are not supported at all in Afghanistan and need to be entirely self-sustaining.”<sup>111</sup> Obtaining resources was often done on an ad hoc basis or was dependent on personal relationships, and ETT personnel were often required to perform administrative or logistical duties for the ETT itself that were distractions from their primary responsibility to advise the Afghans.<sup>112</sup>

The ETT concept also suffered from the lack of a clear, uniform mission statement and shared objectives.<sup>113</sup> Training teams operated based on varying commanders’ intents and therefore different understandings of what it meant to advise and mentor their Afghan counterparts. For some, advising entailed executing missions alongside the Afghans; to others, advising involved the ETT unit executing the mission themselves and only bringing the Afghans in order to show an “Afghan face.”<sup>114</sup>

FIGURE 3



## AUGMENTED BCTS AND SECURITY FORCE ASSISTANCE TEAMS

In 2009, to address some of these staffing and training challenges, the U.S. Army began augmenting BCTs with additional advisors. The U.S. Army referred to these BCTs as “brigade combat teams augmented for security force assistance,” or augmented BCTs, and the advisor teams were known as Security Force Assistance Teams, or SFATs.<sup>115</sup> Augmented BCTs were considered “full-spectrum operations, standard go-to-war brigades that [are] augmented with additional majors, lieutenant colonels, and colonels to build [advisor] teams from within the brigade.”<sup>116</sup> The augmentation package that created SFATs generally consisted of 48 advisor personnel—24 **field-grade officers** and 24 noncommissioned officers—who underwent cultural, language, and advisor training and who were assigned to a BCT during predeployment training. The original concept foresaw the 48 advisors being organized into 24 two-person advisor teams that would receive all necessary support (for example, specialized personnel, equipment, and transportation) from the BCT (See Figure 3).<sup>117</sup> Therefore, unlike the ETTs, SFATs did not cover all warfighting and staff functions.

**Field-grade officers** are senior officers ranking below generals: majors, lieutenant colonels, and colonels.

This new model moved responsibility for the advisory mission from externally sourced training teams to the standard combat brigades, and was intended to help overcome the personnel shortages and resource constraints associated with the ETTs.<sup>118</sup> Further, augmented BCTs were designed to improve command and control over the mission by placing personnel assigned to the advisory mission under a single brigade commander—a feature the U.S. Army’s *Modular Brigade Augmented for Security Force Assistance Handbook* identified as a “key advantage.”<sup>119</sup>

Under this new model, each Afghanistan-bound commander had full responsibility for manning, integrating, and overseeing the advisory and training mission within the BCT’s area of operations. According to the *Modular Brigade Augmented for Security Force Assistance Handbook*, the BCT commander’s tasks included determining the degree to which BCT resources supported the advising mission, organizing the augmented advisor



personnel into advisor teams based on requirements, and providing resources to the advisor teams.<sup>120</sup> By June 2011, nine augmented BCTs were operating in Afghanistan.<sup>121</sup>

### **New Advisor Model Increases Demand for High-Ranking Personnel**

The shift to augmented BCTs and SFATs posed unforeseen personnel challenges. The U.S. Army's augmented BCT concept assumed that specialized personnel needed by the advisor team, such as logisticians and intelligence personnel, would be pulled from the BCT. However, because specialized personnel were also in high demand within the BCT, BCT commanders could not always grant advisor teams the specialized personnel needed.<sup>122</sup>

The need for specialized personnel was highlighted in 2011, when U.S. Army and augmented BCT officials told GAO that including advisors with specialized capabilities as part of the augmented BCT advisor requirements would be very beneficial for the advising mission. Doing so would ensure that advisor teams had the personnel needed to advise effectively on all functional areas, as advisors frequently advised their Afghan counterparts in specialized areas.<sup>123</sup>

While the augmented brigade concept decreased the total number of advisors required for the advising mission and alleviated the strain on the U.S. Army's pool of company-grade and noncommissioned officers, it increased the requirement for field-grade officers. This occurred because the ranks of the advisors required for the SFATs were higher than the rank requirements for ETT personnel. According to U.S. Army Human Resource Command data reviewed by GAO in 2011, augmented BCT advisor requirements increased demand for deployable field-grade officers by 463 in Fiscal Year (FY) 2010 and by 398 in the first two quarters of FY 2011. At the same time, the U.S. Army reported shortages of 2,469 majors and 1,297 lieutenant colonels within the service.<sup>124</sup>

While eventual decisions to prioritize meeting advisor requirements mitigated most shortfalls, the U.S. Army struggled to provide officers to units being augmented in time to ensure proper preparation.<sup>125</sup> According to U.S. Army and augmented BCT officials, it was critical for advisors to arrive 45 days prior to a unit's mission rehearsal exercise in order to integrate advisors into the unit, form advisor teams, and establish command-and-control relationships between the BCT and SFATs.<sup>126</sup> However, multiple augmented BCTs did not receive all of their assigned advisor personnel until the mission rehearsal exercise. According to the 2011 GAO report, one augmented BCT in Afghanistan received only six of its 24 noncommissioned officer advisors and none of its 24 field-grade officer advisors prior to its mission rehearsal exercise.<sup>127</sup>

### **U.S. Army Consolidates All Training for Advisors**

In October 2008, the U.S. Army announced that by the fall of 2009 the mission of preparing advisors and training teams for the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan would shift to the Joint Readiness Training Center at Fort Polk, Louisiana. The 162nd Infantry Brigade was activated to conduct specialized advisor training on topics such as

language, culture, the host nation's government and security forces, cross-cultural communications, key leader engagements, and rapport building.<sup>128</sup> With the move to Fort Polk, the general concept of training advisory teams shifted. Rather than assembling and training teams through a residency course, as was the case at Fort Riley, the 162nd Infantry Brigade sent mobile training teams to a deploying BCT's home station to conduct training in three sessions as the BCT prepared for its mission rehearsal exercise.<sup>129</sup> Team members designated for Afghanistan that had yet to be assigned to a BCT, as well as individual members of the U.S. National Guard, U.S. Navy, and U.S. Air Force who had been designated to serve with advisory teams, attended residence training at Fort Polk.<sup>130</sup>

Prior to training, the BCT commander determined which units within the augmented BCT would be trained to partner in combat with Afghan forces and which units would be trained to advise Afghan forces.<sup>131</sup> Whereas partnering units received training on full-spectrum operations, SFATs received language, cultural, translator, and train-the-trainer training, as well as foreign weapons and equipment training.<sup>132</sup>

### **SFATs Face Familiar Challenges in Afghanistan**

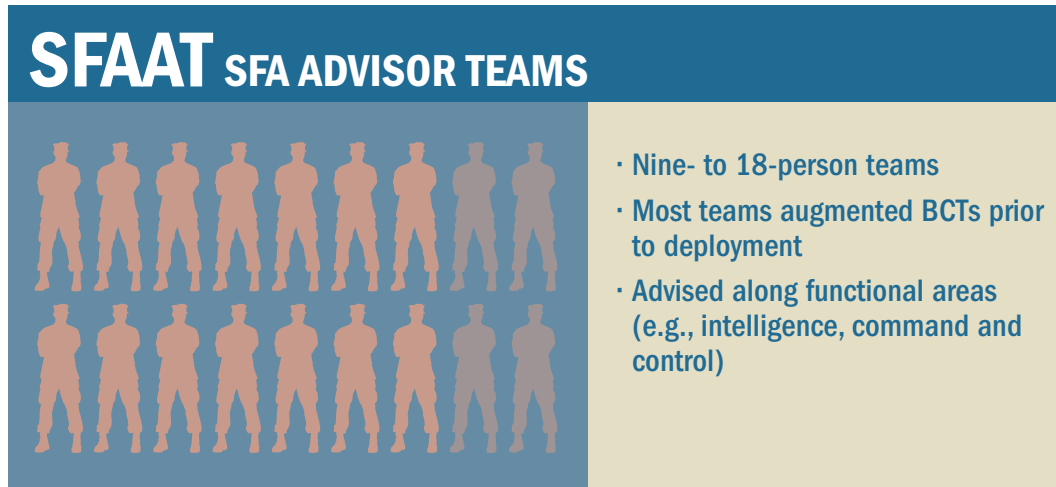
The shift from externally sourced teams to brigade combat teams did not alleviate all challenges facing advisor teams in country. According to the U.S. Army's *Security Force Assistance* field manual, advisor teams require "a clearly defined and structured" chain of command to ensure logistics and resource support and to ensure that advisor personnel remain focused on developing partner nation security forces.<sup>133</sup> However, theater commanders did not define the minimum level of support that BCTs were required to provide advisor teams, and CENTCOM provided no guidance to commanders on how the brigades should balance resources and make tradeoffs between the two different missions.<sup>134</sup> In Afghanistan, where U.S. forces were under political pressure to reverse Taliban momentum and set conditions to begin the drawdown of combat forces, BCT commanders tended to prioritize the fight over the advisory mission.<sup>135</sup>

As a result, advisory teams struggled to acquire personal and operational equipment, as well as transportation and security support.<sup>136</sup> Advisors from one augmented BCT in Afghanistan told GAO in 2011 that the advising mission was a low priority for the brigade; advisors from another augmented BCT described support for the advisory mission as haphazard and as coming from other units outside of the brigade.<sup>137</sup> Because brigades often lacked the resources needed to support 24 dispersed teams, augmented BCTs often organized their advisors into teams consisting of more than two advisors.<sup>138</sup>

There were also multiple instances of advisors being pulled from the augmented BCT to support division headquarters. When this happened, advisor teams under new division commanders were generally used as a division resource, much as previous training teams were used to fill needed staff positions at higher headquarters.<sup>139</sup> For example, one division commander tasked a five-person advisor team from one of the augmented BCTs to mentor the brigade of a NATO partner, not an Afghan unit.<sup>140</sup>



FIGURE 4



## SECURITY FORCE ASSISTANCE ADVISOR TEAMS

In early 2012, in response to requests from the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) and in preparation for the January 1, 2015, transition to ANDSF-led security, the U.S. Army and U.S. Marine Corps began to deploy small teams of advisors with specialized capabilities to work directly with Afghan army and police units.<sup>141</sup> The teams, known as Security Force Assistance Advisor Teams, were designed to help with the shift toward “functional” security force assistance, or the specific focus on key functions, systems, and processes (See Figure 4).<sup>142</sup> This shift entailed moving away from advising along unit and organizational structures and toward advising along functional areas, such as command and control, intelligence, and logistics. In addition to advising Afghan police and army units, SFAATs also advised at Operational Coordination Centers, which were ANDSF command-and-control centers that coordinated security operations and civil responses in their respective areas of responsibility.<sup>143</sup> Ultimately, SFAATs were to provide the training, advising, assisting, and development functions needed to prepare ANDSF units to assume full responsibility of security by the January 1, 2015, transition.

By December 2012, approximately 250 U.S. SFAATs were operating in Afghanistan. Due to the drawdown of U.S. forces, by June 2014 that number was down to 77.<sup>144</sup>

## Personnel Requirements Continue to Demand High-Ranking Individuals with Specific Skills

SFAATs generally comprised nine to 18 advisors, made up of a mix of company and field-grade officers and senior noncommissioned officers. In theory, each member of the SFAAT had specialized experience, and each team was tailored to meet the needs of its ANDSF counterpart. For example, teams working with higher echelons of the ANDSF had a higher rank requirement. SFAATs typically deployed for nine months and were expected to remain with the same ANDSF unit for the duration of their deployment.<sup>145</sup>



An ANA officer listens to a U.S. Army officer from an SFAAT outside of a temporary tactical operations center in Bati Kot, Nangarhar Province, during an ANA-led clearing operation. (U.S. Army photo by Jenny Lui)

The U.S. Army and U.S. Marine Corps used a variety of approaches to meet ISAF's initial requirements for SFAATs. To form the first SFAATs deployed to Afghanistan, the U.S. Army tasked certain non-deployed brigades to form the bulk of the advisor teams using personnel from their units. Once in Afghanistan, the advisor teams were attached to combat brigades. Similarly, the U.S. Marine Corps created some teams out of non-deployed personnel, as well as out of personnel already in Afghanistan.<sup>146</sup> While this sourcing technique enabled the U.S. Army and U.S. Marine Corps to meet theater requirements for SFAATs, it also resulted in brigades leaving large numbers of personnel at home-station locations. This meant that units back in the United States were without leadership and the full command structure needed to maintain readiness.<sup>147</sup> Further, both the U.S. Army and the U.S. Marine Corps worked with their force providers to draw soldiers from active and reserve non-deployed units to help meet rank and skill requirements.<sup>148</sup>

Because SFAATs generally required higher-ranking personnel with specific skills, theater commander guidance allowed for some substitutions when specific ranks or skills were unavailable—for example, allowing the rank requirements to be substituted with an individual one rank above or below the requirement. Since the required number of ranks and specialties for SFAATs exceeded the total number of such personnel in a typical brigade, the ability to substitute certain ranks and skills with other available personnel was critical to meeting requirements.<sup>149</sup> Further, the ability to substitute was critical for filling those specialties in which the U.S. Army had few personnel, such as police and intelligence. However, challenges filling these positions continued. For example, in early 2012, the United States was required to deploy 36 SFAATs to eastern Afghanistan with a military intelligence captain attached to each team. The brigade combat team responsible for supporting these teams was staffed with only five military intelligence

captains, and was therefore unable to staff the required position for all 36 SFAAT teams. The brigade raised the issue with the division headquarters, which referred it to the U.S. Army Human Resource Command, which was unable to fulfill the requirement. The SFAATs deployed significantly understaffed on a critical advisory function.<sup>150</sup>

It is unclear how much an advisor's experience or military occupational specialty influenced the advisor's role on an SFAAT. A field artillery officer who served with an SFAAT recalled that expertise and experience did not appear to be a factor in manning decisions. On his first team, he was slotted as the fire support officer; on his second and third teams, he was assigned as the executive officer; on his final team, he was assigned as the manpower and personnel officer.<sup>151</sup>

### **Predeployment Training Hindered by Late Team Formation, Lack of Advisor- and Afghanistan-Specific Training**

Recognizing that advisor personnel required specific training, ISAF established minimum training requirements for U.S. and coalition SFAATs.<sup>152</sup> In response, the U.S. Army and U.S. Marine Corps each developed a program of instruction for predeployment training designed to occur in three stages: home-station training, advisor-specific training, and a culminating training exercise.<sup>153</sup>

Generally, home-station training covered individual and team-level combat skills training, while advisor-specific training focused on language, culture, COIN, and advisor skills. Most U.S. Army advisor teams received advisor-specific training during an eight-day course (known colloquially as "SFAAT Academy," or "Advisor Academy") provided by the 162nd Infantry Brigade at Fort Polk, although some personnel received an eight-week course which included both combat and advisor skills training.<sup>154</sup> The culminating training exercise included situational training exercises that integrated ANDSF role players and assessed advisor teams on their ability to advise their Afghan counterparts. These exercises were meant to be tailored to the level (corps, brigade, or battalion) and type (army or police) of the ANDSF unit the team would be advising.<sup>155</sup>

In principle, SFAATs were to be formed prior to home-station training so that the SFAAT could participate in training as a team. However, similar to the ETTs, several teams were not fully assembled prior to predeployment training, and some units were not fully formed until arrival in country. One former SFAAT member told SIGAR that some teams changed about 10 times over the course of the year prior to deployment; he was on four different teams prior to his final team, which he was assigned to about three months before deployment.<sup>156</sup> Another SFAAT member recalled that team members were not task-organized until one month prior to deployment. Setting up the teams earlier, the member noted, would have "given them time to properly prepare, solidify standard operating procedures, [and] train to be an advisor team."<sup>157</sup> Still another former SFAAT member said that not one SFAAT team was 100 percent task-organized or formed until arrival in theater, while another—commenting on the late team formations—described "the lack of predictability and advanced notification in the [U.S.] Army [as] always frustrating."<sup>158</sup>

### Marine Corps Training: Advisor Training Cells and the Advisor Training Group

U.S. Marine SFATs and SFAATs completed training through a 12-week program.<sup>159</sup> Generally, U.S. Marine advisor teams received training at the Advisor Training Cells (ATC) at their respective Marine Expeditionary Force (MEF) home stations, as well as at the Advisor Training Group (ATG).<sup>160</sup> This training occurred in three phases: an eight-week program conducted at home station with the MEF's ATC, three weeks of predeployment training and a mission rehearsal exercise at the Marine Air-Ground Task Force Training Command's ATG, and a four-week remediation block prior to arrival in theater.<sup>161</sup>

Most advisors were unimpressed with the initial weeks of training provided by the home station's ATC, which was supposed to cover combat and advising skills. Advisors expressed concern with the hurried nature of the training, the quality of instruction, and the attention placed on combat skills at the expense of advisor skills.<sup>162</sup> One former advisor commented in a postdeployment survey that "I have not met one individual that went through the program of instruction [who] was satisfied with it."<sup>163</sup>

Located at the U.S. Marine Corps Air-Ground Combat Center in Twentynine Palms, California, the ATG was established in 2007 to prepare and certify U.S. Marines deploying to Afghanistan as part of advisor teams. The ATG was a formal school under the U.S. Marine Corps' Training and Education Command, and trained around 225 U.S. Marines each year.<sup>164</sup> Training at the ATG lasted 25 days and entailed completing an advisors skills course as well as a final mission rehearsal exercise. To make the training as realistic as possible, contractors supplied approximately 200 Afghan-American citizens who impersonated such roles as ANA officers, ANP officers, shopkeepers, or village elders.<sup>165</sup> The advisor teams were graded on how they advised and interacted with their Afghan counterparts.<sup>166</sup>

Compared to the ATC, U.S. Marine advisors were generally pleased with the training offered at the ATG. One former police advisor who attended both told SIGAR that "the leadership at the ATG was highly competent and well respected, [and] the overall environment at the ATG was much more conducive to a beneficial training experience. . . . The ATCs [did not attract] the same caliber of leaders."<sup>167</sup> Recommendations for improving the ATG included more rigorous team member selection and more tailored training—for example, providing battalion-level teams with more combat training and providing corps level teams with more "soft skills" training.<sup>168</sup>

Descriptions of the training sequence designed to support the SFAATs suggest only minimal improvements in preparation compared to prior predeployment efforts. During home-station training, for example, advisor personnel generally found that the BCTs they were assigned to devoted insufficient attention to the overall security force assistance mission. As one SFAAT member described, "The BCT did not task-organize or focus on the SFA mission early enough. Had the BCT focused on the SFA mission, the BCT would have had plenty of time to identify many shortcomings for the deployment."<sup>169</sup>

After-action reports, SIGAR-led interviews, and other anecdotal evidence suggest that training at Fort Polk did not adequately prepare SFAATs for the advisory mission. According to one former counterinsurgency advisor in Afghanistan who embedded



An ANA officer with 4th Brigade, 201st Corps, discusses the current situation in a clearing operation with a U.S. Army SFAAT member inside a temporary ANA tactical operations center in Bati Kot, Nangarhar Province. (U.S. Army photo by Jenny Lui)

with and observed 120 SFAATs, the vast majority of advisors did not think highly of the training offered at the Joint Readiness Training Center.<sup>170</sup> Training was often based on what the colonel of the BCT wanted rather than what the SFAATs' leaders wanted; as a result, training tended to focus on combat skills rather than the roles and activities of an advisor.<sup>171</sup> Another former SFAAT member described the predeployment training experience as “not for the purpose of the SFAATs . . . [but] geared toward the support of the SFAAT through convoy and operational training.”<sup>172</sup> Another former SFAAT leader described their predeployment training as “almost solely based on [forward operating base] defense.”<sup>173</sup> One soldier who served on two SFAATs told SIGAR that he did not receive any thorough language or cultural training before either of his deployments, that he often had to rely on his noncommissioned officers who had completed prior rotations in Afghanistan to gain familiarity, and that most of his training focused on weapons training and team combat exercises.<sup>174</sup>

Teams that were formed late also often did not receive U.S.-based advisor training. Former SFAAT members noted that some advisor personnel “did not receive any training due to last-minute notice,” and that “instead of focusing on training and learning about the specifics of the mission, [SFAAT personnel] were consumed with figuring out whether or not they were deploying.”<sup>175</sup>

Unlike the 1st Brigade at Fort Riley, however, the 162nd Infantry Brigade employed liaison officers at ISAF, the regional commands, and other places to collect lessons learned and after-action reports from advisor teams in Afghanistan. According to GAO's interviews with the 162nd Infantry Brigade, these feedback mechanisms were critical to modifying the program of instruction at Fort Polk.<sup>176</sup>

## Challenges Remain with Resource Allocation, Command and Control

Like the ETTs that the U.S. Army deployed to Afghanistan, SFAATs suffered from unclear command-and-control arrangements, inconsistent access to resources, and a lack of clear guidance on the overall SFA mission. As one former counterinsurgency advisor told SIGAR, the SFAATs had their own chains of command, which created communication issues between the BCT and SFAAT leaders.<sup>177</sup> However, placing the advisor teams under the brigade combat team did not necessarily alleviate all problems. According to one former SFAAT leader whose police advisor team fell under the command and control of the brigade combat team, the BCT “did not care about the advisory effort” despite the fact that it was supposed to be the primary focus. His advisor team was not integrated in any broader efforts, and he often felt that his advisor team and the BCT were working at cross purposes.<sup>178</sup>

Like ETTs, some SFAATs struggled to get necessary resources from higher headquarters or from the brigade combat team to which they were attached, often because the brigade combat team was limited in personnel and resources to begin with. Because the BCT was short on numbers, security personnel assigned to the SFAATs were sometimes pulled or assigned to different duties, hindering the SFAAT’s ability to conduct the advising mission.<sup>179</sup>

Limited personnel also meant that some advisor personnel were pulled to support the brigade staff or carry out multiple roles; as one former advisor said, “SFAAT members were required to do the organic unit mission as well as the SFAAT mission.”<sup>180</sup> Another former advisor told SIGAR that his team medic had to serve as both the medical leader for his squadron as well as the advisor to the medical officer for the ANA; still another advisor said that some personnel were taken from the SFAATs and placed onto Regional Command – East’s headquarters staff.<sup>181</sup> This advisor also explained that there were often issues with the SFAATs getting equipment from the brigade combat team to which they were assigned. Some advisor teams did not receive vehicles for their first four to five months of their nine-month deployment, or were left with vehicles that had been stripped of their weapons and radios.<sup>182</sup>

As with prior advisory efforts, SFAATs suffered from a lack of direction from leadership in Afghanistan. Personnel have described SFAAT advisory efforts as a “collection of good activities conducted by individual teams over time without a synchronized approach driving towards a tangible end state.”<sup>183</sup> While SFAATs were required to coordinate with the regional command and the BCT to which they were attached, what the advisor teams advised on and worked toward was largely left to the advisor teams.



## TRANSITION TO RESOLUTE SUPPORT: FULL-TIME ADVISORS AT THE TACTICAL AND OPERATIONAL LEVEL, REPLACED WITH PART- TIME, VISITING ADVISORS

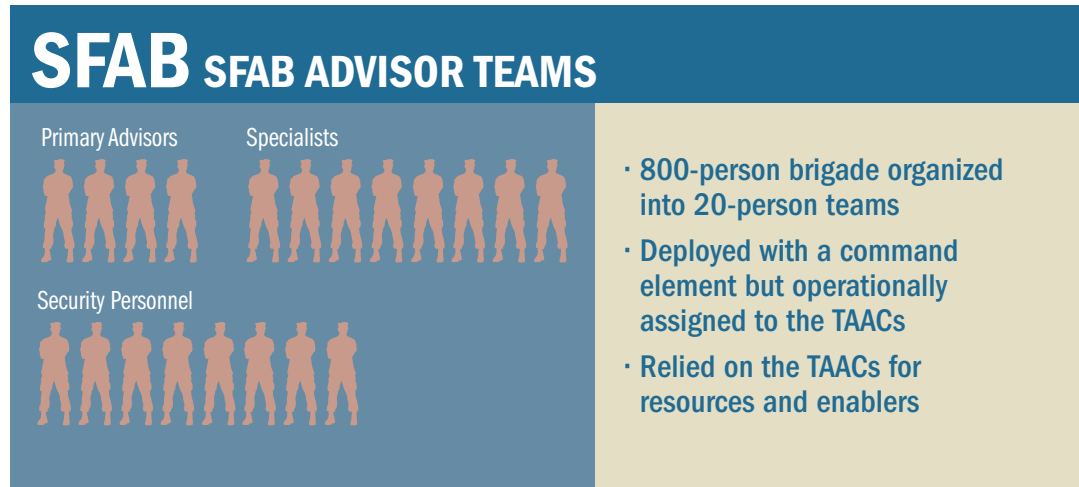
Following the 2014–2015 drawdown of U.S. and coalition forces, the Resolute Support Mission adopted a limited, regional approach to the train, advise, and assist mission.<sup>184</sup> As part of this transition, it was determined that a full-time advisor presence was no longer needed at the tactical and operational level. Rather, full-time advising would occur at the ANA corps level, the ANP zone level, and at the MOD and MOI in Kabul. Partnering with Special Forces and the Afghan Air Force would continue to receive full-time U.S. support at the operational level. It was also decided that a full-time advisor presence would not be needed at the 203rd Corps in Paktika Province or the 215th Corps in Helmand Province.<sup>185</sup>

To offset the lack of advisors at the tactical and operational level, and to ensure continued support of the 203rd Corps and the 215th Corps, the U.S. military turned to expeditionary advisory packages (EAP) to provide tailored advising to ANDSF units as needed. Expeditionary advisory packages refers to teams of advisors that periodically travel to advise Afghan units. The mission and duration of these fly-to-advise and drive-to-advise missions were both situational and flexible. Missions that involved advising an Afghan unit in a functional area could last a few days; operational crises or missions that involved assisting Afghan units with an operation could last several weeks.<sup>186</sup> The frequency of these missions also varied, with some Afghan units receiving in-person advising once a week and others receiving in-person advising once every couple of months.<sup>187</sup>

The U.S. military expanded its use of EAPs in late 2015 and throughout 2016, as it became clear that the ANDSF struggled to operate effectively without advisors.<sup>188</sup> In late 2016, for example, each of the Train, Advise, Assist Commands (TAAC) either had or was in the process of establishing its own internal EAPs to deploy to the brigade level and lower.<sup>189</sup> In December 2016, DOD reported that Resolute Support “is increasingly relying upon expeditionary advising teams that provide immediate, focused, and tailored train, advise, and assist support to the ANDSF for both enduring and emergent capability gaps.”<sup>190</sup> To provide oversight of expeditionary advising efforts in southeast and southwest Afghanistan, where the 203rd Corps and 215th Corps are located, Resolute Support established Task Force Forge and Task Force Anvil, respectively.<sup>191</sup>

Because EAPs are generally ad hoc formations that deploy on an inconsistent basis, their effectiveness has been the subject of scrutiny. A persistent, continued presence has long been considered critical to advising, as it provides continuity and conveys a level of commitment necessary for rapport building. However, anecdotal evidence suggests that EAP missions did not occur as frequently as desired. One interviewee told SIGAR that while his EAPs were intended to be 10- to 14-day missions, most visits lasted only five to eight hours.<sup>192</sup> Another advisor who served in Afghanistan for a total of 20 months from 2014 to 2017 wrote that his advising visits were often canceled “due to weather, security concerns, and VIP visits.”<sup>193</sup> In 2012, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Martin Dempsey testified that, “You can’t commute to work to train and advise someone you’re trying to develop. You can’t be there for three or four hours a day, and gone. You can’t commute. You’ve just got to be part of their lives. It does, in some level, put you at greater risk initially, but as the relationship builds, it actually lowers the risk.”<sup>194</sup>

FIGURE 5



## SECURITY FORCE ASSISTANCE BRIGADES: THE U.S. ARMY'S EFFORT TO INSTITUTIONALIZE BEST PRACTICES

Starting in 2017, the U.S. military took several steps to institutionalize combat advisor teams within the services. In February 2017, the U.S. Army announced the creation of six SFABs to serve three important functions: to preserve readiness by removing advisor requirements from the BCTs, to capture security force assistance expertise, and to complement the U.S. Special Forces that are engaged in several conflicts globally.<sup>195</sup> In emergency situations, if the environment transitions from a security assistance effort to active combat, SFABs are structured to transition from an advisor unit to a fully capable BCT with the addition of lower-rank soldiers. In November 2018, the U.S. Army activated the Security Force Assistance Command (SFAC), responsible for the training and assessment, selection, and vetting of all candidates for SFAB positions.<sup>196</sup>

SFABs consist of about 800 personnel organized in 36 multifunctional advisor teams each composed of 12 advisors and eight security personnel assigned to support the development of a partner nation's military (See Figure 5.). According to the U.S. Army, each advisor team would be staffed with a commander, NCO in charge, two maneuver advisors, a medic, a joint force operator, a communications officer, a mechanic, an intelligence analyst, and specialists in logistics, operations, and explosives—all tasked with advising their Afghan counterparts while also providing sustainment for the SFAB. An SFAB can also employ 18 functional advising teams specializing in logistics, engineering, or field artillery. Each SFAB is led by a one-star general responsible for coordinating all SFAB operations in a partner nation.<sup>197</sup>

In Afghanistan, SFABs were initially designed to partner with the ANDSF at the corps-level and below; accompany ANDSF units on operations; and coordinate access to coalition enablers such as intelligence assets, sustainment, close air support, and medical evacuation. SIGAR was told by the Security Force Assistance Command that SFABs are designed to develop a partner nation's military and are not currently staffed to partner with other types of security forces, such as police or special forces.<sup>198</sup>



According to USFOR-A, however, the 1st SFAB advised some Afghan police and special forces units in addition to the ANA. In reality, then, SFAB personnel are used in whatever manner TAAC commanders think would best accomplish the mission, which may differ across the TAACs. Since redeployment back to the United States in late 2018, the 1st SFAB has shared their experiences with the 2nd SFAB and the U.S. Army to share lessons learned and reflections from its first tour in Afghanistan.<sup>199</sup>

## 1st SFAB Improves Personnel Selection but Struggles with Retention

According to the U.S. Army, staffing for the SFABs is based on recruiting volunteers from the U.S. Army's active military component and National Guard. The 1st and 2nd SFABs implemented a multiple-step process to vet candidates. After a soldier expressed interest and submitted an application, the application was screened to make sure the soldier met the criteria for individual assessment by the SFAB. Soldiers who passed the initial screening were assessed by the SFAB commander.<sup>200</sup>

According to the U.S. Army, the assessment and selection process consisted of multiple exercises over a two-day period. Tasks included a height and weight assessment, a physical training evaluation, a leader reaction course, a warrior skills test, a military occupational specialty proficiency test, an ethical dilemma essay, peer evaluations, and a selection board interview.<sup>201</sup> SIGAR was told that while advisory experience is preferred, about 20 percent of the 1st SFAB had never deployed prior to their first assignment in Afghanistan.<sup>202</sup>

As highlighted in SIGAR's 2017 lessons learned report on U.S. security sector assistance activities in Afghanistan, serving as a military advisor is not considered career enhancing.<sup>203</sup> Personnel have expressed concern over the unclear career paths associated with being an advisor.<sup>204</sup> To incentivize officers to join the SFABs and improve recruitment, the U.S. Army offered a \$5,000 bonus for enlisted personnel, retention bonuses, selection of duty station following tour completion, and an additional Skill Identifier.<sup>205</sup> Even so, the 1st SFAB struggled to achieve the desired number of personnel. Only after altered recruiting efforts and the addition of augmentees was the brigade filled. This effort meant that the 1st SFAB was receiving personnel right up to their deployment.<sup>206</sup>

## SFAB Predeployment Training: Increased Focus on Advisor Skills

Current predeployment training for SFAB units is an improvement over previous efforts. After a soldier is selected as a member of an SFAB, that soldier is required to go through the U.S. Army's Military Advisor Training Academy at Fort Benning, Georgia, which was activated in August 2017.<sup>207</sup> After that, members of the SFAB attend additional advisor training at the Joint Readiness Training Center at Fort Polk, Louisiana. SFAB personnel will also receive home-station training focused on additional language and cultural training, and those SFABs going to Afghanistan as a whole will return to the Joint Readiness Training Center to conduct a mission readiness exercise geared toward advising the ANDSF.<sup>208</sup>

Military Advisor Training Academy instructors initially designed a six-week training program intended to train advisors at the ministerial level, but the U.S. Army Chief of Staff and the Secretary of Defense informed them that the training needed to be altered to meet the SFAB mission of providing combat field advising. With a limited amount of time to change the program of instruction, the 1st SFAB received a 10-day training program on the context of operations, cultural considerations, the NATO Resolute Support Mission, the use of interpreters and translators, Afghan interactions, the role of an advisor, force protection, and security force assistance operations. The 1st SFAB was exposed to limited language training and no training on small unit planning prior to deployment. For the 2nd SFAB, academy instructors expanded its training to four weeks, with follow-up language training through the U.S. Army's partnership with North Carolina State University, which is close to the 2nd SFAB's home station at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. The 2nd SFAB also received training on small unit planning by a certified U.S. Army Special Forces instructor. The academy plans to transition to a nine-week Combat Advisor Training Course; however, doing so will require additional military and civilian instructors.<sup>209</sup>

The 3rd Battalion, 353rd Regiment replaced the 162nd Infantry Brigade as the training organization at the Joint Readiness Training Center. As a smaller organization, it focuses specifically on the advisory mission and currently provides four different training courses for advisors. The Security Force Assistance Course targets advisor units deployed to the CENTCOM area of responsibility; the Joint Security Force Assistance Course is for non-U.S. Army advisors assigned to operational advisor billets; the Regionally Aligned Forces Course is designed for units deploying outside of the CENTCOM area of responsibility and that will provide more traditional advising in non-combat zones; and the Senior Leader Advisor Training is a pilot course designed for military advisors assigned to a partner nation's ministry of defense (For more on the Senior Leader Advisor Training course, see pp. 47–48.). During a site visit to JRTC in December 2018, SIGAR learned that filling classes for the Joint Security Force Assistance Course is a challenge. This may be due to recent reductions in U.S. Navy and U.S. Air Force requirements to advise at the operational and tactical level in Afghanistan and Iraq.<sup>210</sup>

The 1st SFAB attended the Security Force Assistance Course, which focused on basic military advising techniques and provided limited information on ANDSF systems, weapons, and structure. The training did not include discussions on how the unit would sustain itself and work with other deployed military commands. Recognizing issues with previous predeployment courses, the 2nd SFAB worked with the 3rd Battalion, 353rd Regiment to implement Theater-Specific Advisor Training (TSAT), which was tailored completely to advising the ANDSF. It exposed advisors to ANDSF structures, processes, and weapon systems and partnered with advisors from the 1st SFAB to hear lessons learned and best practices from advising the ANDSF and sustaining the SFAB in country.<sup>211</sup>

Despite these improvements, 1st SFAB training was still not tailored to the current environment. Breakout sessions designed to teach advisors how to work through



Advisors with the 1st SFAB speak with their ANA counterparts during a routine fly-to-advise mission. (Photo by Sean Kimmons)

complex problems focused on issues in which the SFAB will not have the authority to effect change. For example, during a training scenario, SFAB personnel were tasked with advising the MOD and MOI on topics such as fiscal sustainability and force allocations—issues no operational or tactical unit will face.<sup>212</sup>

While Joint Readiness Training Center instructors are not required to be experienced advisors, the 3rd Battalion, 353rd Regiment has implemented its own training program for instructors. Through this training plan, instructors attend multiple military schools to learn basic and advanced techniques on how to be an effective advisor in a deployed environment.<sup>213</sup>

### First Tour Reflections: Some Improvements, but Challenges Remain

In February 2019, SIGAR attended the 1st SFAB's after-action review at Fort Benning, Georgia. During the review, 1st SFAB leadership and personnel noted the positive contribution SFABs made to the mission in Afghanistan by providing a window into how the ANDSF was performing tactically on the battlefield. SFAB personnel attributed this to teams deploying to locations where there had not been a U.S. or coalition presence for several years. Advisor teams provided the TAACs with insights into the activities and operational capabilities of some previously unmonitored *kandaks*, or battalions.<sup>214</sup> The mission also benefited from the advisor teams' ability to take on tasks outside of their regular duties, such as supporting coalition partners. 1st SFAB leadership presented several potential indicators of success, such as a two- to threefold increase in ANA-led offensive operations in areas where SFAB teams advised.<sup>215</sup>

A *kandak* is the ANA equivalent of a U.S. Army battalion.

During the review, 1st SFAB personnel made several recommendations on ways to improve the mission. For example, in their selection process, the SFAC should

consider an advisor's ability to work as part of a small team, something ETT personnel identified as early as 2008. It was stated that some advisors did not have the patience or personality needed to work with a small group of people for nine months.<sup>216</sup> Another recommendation was that personnel should be selected based on their ability to teach: Team leaders noted that many people had technical expertise but were unable to transfer what they knew to others.<sup>217</sup> Several advisor team members also suggested that SFABs should not be touted as an all-volunteer force, as many of them were strongly encouraged—"voluntold"—or were simply ordered to join the 1st SFAB.<sup>218</sup>

Personnel also recommended more training on insider threat attacks (attacks by Afghan soldiers on U.S. troops), interpersonal training, training focused on teaching systems and processes, and training as a team.<sup>219</sup> Additionally, they stressed the need for early planning to ensure sufficient theater-specific training. As of this report's writing, the 1st SFAB is preparing for an October 2019 deployment but has not been told where they will be going.<sup>220</sup>

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*Several advisor team members also suggested that SFABs should not be touted as an all-volunteer force, as many of them were strongly encouraged—"voluntold"—or were simply ordered to join the 1st SFAB.*

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Personnel also stated that resource availability varied. While some reported they had adequate support (one battalion commander remarked that "people bent over backward to get the [SFAB] assets") several teams reported that resources were not readily available and that there was no clear guidance on how to acquire them.<sup>221</sup> Some reported that acquiring support and resources required reaching out to as many people as possible and often came down to personal relationships established with other units. As one advisor put it, getting resources involved "calling through the TAAC – South phonebook."<sup>222</sup> Further, limited assets meant that there were few empty seats open on vehicles or helicopters, which resulted in some teams being able to send only two or three advisors to visit their counterparts. Depending on location, advisor teams met with their counterparts once a week or once a month; consistent communication had to be done via phone calls.<sup>223</sup>

Some teams identified limited assets and a risk-averse leadership as factors limiting the amount of advising they could do. Drive-to-advise and fly-to-advise missions often required a lengthy approval process. According to one team leader, driving five minutes to advise their Afghan counterparts required too much supervision and a considerable amount of paperwork.<sup>224</sup>

Personnel also identified the need for a more effective chain of command. SFABs reported to the military operations command (DCOS-Ops) which was focused on battlefield requirements, rather than the train, advise, and assist command (Deputy Chief of Staff for Security Assistance or DCOS-SA/CSTC-A), which better understood the advising mission. DCOS-Ops and the TAACs could organize advisor teams as they saw

fit, but this resulted in some advisors being tasked with filling staff billets, conducting tactical operations, or other duties outside of an advisor's expected responsibilities.<sup>225</sup> In TAAC – South, for example, a battalion was tasked with running an airfield, and in TAAC – West, another battalion was tasked with helping the Italians coordinate air attacks.<sup>226</sup> Other challenges included the lack of standardized assessment tools to assess their Afghan counterparts and mid-deployment changes, such as some advisor teams switching from advising the ANA to advising the ANP.<sup>227</sup>

## 2nd SFAB Reflects on Their Predeployment Training

Following the 1st SFAB's after-action review, SIGAR attended the 2nd SFAB's after-action review at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, which focused on predeployment training. Several challenges were identified. For example, less than one month prior to their deployment, 2nd SFAB personnel learned that their missions had changed.<sup>228</sup> Specifically, advisor teams will only be advising at the corps and brigade level and not at the kandak level.<sup>229</sup> This means that some Afghan units that benefited from a renewed U.S. advisor presence under the 1st SFAB will no longer have access to U.S. advisors. In addition, the 2nd SFAB continued to receive new personnel just two months prior to their deployment.<sup>230</sup> This limits the amount of training possible and hampers team cohesion. 2nd SFAB personnel also noted the need for more advisor-specific and Afghanistan-specific training.<sup>231</sup> As in the 1st SFAB's review, 2nd SFAB personnel raised concerns about the criteria used to select advisors. Specifically, 2nd SFAB personnel expressed concern with the overemphasis on physical fitness rather than a candidate's ability to advise.<sup>232</sup> In addition, like the 1st SFAB, the 2nd SFAB does not have a standardized tool to assess their Afghan counterparts.<sup>233</sup>

## AIR ADVISING

In June 2004, the Office of Military Cooperation – Afghanistan (OMC-A) determined that Afghanistan required an air corps capable of providing more than a presidential lift capability. Specifically, OMC-A concluded that while providing airlift to the president of Afghanistan would serve as the primary effort, the nascent Afghan Air Force (AAF) should be expanded to provide a troop airlift capability. Thereafter, developing Afghan air power gained more attention and momentum. In 2005, the Afghan National Army Air Corps (ANAAC) was reconstituted and, in 2006, U.S., coalition, and Afghan leaders agreed to develop a 7,000-member air corps, more than double the number envisioned in 2005.<sup>234</sup> By 2009, DOD reported that ANAAC training was building Afghan capability for “missions ranging from [medical evacuation] to battlefield mobility and presidential airlift.”<sup>235</sup> In June 2010, Hamid Karzai, then the president of Afghanistan, announced that the ANAAC would be called the Afghan Air Force. Karzai also introduced a new long-term strategy for the development of Afghan air power. Specifically, U.S. and coalition partners agreed to support the creation of a COIN-capable air force that by 2016 would be capable of airlift, rotary and fixed wing close air support, medical evacuation, reconnaissance, and presidential transport.<sup>236</sup>

## **U.S. Air Force's Early Advisor Training Programs Were Ad Hoc**

In September 2006, as the U.S. Air Force was preparing to take over air advising responsibilities in Afghanistan, the U.S. Air Force Central Command teamed with 6th Special Operations Squadron to lead the first formal air advisor training course, which produced over 120 general purpose forces advisors. Although an effective course, it was described as “ad hoc and not designed for an enduring demand.”<sup>237</sup> In March 2007, therefore, the U.S. Air Force identified a need for a sustainable training program capable of producing 600 air advisors for both Iraq and Afghanistan.<sup>238</sup>

In March 2007, the headquarters of the U.S. Air Force designated Air Education and Training Command (AETC) as the lead command to provide predeployment training education for air advisors.<sup>239</sup> Training classes were first held at Camp Bullis and at Lackland Air Force Base in Texas until February 2008, when the AETC moved the course to Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst in New Jersey.<sup>240</sup> Air advisors attending this course received nine days of advanced combat skills training, 12 days of advisor training, and two days of area-specific instruction at the Expeditionary Center, for a total of 23 days of training and 230 hours of instruction. The maximum class size was 72 students, but the largest class was only 59 students.<sup>241</sup>

## **U.S. Air Force Establishes the Air Advisor Academy**

On April 19, 2010, General Norton Schwartz, then the U.S. Air Force's chief of staff, ordered AETC to establish a permanent Air Advisor Academy (AAA) for general purpose forces, which formally opened in May 2012 at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst.<sup>242</sup> The course for air advisors deploying to Afghanistan was known as the Air Advisor Basic Course – Afghanistan (AABC-A). The school provided training in three areas: air-advising core skills; language, region, and cultural training; and advanced force-protection skills.<sup>243</sup> According to U.S. Air Force officials interviewed by GAO, the Air Advisor Academy provided training to advisors deploying to Afghanistan, mobility support advisory squadrons, and mobile training teams. By 2014, the academy had trained more than 4,300 students and had the capacity to train up to 1,500 students per year, producing 1,227 graduates in 2013.<sup>244</sup>

## **AAA Training Program for Afghanistan Insufficient**

A 2013 report conducted by the Air Force Central Command Air Advisor and Training Division found that the Air Advisor Academy did not advise on appropriate teaching techniques, and that Afghan cultural training was “too focused on village type environments and [did] not necessarily represent the culture air advisors face in the field.” Although advisors received language training, some were trained in the wrong language (for example, some advisors were trained in Dari but were deployed to a Pashto-speaking area). The report also noted that advisors needed more training in AAF structure and processes.<sup>245</sup>

Another criticism was that the academy did not prepare air advisors to work in an environment that included working alongside coalition partners, other military services, and U.S. and foreign national contractors.<sup>246</sup> Air advisors said they felt unprepared to handle issues such as contractual restrictions and the national caveats of coalition



An AAF pilot and U.S. Air Force advisor fly an advisory mission near Kabul.  
(U.S. Air Force photo by Jason Robertson)

partners.<sup>247</sup> To further complicate the situation, non-U.S. Air Force air advisors from these other participating groups did not attend an equivalent formal air advisor school, yet they operated in the same capacity as U.S. air advisors.<sup>248</sup> Although the 2013 report noted that personnel from other military services and contract personnel could attend the Air Advisor Academy, this was not a requirement and few personnel attended.<sup>249</sup> As a result, predeployment training was not standardized across air advisors in Afghanistan. The report recommended that the U.S. Air Force reach out to NATO advisor training in Poland and advisor training in Canada to ensure that all members of the 438th Air Expeditionary Wing (AEW), the U.S. Air Force's air advisor organization in Afghanistan, received compatible training.<sup>250</sup>

At least some of the Air Advisor Academy's shortcomings could be attributed to the fact that there was no instructor cadre with air advising experience within the U.S. Air Force. Although there was an opportunity for those who graduated to return as guest instructors, doing so placed a strain on home units that had already gone without those personnel for up to 15 months.<sup>251</sup>

### Training Responsibilities Shift to U.S. Air Force Expeditionary Center

In September 2015, the Air Advisor Academy closed and training responsibilities were shifted to the Air Force Expeditionary Center, also located at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst. The primary advising course that airmen complete at the Expeditionary Operations School before going to Afghanistan is known as "Advisor C Course." According to the DOD OIG, this course "includes instruction and training on air advisor core knowledge skills, region-specific languages (Dari or Pashto), and other tactical skills, such as weapons training." The attendees also receive briefings about current ground, air, and counterinsurgency operations, as well as courses on Afghan culture, religion, government, and legal system.<sup>252</sup>





An Afghan A-29 pilot begins preflight preparation of his aircraft at Kandahar Airfield. (U.S. Air Force photo by Alexander W. Riedel)

### **Advisor C Course Critiques**

Air advisors reported that the course prepared them to encounter Afghan culture, but did not provide training in AAF organization and the procedures needed to effectively advise their counterparts—for example, how to use a basic form for AAF logistics requests. Nor did they learn about the relationship between the AAF and the ANA and the associated consequences regarding staffing and command and control. Both critiques had been offered by graduates of the previous Air Advisor Academy. As a result, graduates of the Advisor C Course felt that they were not as effective at advising their counterparts until they had gone through on-the-job training, which delayed the development of a productive relationship with their counterparts.<sup>253</sup>

The Expeditionary Operations School collects feedback through post-course critiques and in-country interviews every 18 months, which in theory should enable it to identify training gaps.<sup>254</sup> However, additions to the curriculum do not always specifically address those concerns. In response to the DOD OIG's findings, the NATO Air Command – Afghanistan (NAC-A) and the U.S. Air Force's AETC agreed to change predeployment training curriculum and provide incoming advisors with Afghan-specific information. Additionally, AETC agreed to update the curriculum for the air advisor course and collect observations, lessons learned, and best practices from air advisors in Afghanistan.<sup>255</sup>

### **U.S. Air Force Assumes Control of Advisory Mission and Creates Command Structure to Coordinate Efforts**

As the U.S. Air Force assumed responsibility for developing Afghan air capabilities in 2007, the U.S. Air Force created the Combined Air Power Transition Force, the initial air training entity responsible for advising Afghan pilots.<sup>256</sup> In 2008, U.S. Central



Command activated the 438th Air Expeditionary Wing (AEW) as the U.S. Air Force advisor organization in Afghanistan. The commander of the 438th AEW would also serve as the commander of the NATO Air Training Command – Afghanistan (NATC-A), the organization responsible for all key aspects of the mission: training, advising, and equipping the Afghan Air Force.<sup>257</sup> NATC-A reported to the NATO Air Command – Afghanistan (NAC-A) which was led by a U.S. Air Force general officer. In 2015, as the NATO mission changed from ISAF to Resolute Support, NATC-A was renamed Train, Advise, and Assist Command – Air (TAAC-Air) to better streamline the advisory effort and to ensure air advising efforts were included in planning and synchronization activities conducted by the regional commands.<sup>258</sup>

### **Air Force Lead Creates Opportunities and Challenges**

As discussed above, in 2007, the U.S. Air Force was designated as the lead for developing what was then the ANAAC, under the Combined Air Power Transition Force. A year later, the U.S. Air Force stood up the 438th AEW as the unit responsible for this mission. The institutionalization of an Air Force-specific element presented both advantages and challenges. The leadership of the 438th AEW felt that the primary advantage was in recruiting U.S. Air Force advisor personnel: As a U.S. Air Force command, the unit had access to service candidate lists and other tools for recruiting desirable personnel. Another advantage was having a familiar structure to assimilate and organize new staff.<sup>259</sup> Other senior officers, however, thought this traditional staff organization caused confusion when the 438th AEW worked with the combined and joint staff structure of NTM-A/CSTC-A.<sup>260</sup> A 2018 DOD OIG report found that TAAC-Air's plan for developing the AAF did not align with NAC-A's guidance and was not synchronized with Resolute Support campaign-level plans.<sup>261</sup>

Nor did having a U.S. Air Force unit designated as the lead for air advising in Afghanistan alleviate the friction of operating in a joint environment. By 2012, the U.S. Air Force had provided most of the U.S. military advisors in the NATC-A. While the U.S. Navy and U.S. Army did contribute personnel, both services restricted the use of their personnel with service-specific caveats. For example, U.S. Navy personnel were restricted to staff or aviation-related ground operations positions. The U.S. Army adopted a different airworthiness standard for the Mi-17 aircraft than those established by the 438th AEW commander and the AAF, which meant that U.S. Army aviators were unable to fly on the Mi-17 and could not serve as advisors to Afghan aviator counterparts. The U.S. Army could offer waivers with approval from the deputy commanding general of CSTC-A, but only on an individual, per-mission basis.<sup>262</sup> This issue created significant shortfalls for the training of the AAF and put a strain on the Air Force to produce more air advisors to minimize the deficit. In 2012, for example, the DOD OIG reported that there was a need for additional advisor personnel, especially those from the U.S. Army, for the Mi-17 rotary air training mission.<sup>263</sup>

## KEY FINDINGS

Overall, this study of U.S. field advising efforts in Afghanistan finds:

1. No military service was assigned responsibility or ownership for developing ANDSF combat capabilities. Instead, DOD looked to the various services to fill staffing requirements for training and advising teams. The design for training teams and predeployment training for advisors varied across the military services.
2. While DOD has sought to address field advising challenges with new advisor team models designed to mitigate command-and-control issues between combat-focused military elements and advisory teams, the U.S. military has struggled with setting priorities for the mission, resource allocation, and enabler support.
3. Despite efforts to improve advisor selection and predeployment training, advisor units face many of the same challenges previous advisor teams faced: delayed team formations, being assigned non-advisor tasks, and mid-deployment assignment changes. Advisor roles continue to be seen as not career enhancing, which contributes to high attrition rates and limited continuity.
4. Due to rank and specialty requirements, the U.S. military has struggled to staff field advisor teams. The current supply of field-grade officers, senior noncommissioned officers, and certain military occupational specialties cannot always meet demands.
5. Predeployment training did not adequately expose advisors to Afghan military systems, weapons, doctrine, and history. Nor does it adequately expose advisors to other U.S. advisory efforts that directly impact their mission.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **The U.S. military should create a clear career path for combat advisors and continue to provide incentives to improve recruitment. Part of this career path should include postdeployment assignments at SSA commands and U.S. military training centers.**

Establishing a career path for combat advisors within the U.S. military will allow the military services to retain expertise and experience. The military services should station former advisors at training centers (such as the Military Advisor Training Academy, Twentynine Palms, or the Joint Readiness Training Center) so they can provide relevant expertise to teams preparing to deploy. Additionally, assigning former advisors to roles at SSA commands such as the Defense Security Cooperation Agency (DSCA), Security Force Assistance Command, or the U.S. Marine Corps Security Cooperation Group will allow advisors to share recent first-hand experiences with those responsible for overseeing the mission. To improve retention, SFAC should consider phasing in incentives to SFAB personnel over time to counter yearly attrition. The U.S. Army should also consider creating a primary military occupational specialty for combat advisors.

- 2. Congress should consider directing the military services to conduct an internal human capacity assessment of combat advisor requirements around the globe. This assessment should also consider U.S. military force readiness requirements to maintain combat capabilities, a top priority of the U.S. National Security Strategy. The assessment should pay specific attention to those positions in high demand, such as military officers with a specialty in intelligence, medical, and logistics.**

For 17 years, the U.S. military has struggled to meet minimum staffing requirements for advisor teams. With renewed attention on adversaries such as China, Russia, and Iran, and continued high demands for advisory teams to build partner capabilities in fragile states such as Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, and several African countries, the services would benefit from a capacity analysis to efficiently allocate resources according to national security interests. This will allow Congress to properly allocate resources through the annual National Defense Authorization Act and defense budget.

- 3. In addition to training and building the SFABs, SFAC should also certify outgoing teams to ensure they are properly staffed, trained, and equipped; institutionalize a formal feedback mechanism to collect the SFABs' observations and formulate lessons learned; and create an assessment tool that SFAC can use to evaluate the effectiveness of SFAB units.**

To do this effectively, SFAC needs to be properly staffed to meet mission demands. As the command element, SFAC should validate that all SFAB personnel are assigned to advisor teams with enough time to receive predeployment training and that they have appropriate expertise and teaching abilities. SFAC should be empowered to remove candidates from the program who do not meet SFAB standards. SFAC should also create a tool that will allow the U.S. Army to assess, monitor, and evaluate SFAB performance during predeployment training and during deployment.

- 4. The military services should comply with DOD policies to track advisor experience, training, and deployments.**

DOD Instruction 5000.68 requires the military services and elements of DOD to track the security cooperation activities of personnel, but a 2018 SIGAR audit found that the services lacked any consistent and functional means of doing so. In order to effectively use advisors' background for future needs or to staff training entities, DOD must be able to identify those with advisor expertise.

- 5. The Joint Readiness Training Center should institutionalize Theater-Specific Advisor Training for all advisors and should address country-specific command-and-control relationships, procedures, and military culture. All advisors should complete TSAT in order to properly advise their Afghan counterparts in the processes and systems the Afghans employ.**

Advisors often received predeployment training that was not focused on the specific mission, organization, and equipment of their Afghan counterparts. TSAT, tailored to ANDSF forces and incorporating feedback and best practices from previous deployments, will better prepare advisor for their missions compared to past efforts. Training programs such as TSAT should use existing training curricula, such as the Ministry of Defense Advisors program's Advisor Fundamentals Training.

- 6. Resolute Support should create an independent assessment, monitoring, and evaluation division and create mobile assessment teams responsible for tracking ANDSF capabilities. The mobile teams should track the frequency in which tactical and operational training and advisory teams visit and engage with ANDSF units, as well as the core tasks advisors perform.**

Resolute Support and the U.S. military lack an assessment, monitoring, and evaluation tool to measure the effectiveness of U.S. advising at the tactical and operational level. As the United States has elevated its advising mission from the battalion to the corps level, U.S. advisory teams' engagement with ANDSF units have become sporadic and inconsistent. This assessment tool must be able to measure the frequency of U.S. advisors' engagements and record actions taken during "fly-to-advise" or "drive-to-advise" missions.

- 7. The Office of the Joint Chiefs of Staff should create a Joint Security Force Assistance Command to monitor advisor requirements among the different military services and provide a level of standardization in unit organization and predeployment training.**

Since multiple military services deploy advisors at the operational and tactical level, the Joint Staff should create an organization that can evaluate the effectiveness of all military advisor activities. This organization can recommend ways to improve standardization among training centers and identify areas in which advisor teams from different services may overlap in mission and requirements.

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# AIR-TO-GROUND SYNCHRONIZATION CHALLENGES

Various U.S. advisors have supported the development of Afghan ground and air capabilities. U.S. Air Force personnel (along with small numbers of U.S. Army and U.S. Navy aviation personnel) have predominately focused on advising the AAF, while U.S. Army and U.S. Marine Corps advisors predominately supported ANA ground operations.<sup>264</sup> While dividing these responsibilities was consistent with the services' core functions, it resulted in uncoordinated advisory missions. It also failed to fit the organization of the Afghan military, since both the AAF and the ANA report to a unified command under the Chief of the General Staff.<sup>265</sup> The resulting command-and-coordination gap between air and ground advisors resulted at times in U.S. ground and air advisors working at cross purposes.

On the Afghan side, ANA commanders lacked visibility of—or did not consider—AAF limitations or needs when calling for air support. ANA commanders could direct the use of air assets without taking into consideration AAF maintenance requirements, policy restrictions, or the availability of replacement assets. Some ANA leaders also used Special Mission Wing air assets for purposes other than their intended purpose of supporting Afghan Special Security Forces. Misuse of AAF assets has also been a problem. Some ANA misuse of air assets arose from senior leaders bypassing normal command-and-control channels or from giving misleading or insufficient information to correctly plan and source air missions. Sometimes misuse became actual abuse, such as deliberately mischaracterizing the nature of a mission in order to assign it a higher priority.<sup>266</sup>

In addition to diverting aircraft from their designated roles, excessive tasking of assets disrupted the normal maintenance cycle for Afghan aircraft, which resulted in potential safety issues and created a backlog for major maintenance. Depot-level maintenance must be performed outside of Afghanistan and can take up to 12 months, which puts greater demands on remaining operational aircraft. Eventually, this reduces the long-term service life of the Afghan aircraft inventory.<sup>267</sup> In order to reduce misuse and encourage adherence to required maintenance cycles, CSTC-A began levying fines in August 2018, eventually reaching \$150,000 per flight hour for misuse of Mi-17 helicopters. These fines had some short-term effectiveness.<sup>268</sup>

At least some field advisors were aware of these issues, but disregarded them to accomplish short-term tactical and operational goals. Some advisors felt that, due to insufficient resources, ANA corps commanders had no choice but to violate policy. These attitudes represent not only conflicting mission priorities, but cultural differences among the U.S. services when it came to advising their Afghan counterparts.<sup>269</sup>

ANA forces at the corps, brigade, and battalion level are currently advised by SFABs and U.S. Marine units, which fall under regional Train, Advise, and Assist Commands and task forces. AAF advisors fall under Train, Advise, and Assist Command – Air, located in Kabul. There is no established way of resolving conflicts between the regional TAACs and TAAC-Air; coordination occurs informally through ad hoc channels, or through the military operations chain of command.<sup>270</sup>

In 2017, the number of AAF combat operations surpassed coalition combat air support operations—a notable improvement from 2015, when AAF headquarters was incapable of planning independent AAF offensive operations.<sup>271</sup> The Director of Operations for Resolute Support noted that by early 2017, the AAF had assumed some aerial resupply duties previously provided by U.S. forces.<sup>272</sup> As the AAF becomes more capable and flies more missions, ensuring proper coordination between AAF and ANA advisors is more important than ever.





### CHAPTER 3

## MINISTERIAL ADVISING

Resolute Support photo

**B**uilding institutional capacity and governing capabilities in a partner nation's security ministries is critical to developing an independent and self-sustaining national defense and security force. Without effective governing institutions, a partner nation's fighting force will be unable to contribute to the security and prosperity of the state and will remain dependent on U.S. support, as is the case in Afghanistan today. This chapter analyzes the U.S. approach to developing key governance and oversight functions at the Afghan Ministry of Defense and Ministry of Interior and examines the selection and predeployment training of advisors.

Overall, SIGAR found that the ministerial advising effort in Afghanistan suffered from a lack of ownership. This resulted in the deployment of individual advisors from multiple DOD agencies and military services, each with varying levels of experience and training, all of whom were ultimately assigned to a temporary command structure. The U.S. approach to developing institutional capacity within the ministries was often not based on an expert-designed plan centered on an initial assessment of Afghanistan's long-term needs. Instead, plans routinely changed in reaction to immediate tasks and requirements. In-country, interagency coordination was ad hoc and responsibility for ministerial advising and field advising was divided between different chains of command.

## ROLE OF A MINISTERIAL-LEVEL ADVISOR

As a tool to advance U.S. interests, defense institution capacity building targets institutions responsible for the oversight, management, and governance of a partner nation’s defense sector. Unlike field advisors, who develop a partner’s warfighting capabilities, ministerial advisors focus on core functions required to govern the security forces: management of ideas (strategy, policy, and planning), money (resource management), people (human resource management), and things (logistics) (See Figure 6.).

Deploying advisors with the required expertise at the ministerial level is often challenging, due to the diversity of functions within the ministries. Some areas of ministerial advising call for subject-matter expertise typically found in the civilian sector; however, in Afghanistan, an over-reliance on military personnel meant some advisors lacked necessary expertise.<sup>273</sup>

FIGURE 6

### MINISTERIAL ADVISING: EXAMPLES OF CORE FUNCTIONS REQUIRED TO GOVERN SECURITY FORCES

<p><b>Strategy, Policy, and Planning</b></p> <p>Developing and overseeing security plans requires identifying defense objectives, providing policies to manage human and material resources, directing when and how to employ military forces, and aligning available ways and means to desired end states. Proper definition and articulation of missions and objectives are necessary to effectively drive the employment of available resources and are central to all other ministerial functions.</p>			
<p><b>Resource Management and Budgeting</b></p> <p>is the ability to plan, allocate, execute, and account for financial resources, including budgeting and analysis of short- and long-term budgetary requirements, alignment of resources with strategic priorities, management of programs, and auditing of expenditures.</p>	<p><b>Human Resource Management</b></p> <p>is the ability to recruit, develop, and assign the civilian and military workforce in support of defense objectives. Human resource management determines requirements, then manages and develops people to meet those requirements. It also bridges ministerial functions and general staff leadership through the force management process.</p>	<p><b>Acquisition and Logistics</b></p> <p>is the management framework needed to acquire and maintain defense capabilities, and to plan for delivery of forces and material. It requires performance of cost analysis and life-cycle support planning, and the development of policies for management and accountability of logistics systems and supply chains.</p>	<p><b>Rule of Law</b></p> <p>is the capacity to ensure the defense sector is accountable to national civilian authorities, adheres to domestic and international law, is subject to a clearly defined chain of command, and is governed by a consistent system of justice.</p>

Source: Thomas Ross Jr., "Defining the Discipline in Theory and Practice," in *Effective, Legitimate, Secure: Insights for Defense Institution Building*, eds. Alexandra Kerr and Michael Miklaucic (Washington, DC: National Defense University Press, 2017), pp. 36–40, 84; RAND Corporation, *What Works Best When Building Partner Capacity and Under What Circumstances?*, 2013, p. 91; James Greene, "Personnel Policies," in *Building Integrity and Reducing Corruption in Defense: A Compendium of Best Practices*, ed. Togar Tadarev (Geneva, Switzerland: Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces, 2010), p. 43.



Early in the conflict, it was common for advisors to prioritize immediate combat-related requirements over the long-term development of ministerial capabilities.<sup>274</sup> This approach underestimated the importance of ministerial capabilities in ensuring the long-term effectiveness of combat operations. Without fully functional ministries, operational forces will be unable to absorb and benefit from lower-level advising, and will fail to effectively move supplies, pay salaries, and provide medical care.<sup>275</sup> For example, U.S. field advisors found that ANDSF units frequently had insufficient ammunition and supplies for operations. Only when ministerial advisors urged the MOD to develop an effective supply management system for resources could field advisors help their partners with such logistical problems.<sup>276</sup> Additionally, Afghan ministries often lacked human resource management policies to ensure that personnel with specialized training were placed in roles that capitalized on their training. In December 2016, DOD reported that qualified personnel were routinely diverted to support immediate operational needs outside of their specialties.<sup>277</sup> One former executive director of sustainment wrote in 2016 that “in many corps, maintainers are not serving as mechanics in their positions. Rather, they are consistently assigned to other duties and spend little time actually performing maintenance functions.”<sup>278</sup> Poor human resource management at the ministerial level meant that U.S. efforts to train Afghan personnel were often wasted.

## Building Institutional Capabilities Requires Continued Evaluation of Ministerial Needs

Oftentimes, U.S. advisors viewed the **training** and **advising** mission as a list of tasks that needed to be completed, rather than a list of tasks that required continuous review and adjustments along the way. U.S. advisors also tended to focus on developing individuals rather than developing institutionalized capabilities, an effort that involves advising multiple individuals at the same time.<sup>279</sup> Based on this approach, Afghan proficiency with certain capabilities often depended on how long individuals had been in their jobs. When they moved on, the training and advising process had to start over with their replacement.

During SIGAR’s visit to CSTC-A in January 2019, CSTC-A told SIGAR that they were updating an internal spreadsheet used to track tasks assigned to advisors at the ministerial level. Many of the thousands of tasks listed were marked as “complete” but, due to Afghan personnel rotation or lack of supervision, many were found to be incomplete and required further U.S. advisory support.<sup>280</sup> Rather than a linear, hierarchical sequence of steps in which the goal is to complete the next task, a successful approach to **defense institution building** (DIB) calls for managing the status of multiple tasks simultaneously to monitor progress and setbacks.<sup>281</sup>

**Training** includes efforts that improve partner capabilities and enable foreign forces to accomplish functional tasks, roles, and missions. It also includes teaching partners operational planning methods; combat tactics, techniques, and procedures; and sustainment methods.

**Advising** includes counseling partner commanders on the effective employment of forces in specific operational situations or in the context of specific problems.

Source: U.S. Air Force, Curtis E. LeMay Center for Doctrine Development and Education, *Annex 3-22: Foreign Internal Defense*, July 10, 2015.

**Defense institution building** refers to security cooperation activities that empower partner nation defense institutions to establish or reorient their policies and structures to make their defense sector more transparent, accountable, effective, affordable, and responsive to civilian control.

DIB improves defense governance and increases the sustainability of other DOD security cooperation programs.

Source: DOD, “Directive 5205.82—Defense Institution Building,” January 27, 2016, p. 13.

## EVOLUTION OF THE STRUCTURE OF MINISTERIAL ADVISING

The command structure for advisors assigned at the ministerial level has undergone several changes over the past 17 years. In 2002, the United States focused on quickly building combat forces, which led to the creation of the Office of the Military Cooperation – Afghanistan to oversee the development of the Afghan MOD and ANA.<sup>282</sup> However, OMC-A lacked the resources needed to grow Afghan ministerial capabilities in order to support and sustain the newly formed Afghan forces.<sup>283</sup> In response, the United States deployed ad hoc teams of civilian, military, and contractor personnel to help the Afghan security ministries develop capabilities required to sustain operations.<sup>284</sup> Contractors helped reform and mentor the MOD and Army General Staff by writing doctrine and teaching how to plan and synchronize operations.<sup>285</sup>

When the task of developing the MOI and Afghan National Police was moved from State to DOD in 2005, OMC-A was renamed the Office of Security Cooperation – Afghanistan (OSC-A) and was assigned to “develop, plan, program, and direct all aspects of security assistance in order to deliver [an ANDSF] capable of supporting the development of a stable Afghanistan.” To improve command and control over ministerial-level ANA and ANP development, OSC-A created two lead organizations: the Defense Reform Directorate and Police Reform Directorate.<sup>286</sup> The Defense Reform Directorate was responsible for human resources, operations and training, resources, strategic reform, engineering, communications, and aviation divisions.<sup>287</sup> The Police Reform Directorate had divisions responsible for ministry reform, police operations, plans and integration, and resources.<sup>288</sup> Each directorate reported to the OSC-A commander.<sup>289</sup>

By 2006, the concept of building capacity through security sector assistance was gaining traction at the highest levels in the U.S. government. DOD’s *Quadrennial Defense Review*, for example, mentioned U.S. efforts that enabled partner nations’ ministerial capabilities.<sup>290</sup> In Afghanistan, as a result of the growing focus on institutional development within the Afghan MOD and MOI, OSC-A was renamed the Combined Security Transition Command – Afghanistan and was assigned to CENTCOM.<sup>291</sup> CSTC-A was given the responsibility of helping the ANDSF establish its own acquisition and personnel systems, recruit and train soldiers and policemen, organize the MOD and MOI to mentor senior leaders and the General Staff, and acquire weapons, uniforms, and equipment to develop the security forces.<sup>292</sup> Under the first CSTC-A commanding general, there were two deputy commanding generals (DCG): One would focus on political-military initiatives within CSTC-A and on developing the ANP, while the other would focus on security assistance and developing the ANA.<sup>293</sup> Both would report to the CSTC-A commander.<sup>294</sup>

According to security sector reform experts Querine Hanlon and Robert Perito, “Deteriorating security conditions in Afghanistan, coupled with the growing awareness that U.S. security assistance had failed to produce a viable Afghan army or police force, prompted a renewed focus on defense institution building.”<sup>295</sup> In an attempt to align the U.S. and NATO efforts to build institutional capacity within the Afghan ministries, the United States worked with NATO to establish the NATO Training Mission – Afghanistan. The April 2009 NATO summit supported the establishment of NTM-A and embraced its pursuit of a “capable and self-sustaining ANDSF, comprised of senior-level mentoring for the ANA and an expanded role in developing professional ANP.”<sup>296</sup> According to Jack Kem, former deputy to the commander of NTM-A, “the establishment of a separate three-star headquarters in Afghanistan as the training command was a vital step to creating the organizational structure to enable the eventual transition of full control to the Afghan government.”<sup>297</sup>

NTM-A/CSTC-A provided a greater focus on ministerial needs.<sup>298</sup> Lt. Gen. William Caldwell, the first U.S. dual-hatted commander of NTM-A/CSTC-A, created two deputy commanders—one for the ANA and one for the ANP—under CSTC-A's mandate. The Deputy Commanders (DCOM) were responsible for ministerial-level development and had command over all advisors working at the MOD and MOI; however, they did not have command and control over tactical and operational advisory efforts. According to NTM-A/CSTC-A's *180 Day Internal Review and Way Forward*, ministerial development showed slow but steady incremental progress. Yet neither the MOD nor the MOI were expected to be fully capable before 2012.<sup>299</sup>

Under Lt. Gen. Caldwell's guidance, NTM-A and the DCOMs developed Ministerial Development Plans (MDP) that were focused on five priority areas (known as lines of operation): human resource management, support to operations, national logistics, executive leadership and defense policy, and resource management.<sup>300</sup> These MDPs outlined tasks for each type of advisor carrying out a specific function and included expected measures of performance and effectiveness.<sup>301</sup> At the peak of the NTM-A mission, there were over 500 advisors assisting the MOD and MOI.<sup>302</sup> The deployment of a large number of advisors allowed the United States to target certain essential functions in the MDPs (such as logistics, medical, and acquisition).

In 2015, as the United States and NATO transitioned from ISAF to Resolute Support, the mission prioritized SSA as the main line of effort.<sup>303</sup> The advisory effort at the MOD and MOI was reorganized from four pillars (sustainment and resource management; human resource management; strategy and policy; and transparency, accountability, and oversight) to eight essential functions.<sup>304</sup> These were synced with the core functions of defense institution building and aligned advisors with specific capabilities required at the ministerial level: policy, budgeting, and human resource management.<sup>305</sup> Since these functions are required at both the MOD and MOI, a general officer or a member of the DOD Senior Executive Service served as the lead for each of the eight essential functions.<sup>306</sup> Advisors were then aligned to a function and would, at times, advise at both the MOD and MOI.<sup>307</sup> These advisors would report up their essential function chain of command to the function lead, who would report to the CSTC-A commander.<sup>308</sup> While this model was an improvement, there was no enduring, expert-designed plan complete with specific performance indicators, logic frameworks, and other key assessment, monitoring, and evaluation elements.<sup>309</sup>

In 2018, newly appointed CSTC-A commander General James Rainey recognized that a strict alignment of advisors to essential functions hindered prioritization and synchronization of efforts within each ministry.<sup>310</sup> CSTC-A reorganized the advisory effort and re-established proponent leads for the defense and interior, now called Ministry Advisor Group – Defense (MAG-D) and Ministry Advisor Group – Interior (MAG-I).<sup>311</sup> MAG-D and MAG-I are each led by a two-star level general officer, both of whom report directly to the three-star CSTC-A commander.<sup>312</sup> CSTC-A also renamed essential functions as “functional areas” to continue focusing on functionally based security force assistance and aligning advisors to key ministerial functions that impact both the MOD and MOI collectively.<sup>313</sup>



Incoming Resolute Support advisors attend in-country advisor training held at Resolute Support headquarters in Kabul. (Photo by Kristine Volk)

## **DIVERSE MEANS FOR SELECTING AND TRAINING MINISTERIAL ADVISORS**

Oversight and governance of the armed forces is traditionally considered a civilian-led function in most democracies, but it took about a decade for the United States to begin using civilian government experts as advisors at the Afghan MOD and MOI.<sup>314</sup> Even then, as SIGAR noted in a July 2017 performance audit, only 12 percent of ministerial-level advisors in Afghanistan were DOD civilian experts.<sup>315</sup> Today, the United States continues to rely on a range of U.S. military personnel, civilians, and contractors to advise at the ministerial level in Afghanistan.<sup>316</sup>

### **Uniformed Personnel Deploy in Key Leadership Roles without Tailored Advisor Training**

For years, senior uniformed military advisors have been responsible for advising the senior ranks of the Afghan security ministries.<sup>317</sup> Without proper training, uniformed military advisors have at times tried to create Afghan capabilities and capacity that are similar to those of the United States—a concept referred to as mirror imaging.<sup>318</sup> Former Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense Thomas Ross Jr., for instance, has noted stories about U.S. military advisors trying to develop a budgeting system for the Afghan MOD based on Pentagon budgeting systems. Ross remarked on the absurdity of this idea, describing it as “seeking to adapt an incredibly complex system designed to balance requirements of numerous components and agencies across over a half trillion dollars to meet the needs of a ministry that had a budget the size of an average big-city school district in the United States.”<sup>319</sup>

A 2010 study conducted by the Joint Center for International Security Force Assistance (JCISFA) also found that many military ministerial advisors were not fully

qualified for their positions.<sup>320</sup> While some advisors were selected for their functional skills, others were selected based on the amount of time since their last deployment, based on a nomination from a commander, or because they volunteered.<sup>321</sup> Many of these personnel arrived in Afghanistan with varying levels of training and experience, and there is evidence that many of them were insufficiently trained.<sup>322</sup> One former advisor told the Center for Army Lessons Learned that advisors were chosen based on “timing, availability, the number of deployments, and based on how it will bolster the officer’s service record.”<sup>323</sup> Despite a 2010 DOD instruction that required the U.S. military services to create a tracking system to identify individuals who have served in an SSA assignment or completed advisor training, the U.S. Army has yet to do so, making it difficult to match personnel with requirements.<sup>324</sup>

### No Standardized or Institutionalized Training Available to Military Personnel

Many uniformed personnel were selected as **individual augmentees** and received no ministerial advisor-specific training prior to deployment.<sup>325</sup> Advisors reported that the predeployment training they received focused largely on “combat survival skills, without sufficient emphasis on Afghan-centric mentoring and training skills specific to their assignments.”<sup>326</sup> In-theater training for advisors at NTM-A and CSTC-A was limited to a single half-day advisor course.<sup>327</sup> During one iteration of the course, only five of the 26 newly arrived advisors had received previous training at an advisor training center.<sup>328</sup> In the absence of a formal predeployment training program, some advisors were left to their own study efforts to prepare for their mission, which most described as inadequate.<sup>329</sup>

**Individual augmentees** are personnel assigned to fill shortages or are used when specialized experience is needed.

Resolute Support commander General John Nicholson noted in 2017 that most uniformed personnel assigned as ministerial advisors were still not receiving appropriate predeployment training, an observation echoed by Maj. Gen. Richard Kaiser, outgoing commanding general of CSTC-A, who noted that “the U.S. military has no proper training for advising at the ministerial level.”<sup>330</sup> In response, Secretary of Defense James Mattis stopped all advisor deployments in mid-2017 until all uniformed personnel deploying to Afghanistan in advisory roles could be trained.<sup>331</sup> In June 2017, CSTC-A provided a four-day Individual Key Leader Training at Resolute Support headquarters that covered security force assistance and guardian angel training for incoming advisors as well as a baseline understanding of the advisory mission in Afghanistan.<sup>332</sup> At the same time, Maj. Gen. Kaiser designed plans to create an academy in Afghanistan to provide an overview of basic advisor skills. The program was mandatory for all deployed uniformed personnel prior to any engagements with Afghans officials.<sup>333</sup> Additionally, some military commanders requested that Ministry of Defense Advisors program instructors provide training for military officers.<sup>334</sup>

In 2018, the Joint Readiness Training Center in Fort Polk, Louisiana, created a Senior Leader Advisor Training (SLAT) pilot program designed to train senior military officers to serve as advisors at the MOD or MOI.<sup>335</sup> The Senior Leader Advisor Training course was a collaborative effort that included the 3rd Battalion, 353rd Regiment; JCISFA; the Defense Security Cooperation Agency; United States Special Operations Command; NATO’s Joint Force Training Center; NATO’s Allied Joint Force Command;

and the MODA program.<sup>336</sup> Along with the SLAT program, CSTC-A continues to require uniformed personnel to attend the four-day Resolute Support Individual Key Leader Training at Resolute Support headquarters upon arrival in Kabul if the advisor did not receive advisor-specific training before deploying (See Table 1).<sup>337</sup>

While these efforts demonstrate the U.S. military’s desire to improve and institutionalize advisor training, there were still ways to avoid training altogether. To meet mission requirements in Afghanistan or to rapidly fill advisor vacancies, the services’ predeployment training requirement has sometimes been waived.<sup>338</sup> According an October 2018 SIGAR audit on ministerial advising at the MOD and MOI, training waivers were a primary reason for advisors to not attend training.<sup>339</sup> The U.S. Army has been aware of this issue and is tightening scrutiny on the waiver process.<sup>340</sup>

TABLE 1

SENIOR LEADER ADVISOR TRAINING SCHEDULE	
Day One	Inbrief, threat brief, MODA introduction, cross-cultural communication and rapport, insider threat training, language training
Day Two	Senior advising fundamentals, influence and negotiation
Day Three	Afghan history and culture, ANET, use of an interpreter
Day Four	Weapons training and qualification
Day Five	Role player engagement exercise
Day Six	Language training, role player engagement exercise
Day Seven	Language training, role player exercise

Source: 3rd Battalion, 353rd Regiment, “Senior Leader Advisor Training Course Schedule,” May 31, 2019.

### The AFPAC Hands Program: Regional Expertise, but Not Advisor-Specific Training or Employment

In 2009, DOD created the Afghanistan/Pakistan Hands (AFPAC Hands) program to develop a cadre of experts specializing in the language, culture, processes, and challenges facing Afghanistan and Pakistan.<sup>341</sup> The AFPAC Hands program is staffed with uniformed personnel who were either nominated or selected by their services or who volunteered, as well as civilian volunteers who are supported by their DOD home office.<sup>342</sup> To create this cadre of regional experts, AFPAC Hands received extensive cultural and language training and were expected to serve at least two deployments in the region. (See Table 2.)<sup>343</sup> The services were instructed to select officers whose records indicated a strong future command potential, or who were former commanders with senior leadership potential.<sup>344</sup> Candidates were not required to possess knowledge of core security sector governance functions for nomination and selection into the program.<sup>345</sup>

AFPAC Hands program participants received significant language training, had the opportunity to earn a master’s degree, and were placed in key staff positions in places like the Pentagon, CENTCOM, or U.S. Special Operations Command during their tour in the United States.<sup>346</sup> Yet many attendees regarded their assignment to the program as a hindrance to their career progression.<sup>347</sup> Participants in the AFPAC Hands program deployed individually and, while some had experience in relevant areas such





U.S. Army General Stanley McChrystal, then commander of ISAF, speaks with the first class of AFPAK Hands' U.S. service members and civilians. (Photo by Matthew Chlosta)

as financial management, they were at times assigned to fill billets unrelated to their experience.<sup>348</sup> The program also had problems with filling its own staffing requirements. One interviewee told SIGAR that there is some fatigue in the services with supporting the program, and that there are competing demands for advisors with the creation of the U.S. Army's new Security Force Assistance Brigades.<sup>349</sup>

Assessments of the language training participants received during the AFPAK Hands program were mixed. One former AFPAK Hand told SIGAR that the advanced language training they received “was very practical and [was used] in order to gain insights from the interpreters that the coalition hired.”<sup>350</sup> But this language training was not tailored to ministerial level advising and, according to former Hands, was better suited for the

TABLE 2

AFGHANISTAN-PAKISTAN HANDS PREDEPLOYMENT TRAINING		
Type of Training	Description	Duration
Predeployment combat skills	Includes training and equipping for U.S. Navy, U.S. Air Force, and U.S. Marine Corps service members	3–4 weeks
COIN Seminar	Includes lessons in stabilization, ethics and human rights, and training, developing, and advising local security forces	4 days
Culture and history seminar	Includes lessons on history, culture, governance, and political dynamics of Afghanistan and Pakistan	3 days
Language training	Includes language training in Dari, Pashto, or Urdu	16 weeks
Predeployment combat skills or weapons qualifications	U.S. Army to complete combat skills and other services to complete weapons qualification	1 week
<b>Total</b>		<b>5 Months</b>

Note: Language training also includes weekly operations, intelligence, command-and-control briefs as well as periodic COIN discussions.

Source: Joint staff PACC, AGPAK Hands (APH) Program, no date, p. 5; Mark Lee, “The Afghanistan-Pakistan Hands Program,” February 11, 2014; Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, “CJCS Instruction 1630.01B-Afghanistan/Pakistan HANDS (APH) Program,” July 8, 2016, pp. E-1–E-2.





A U.S. Air Force engineer and a member of the 1st AFPAK Hands cohort listens to counterinsurgency training at the COIN Academy at Camp Julien in Afghanistan. (Photo by Matthew Chlosta)

tactical level.<sup>351</sup> Some former AFPAK Hands observed that, while they were trained in combat skills, there was no training in how to actually develop relationships and advise a counterpart. They further noted that the process used to screen AFPAK Hands did not select individuals with the right disposition needed to be an effective advisor.<sup>352</sup>

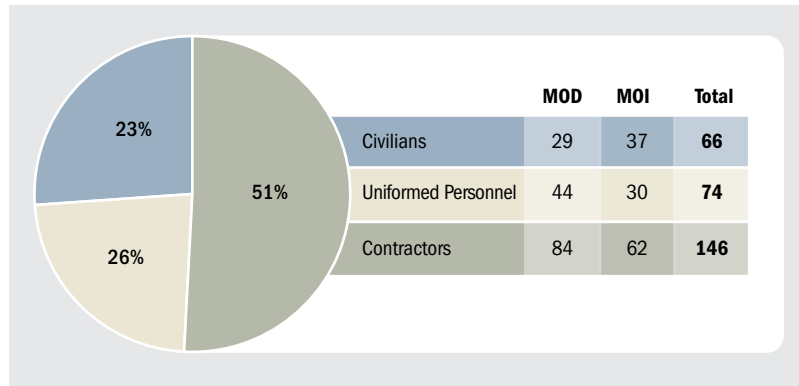
### **Contractors Used to Fill Staffing Gaps**

In the early years of the United States' involvement in Afghanistan, the U.S. government faced challenges deploying enough personnel with the required expertise to meet the growing mission requirements at the MOD and MOI. To respond to these emergent needs, State and DOD turned to contractors, since contractors are often able to quickly deliver critical support capabilities tailored to specific military needs (See Figure 7).<sup>353</sup> Contractors brought with them a vast and varied array of experiences, from linguistics to weapon systems maintenance.<sup>354</sup> They are also able to deploy for multi-year assignments, which allowed them to provide historical knowledge and continuity and create long-term rapport with their Afghan advisees.<sup>355</sup> According to a SIGAR interview with DynCorp officials, "Contractors tend to have the most experience among the varied types of advisors. Many of the contractors have spent five to 10 years in Afghanistan or advising. The turnover rate is less than 2 percent a month."<sup>356</sup> But according to one DOD official, such continuity does not necessarily translate into effectiveness. In the words of the official, "contractor efforts [can] provide continuity in implementing a poorly designed reform process."<sup>357</sup>

As the United States began to draw down forces and transition to the Resolute Support Mission, contractors were used to staff key billets because they were not limited by "boots on the ground" restrictions that were applied to uniformed personnel.<sup>358</sup> General John Nicholson, former commander of the Resolute Support Mission and U.S. Forces –

FIGURE 7

**TOTAL DOD CONTRACTORS, DOD CIVILIANS, AND U.S. MILITARY ADVISING AT THE MOD AND MOI (AS OF MARCH 2019)**



Source: CSTC-A, response to SIGAR data call, March 2019.

Afghanistan, testified before the Senate Armed Services Committee that DOD had to substitute contractors for uniformed personnel in order to “meet force manning levels” and “to do functions that normally service members would do.”<sup>359</sup>

Contractors were not required to attend predeployment advisor training. Instead, they were vetted by the contracting firm, which determined if the candidate had the required technical skills and experience for the position.<sup>360</sup> In July 2017, contractors accounted for 67 percent of ministerial advisors in Afghanistan (387 out of a total of 577), with 110 in the MOI and 277 in the MOD.<sup>361</sup> In its October 2018 audit on ministerial advising, SIGAR noted that performance metrics for contract advisors were nonexistent, although DOD has told SIGAR it had plans to modify performance work standards to incorporate some objective measures.<sup>362</sup>

CSTC-A told SIGAR that at the end of October 2018, they implemented a review process that included a discussion of performance metrics and future requirement plans.<sup>363</sup> A senior CSTC-A officer initially reviewed the top 25 CSTC-A contracts that accounted for 90 percent of the funding. During his review, he found that requirements in 2019 were sometimes different than they were when they were first awarded years ago. Many of the contracts awarded during those years were firm, fixed price contracts, which worked very well when requirements were stable. However, when requirements are changing continuously and significantly, as they are today, a firm, fixed price contract is not optimal. As a result, CSTC-A looked for opportunities to change contract types when appropriate. For example, CSTC-A mapped out requirements for one specific contract providing train, advise, and assist services, and determined it could cut the number of mentors by two-thirds. By emphasizing decisive and key tasks, CSTC-A focused its advising efforts and became more effective with its contractor staff.<sup>364</sup>

## **DOD Develops a Civilian Capacity for Ministerial Advisors**

In 2009, President Obama announced a military and civilian surge in Afghanistan aimed at reversing the Taliban's momentum and building the capacity of the Afghan government. To develop governance capacity within the security ministries, DOD created formal structures to recruit, select, and deploy its civilian workforce.<sup>365</sup> This led to the creation of the MODA program, which was designed to provide a worldwide network of trained civilian advisors specifically tailored to improve a country's defense institutions.<sup>366</sup> Additionally, the increased focus on defense institution building led to the creation of the Defense Institution Reform Initiative (DIRI) program, which was designed to "support the development of partner defense ministries through regular engagements with partner defense ministries that are aimed at identifying their capability gaps and then working to fill them."<sup>367</sup>

### **Ministry of Defense Advisors Program: Civilian Experts with Multi-Year Tours**

The MODA program was established as a pilot program by DOD in 2009.<sup>368</sup> The concept for the MODA program was developed by the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Partnership Strategy and Stability Operations in collaboration with the United States Institute of Peace's (USIP) Academy for International Conflict Management.<sup>369</sup> MODA advisors aim to forge long-term relationships with their counterparts and improve ministerial competencies in areas such as personnel and readiness, strategy and policy, and financial management.<sup>370</sup> The FY 2012 NDAA authorized the MODA program and provided funding that would allow it to select and train civilians to deploy to partner nations outside of ongoing overseas contingency operations in order to support that nation's institutional development.<sup>371</sup> In October 2012, DSCA took over program management responsibilities for the MODA program.<sup>372</sup>

### **Defense Institution Reform Initiative**

The DIRI program provides subject matter experts that work with a partner nation to address capabilities gaps in the development of policy and strategy, ministerial organization, force development, budgets, human resources, logistics, civil-military relationships, and interagency coordination.<sup>373</sup>

Subject matter experts provide support on a periodic but sustained basis.<sup>374</sup> The DIRI program enables subject matter experts to identify and develop ways to address the capacity gaps of a partner nation and provide advisors with a key set of tasks required to develop an improved resource management capability over time. However, according to a SIGAR interviewee, the DIRI program is not suited for contingency operations because of changing conditions on the ground and frequent turnover.<sup>375</sup>

In 2011, DOD considered using DIRI's subject matter experts in Afghanistan to "provide a holistic look at the [human resources management] line of operation that is currently threaded across 38 individual Ministerial Development Plans and provide one master plan" for NTM-A. DIRI professionals questioned the viability of NTM-A's MDP and whether the milestones identified could be completed in the timeframe provided.<sup>376</sup> Despite these concerns, an alternative solution provided by DIRI experts was never implemented at NTM-A.<sup>377</sup>



A senior DOD civilian employee and MODA program trainee meets with an Afghan role player during a training exercise for the MODA program. (Photo by David Bruce)

MODA advisors typically have 15 or more years of federal service experience.<sup>378</sup> They usually come from organizations within DOD, and have expertise in fields like logistics, finance, personnel, communications, public works, public affairs, and intelligence.<sup>379</sup>

Deploying civilians with relevant experience proved to be an effective approach for ministerial development. In his 2010 testimony to Congress, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Partnership Strategy and Stability Operations James Schear stated that after the first group of MODA advisors had served in Afghanistan for a few months, NTM-A/CSTC-A commander Lt. Gen. Caldwell requested that military advisors be sent through the MODA training program as well.<sup>380</sup> General David Petraeus, then commander of ISAF, requested that DOD recruit and deploy at least 100 more civilian advisors before the end of 2010.<sup>381</sup> In 2017, Maj. Gen. Kaiser, then CSTC-A commander, called MODA's personnel "some of the best advisors."<sup>382</sup>

### **DOD Explores Ways to Find Civilian Advisors**

In January 2009, DOD established the Civilian Expeditionary Workforce (CEW), a standing cadre of civilian volunteers that could be prepared to mobilize quickly as needed.<sup>383</sup> CEW personnel were placed in a variety of roles in Afghanistan, including advising at the MOD and MOI.<sup>384</sup> GAO found in 2011 that CEW was not fully developed and guidance had not been published that would enable DOD components to identify and designate positions for CEW volunteers.<sup>385</sup> In January 2017, CEW was renamed DOD Expeditionary Civilians (DOD-EC), and the military services and DSCA were given the responsibility to fill required positions.<sup>386</sup>

DOD civilians assigned through DOD-EC can serve as MODA advisors for up to two years.<sup>387</sup> MODA reimburses the office of the deployed advisor so that they can hire a





Members of the MODA program are escorted from meetings by their personnel security detail during a training exercise held at Muscatatuck Urban Training Center, Indiana. (Photo by David Bruce)

temporary replacement during the advisor's absence.<sup>388</sup> Nevertheless, the deployment of senior personnel can leave a gap at their home agency; one senior MODA advisor assigned to CSTC-A's Rule of Law Directorate was the general counsel for his home office, and he faced pressure to return to his permanent position.<sup>389</sup> Advisors' home offices do not always allow deployment extension: The MODA program manager estimated that approximately a third of extension requests are denied.<sup>390</sup> DOD officials have told SIGAR this contradicts guidance from the Secretary of Defense allowing DOD civilians to deploy without scrutiny from their home office. This also illustrates the demand for personnel with specialized experience and skills both in the United States and Afghanistan.<sup>391</sup>

While the MODA program management team was able to bring in qualified DOD civilian employees through the CEW and DOD-EC, many MODA advisors also came from outside the government.<sup>392</sup> On average, 20 percent of the first five classes were from outside the government and were brought on via direct hire, or Schedule A hiring authority.<sup>393</sup> This authority allowed the MODA program management team to temporarily hire civilians with skills needed to fill their requirements. However, in FY 2014, Schedule A hiring authority was rescinded and the program management team was forced to rely only on volunteers from DOD agencies through the CEW and DOD-EC.<sup>394</sup> In June 2018, the MODA program manager told SIGAR that the lack of Schedule A hiring authority hindered DSCA's ability to fill MODA requirements.<sup>395</sup>

### **MODA Training Tailored to Advising Mission**

Predeployment training for MODA advisors consists of a seven-week intensive course on topics such as advising skills, civilian-military coordination, country-specific languages and culture, and personal security.<sup>396</sup> More than 470 civilians have been trained through

TABLE 3

MINISTRY OF DEFENSE ADVISORS PROGRAM: TRAINING PROGRAM IN PHASES			
Phase	Name	Description	Duration
Phase 0	Operational Deployment Preparation	Contains general lessons specific to the MODA program and predeployment training requirements for civilians determined by the COCOM	5 days*
Phase 1A	Advising Fundamentals	Provides the tools and skills to engage in effective and sustainable capacity building missions	7 days
Phase 1B	Operational Readiness	Provides an introduction to personal security awareness to improve operational readiness	6 days*
Phase 2	Advanced Advising	Covers advanced topics on advisor roles, capacity building, communication, planning, and organization analysis	5 days
Phase 3	Country Study	Provides an understanding of the history, language, culture, and politics of the region and country	5 days
Phase 4	Mission Study	Provides the status of and issues related to the mission, national priorities, plans and programs	5 days*
Phase 5	Exercises	Applies knowledge and skills of previous weeks in scenario-based, role-playing exercises	6 days*

Note: \* Omits travel days.

Source: DSCA, "Ministry Of Defense Advisors (MODA) Training Program: Program of Instruction," March 30, 2018, pp. 13–16, 18.

the program since 2010, and advisors have deployed to Afghanistan and other partner countries.<sup>397</sup>

Civilians selected as MODA advisors attend a predeployment training program in Washington, DC, and Camp Atterbury’s Muscatatuck Urban Training Center in Indiana.<sup>398</sup> MODA aims to “develop and deploy skilled DOD civilian advisors capable of having a strategic impact—based upon their strategic understanding, mindset, and character—while maintaining the highest standards of professionalism and expertise in their respective functional areas.”<sup>399</sup> Now that MODA has a global authority and can send advisors to countries besides Afghanistan, training courses are conducted in phases under a building block or modular approach (See Table 3.). The MODA training course is composed of six phases: Phase 0 prepares advisors for operational deployment; Phases 1 and 2 focus on advisor fundamentals and operational readiness; Phases 3, 4, and 5 are tailored to the specific area to which advisors are preparing to deploy.<sup>400</sup> USIP assisted in developing the training program and provided instructors to prepare the civilians for the work ahead as MODA advisors.<sup>401</sup>

Though Congress has required advisory training for all uniformed personnel deployed as ministerial advisors, the standard MODA predeployment training program at Camp Atterbury focuses only on civilians deployed as MODA advisors. However, MODA instructors have provided training to military personnel based off direct requests from military commanders.

# 2018 SIGAR AUDIT FOUND DOD LACKS PERFORMANCE DATA TO EVALUATE MOD AND MOI ADVISORS

SIGAR's October 2018 audit report, *Afghanistan National Defense and Security Forces: DOD Lacks Performance Data to Assess, Monitor, and Evaluate Advisors Assigned to the Ministries of Defense and Interior*, evaluated "the extent to which DOD (1) evaluates its advising efforts to the MOD and the MOI; (2) tracks advisors assigned to the MOD and the MOI; and (3) trains its advisors in preparation for their assignments at the MOD and the MOI" from January 2015 to April 2018.<sup>402</sup> From that evaluation, SIGAR found that:

1. DOD had not fully evaluated the progress that was made in its MOD and MOI advising efforts. While DOD Instruction 5132.14 requires all DOD security cooperation efforts follow a standard assessment, monitoring, and evaluation program, SIGAR reported that DOD provided conflicting responses as to whether this instruction applied to its advising activities in the Afghan MOD and MOI. DOD stated that it is fully committed to complying with all departmental policies, including DOD Instruction 5132.14.<sup>403</sup>
2. It was difficult to track the effectiveness of the U.S. advisory effort over time because the advising goals and rating systems had frequently changed. SIGAR analyzed all of the plan of action and milestones (POAM) and found that in 2015 and 2016, 96 percent and 28 percent of the MOD POAM goals had changed. For the MOI, 86 percent and 58 percent of POAM goals had changed.<sup>404</sup> SIGAR also learned that in the spring of 2017, Resolute Support began reporting progress quarterly and, in the fall of 2017, Resolute Support switched its assessment system to one in which advisors used a "yes" or "no" assessment to track achievements.<sup>405</sup>
3. DOD could not measure the effectiveness of contract advisors because its current contracts did not have measurable performance standards to effectively assess the contractor's performance. SIGAR found that U.S. Army Contracting Command and CSTC-A did not write performance work statements that clearly described the work DynCorp contractors should accomplish in a way that could be measured and assessed.<sup>406</sup> As a result of the preliminary finding that the absence of measurable performance standards would mean that DOD cannot measure the effectiveness of its more than \$421 million contracts with DynCorp, DOD released a draft performance work statement in September 2018 for a follow-on contract. This included two general performance requirements that measured CSTC-A's satisfaction with the advisor's efforts and the contractor's adherence to meeting the milestone schedule.<sup>407</sup>
4. DOD has not tracked personnel who were reassigned to advising duties once they were in Afghanistan. SIGAR learned that while there are databases that track personnel and their original assignments, and while those databases are updated to ensure the right number of people are requested and assigned to specific duties, CSTC-A does not track reassignments or report them to CENTCOM.<sup>408</sup> SIGAR believes that not tracking reassignments can result in DOD requesting personnel with the wrong type of experience or requesting an insufficient number of personnel for its advising roles.<sup>409</sup>





A public affairs officer discusses communications planning and social networking with Farah's provincial director of information and culture during a key leader engagement. (Photo by Josh Ives)

5. Despite a CENTCOM requirement and guidance given by the Secretary of Defense, DOD has not ensured that all uniformed personnel complete advisor training before deploying to Afghanistan.<sup>410</sup> SIGAR learned that many advisory positions had not been coded as such, resulting in many selected uniformed personnel not receiving advisor-related training.<sup>411</sup> SIGAR also learned that there were a number of uniformed personnel receiving training waivers and therefore were not required to attend advisor training.<sup>412</sup> CSTC-A has been addressing this lack of training by having some uniformed personnel attend a four-day Resolute Support Individual Key Leader Training at Resolute Support headquarters upon arrival in Kabul.<sup>413</sup>
6. In the audit report, SIGAR recommended that the Secretary of Defense (1) comply with all DOD policies regarding security cooperation assistance, including DOD Instruction 5132.14; (2) incorporate specific, measurable performance standards into its current and future ministerial advising contracts; (3) develop and implement a mechanism to accurately identify and track all personnel performing advising tasks at the MOD and the MOI; (4) enforce existing requirements for all uniformed U.S. personnel to receive advisor-specific training before deploying to Afghanistan to be advisors at the MOD and the MOI.<sup>414</sup> DOD concurred.



Financial management employees from MOD offices attend a one-day financial management seminar at Resolute Support headquarters. The seminar covered topics such as budget programming and analysis and anticorruption reform methods. (Photo by Egdanis Torres Sierra)

## **LACK OF AFGHAN INPUT HINDERS MINISTERIAL DEVELOPMENT**

Ministerial advising sometimes suffers from what SSA expert Nadia Gerspacher terms “a paradox of partnership”—defense institution building can advance U.S. objectives in the short term, but initiatives that do not take partner perspectives into account are unlikely to succeed in the long term.<sup>415</sup> Without Afghan input, it is difficult to implement sustainable change.<sup>416</sup> Afghan involvement does not mean uncritical acceptance of a partner nation’s stated objectives, but calls for an understanding of the interests of stakeholders and taking them into account.<sup>417</sup>

Afghan objectives and input may not be fully included in defense institution building for several reasons. Faced with limited Afghan capacity and the need to build defense institutions from the ground up, advisors implemented plans with little input from Afghan partners.<sup>418</sup> When predeployment training emphasizes a host nation’s culture and language but not advising methods and techniques, advisors may conclude that partnership is a goal in and of itself rather than the means to achieve other goals.<sup>419</sup> Also, in the course of a deployment, advisors may feel pressure to show immediate results.<sup>420</sup> One U.S. general officer described a constant feeling of “turning the corner now” conveyed by leadership in Afghanistan, creating the sense that time constraints prevented any long-term commitment to partnering.<sup>421</sup> Advisors sometimes seek to mirror U.S. systems or to prioritize interoperability with U.S. systems over long-term sustainability for the Afghan ministry.<sup>422</sup> During ongoing reassessments of progress, Afghan institutions may have not yet developed robust self-evaluation processes, limiting their ability to provide and analyze useful data. This in turn may encourage advisors to discount Afghan input in favor of their own measures.<sup>423</sup>

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*One U.S. general officer described a constant feeling of “turning the corner now” conveyed by leadership in Afghanistan, creating the sense that time constraints prevented any long-term commitment to partnering.*

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Regardless of why Afghan interests are not taken into account by advisors, initiatives are unlikely to succeed in the long run without partner support. Some situations represent a trade-off between short-term and long-term goals. For example, CSTC-A was able to force the ANA to adopt the Afghan Personnel and Pay System (APPS) only by refusing to disburse funds until the U.S.-designed system was adopted; this was sufficient leverage with the right stakeholders to compel change for the short term. CSTC-A also took control of fuel supplies away from the ANDSF because they considered Afghan management of fuel supplies as inefficient and prone to corruption. While the commanding general of CSTC-A noted that these actions “will save the U.S. taxpayers’ money,” ministerial advisors recognized this as a setback in the development of Afghan governance.<sup>424</sup> Once U.S. financial incentives are withdrawn, it is unlikely that Afghans will permanently implement systems lacking their input or which they initially resisted.<sup>425</sup> Without Afghan input, such reforms are unlikely to be maintained in the long term.<sup>426</sup>

## KEY FINDINGS

Overall, this study of the United States' ministerial and institutional advising efforts in Afghanistan finds:

1. No permanent organization within DOD had responsibility for the ministerial advising mission in Afghanistan. While the responsibility for developing the Afghan MOD and MOI rested in country at CSTC-A, no permanent agency had an overarching and enduring mandate to plan and coordinate ministerial advising; oversee staffing and training for all advisors; provide assessment, monitoring, and evaluation of ongoing ministerial efforts; or consolidate best practices and lessons learned.
2. Military personnel serving as ministerial advisors were individually sourced and not deployed as a team with a unifying mission. Many advisors often lacked expertise in the security sector governance functions in which they were expected to advise their Afghan counterparts. For most of the conflict, military advisors did not receive specific training on advisor fundamentals and defense institution capacity building.
3. The ministerial advising effort in Afghanistan was not linked by a direct command-and-control relationship to the field advising effort. These efforts were coordinated only through ad hoc meetings without the authority to force synchronization between them.
4. DOD's specialized programs to deploy civilian experts to serve as ministerial advisors allowed the agency to better match the experiences of its personnel with Afghan needs. MODA relied on a hiring authority granted by Congress to source civilian experts from outside DOD to meet these requirements, which increased deployment of appropriate experts in security sector governance.
5. While AFPAK Hands received significant language and cultural training, they were not trained on how to be advisors, and often served as ministerial advisors on subjects in which they had no specific education or experience.
6. Contractors were used at the ministerial level to augment U.S. advisors. They provided continuity through long-term engagement with their Afghan counterparts, but they could not commit resources or agree to programs or policies outside of their performance work statement. Contractors also did not receive training in advising and did not necessarily have specific expertise in ministerial-level security governance functions.

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## RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1. DSCA should take ownership of the ministerial development mission in Afghanistan and establish a cadre of civilian professionals for this task. The director of DSCA, in close coordination with the senior U.S. military commander in Afghanistan, should approve all U.S. candidates serving in senior leadership roles at CSTC-A, including the CSTC-A commander.**

DSCA is responsible for security cooperation programs that conduct institutional capacity building efforts like MODA and DIRI. Therefore, DSCA should be the organization responsible for vetting key personnel at CSTC-A, such as the heads of the functional areas; validating personnel requirements; and capitalizing on the MODA program and DIRI for security cooperation efforts. To that end, DSCA could establish a team of civilian experts in security sector governance and defense institution building that can be deployed or serve as “reach back” for deployed ministerial advisors.

- 2. The Office of Personnel Management, in coordination with the U.S. military, should request that Congress reinstate special hiring authority allowing DSCA to hire individuals outside of DOD. This would allow DSCA to capitalize on internal and external civilian expertise and fulfill its civilian requirements through the MODA program.**

Prior to 2014, Congress authorized Schedule A hiring authority to DOD, which allowed the MODA program to temporarily hire civilians external to the agency. These civilians had particular skills and expertise needed by DOD and MODA to fill their requirements in Afghanistan. In 2014, Congress rescinded the hiring authority. This meant that sourcing for MODA relied solely on volunteers from DOD agencies, and that MODA could not be as selective as it had been when the authority was in effect. Without this hiring authority, the program is unable to source and fill its current billets.

- 3. The Joint Readiness Training Center should institutionalize Senior Leader Advisor Training. This training should be conducted in close partnership with the MODA training center and take advantage of core aspects of the MODA program of instruction. USFOR-A should make this training a requirement for all military personnel deployed to serve as advisors at the ministerial level.**

Over time, the United States has learned that deploying uniformed personnel without advisor-specific training is detrimental to the train, advise, and assist mission. However, uniformed personnel were consistently deployed without receiving such training or without training in a standardized form. The SLAT at the JRTC is in a pilot stage, but is proving to be an effective predeployment training step for personnel going out to serve as advisors at the tactical and ministerial levels. Institutionalizing and mandating this training ensures that all advisors

receive the same type of training and are able to meet one another regardless of their ministry, office, or operational area to connect and coordinate in Afghanistan. If uniformed personnel are used as ministerial advisors, the SLAT curriculum should be revamped to include education on defense institution building. Further, SLAT should use MODA's existing training plan on advising fundamentals.

**4. As with MODA, predeployment training academies should be empowered to vet and remove candidates who do not meet training qualifications.**

While there are criteria used to select personnel with the right background and experience, there is no criterion to ensure that personnel receiving advisory training are suited to be advisors. This becomes clear in training academies, where instructors are able to see and assess a person's ability to complete their advising task. The training academies must be able to remove someone who does not meet the training standards to ensure spaces are filled by qualified and capable people.

# OPTIMIZING COMMAND AND CONTROL

Command and control of the U.S. advisory effort has evolved over time. While some changes improved unity of effort, others had unintended consequences that hampered advisor coordination. In the early days of the U.S. advisory effort, the United States’ command-and-control structure linked advising at the tactical and ministerial levels. In October 2003, the Office of Military Cooperation, based at the U.S. Embassy, assigned advisors to the Kabul Military Training Center, MOD, MOI, and ETTs. In 2005, as the U.S. military expanded its advisory effort to include the ANP, the Office of Military Cooperation was renamed the Office of Security Cooperation – Afghanistan.<sup>427</sup> As shown in Figure 8, OSC-A established three components to oversee the advisory mission: defense reform (at MOD), police reform (at MOI), and Combined Joint Task Force Phoenix (an international military formation that trained and mentored Afghan security forces).<sup>428</sup> U.S. military operations targeting al-Qaeda operatives and Taliban leadership fell under the Combined Joint Task Force 180 at Bagram Airfield and were completely separate from the advising mission.<sup>429</sup>

In 2006, OSC-A became CSTC-A and was eventually provided a direct command line to CENTCOM. In addition to developing Afghan forces, CSTC-A also assumed primary responsibility for political-military affairs and coordinating with the U.S. Embassy and the Afghan government.<sup>430</sup> In 2009, to bring the United States and NATO train, advise, and assist programs under one roof, NATO created the NATO Training Mission – Afghanistan. A U.S. Army general, Lt. Gen. William Caldwell, assumed command of both organizations in 2009. Lt. Gen. Caldwell structured his organization with two offices: a Deputy Commander for Army (DCOM-Army) and a Deputy Commander for Police (DCOM-Police), to oversee advising at the ministerial level.<sup>431</sup>

FIGURE 8

## ADVISORY EFFORT CONSOLIDATED UNDER ONE COMMAND (2005)

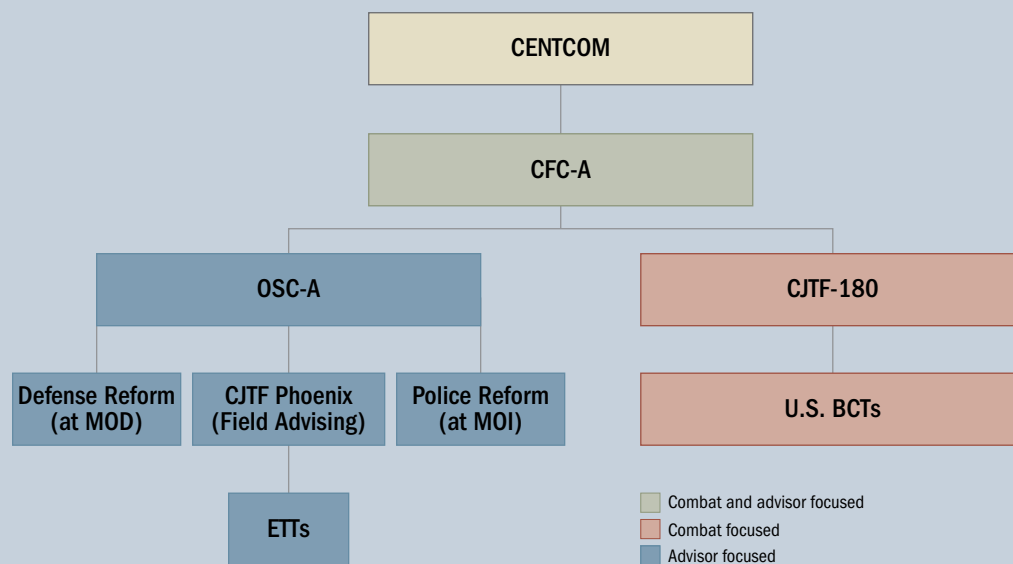
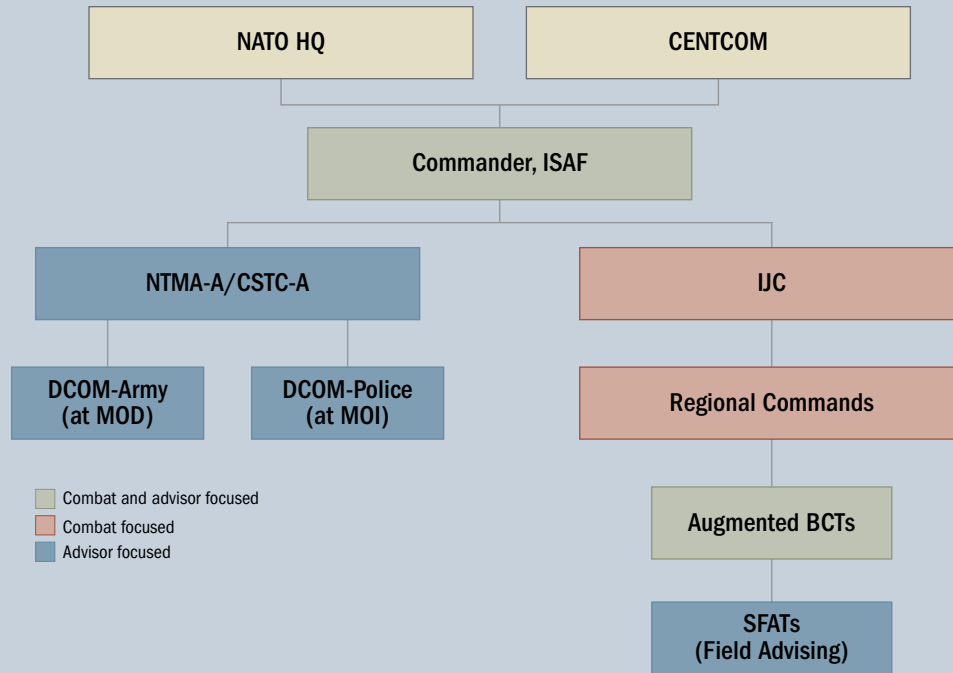




FIGURE 9

FIELD ADVISING TEAMS MOVED UNDER OPERATIONAL COMMAND (2009)

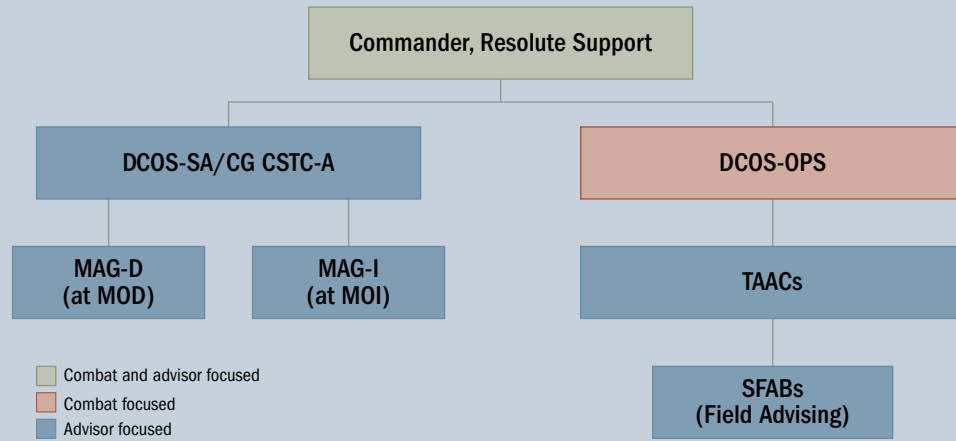


In preparation for the transition of security responsibilities to the Afghan government, ISAF created the ISAF Joint Command (IJC) in 2009 to oversee operations nationwide. As Figure 9 shows, there would now be a split between tactical advising in the field and ministerial advising back in Kabul. IJC, through its Regional Commands, was now training and advising Afghan army and police units in the field, while NTM-A/CSTC-A developed institutional capabilities at the MOD and MOI to manage and support those fielded units.<sup>432</sup>

In 2013, IJC established a Security Force Assistance Center (SFA Center) to address challenges with the divide in command structures and to improve synchronization of SSA activities. The SFA Center was designed to improve coordination between the tactical and ministerial levels and across key functional areas within CSTC-A (such as human resource management and logistics). The director of the SFA Center chaired a weekly SFA working group, which coordinated efforts across essential functions, received input from the regional TAACs, and forwarded agenda items for action by the Commander of Resolute Support. However, according to SIGAR interviews, the SFA Center—located in Kabul—did not reach its full potential because it was not provided the proper authorities to oversee and coordinate the SFA mission nationwide. For instance, the SFA Center did not have command authority to direct specific SSA actions.<sup>433</sup>

FIGURE 10

ADVISOR TEAMS REMAIN UNDER OPERATIONAL CONTROL (2015)



The SFA Center was dissolved in 2018 and the Deputy Chief of Staff for Security Assistance assumed responsibility for all tasks previously overseen by the SFA Center. Despite this, as shown in Figure 10, TAACs continue to report through operational channels (the Deputy Commander of Operations) and not the commanding general of CSTC-A (also the Deputy Commander for Security Assistance).<sup>434</sup> Without command responsibility over the TAACs, the Deputy Commander for Security Assistance does not control, and has limited visibility of, activities conducted by advisors in the field. This lack of command authority increases the likelihood that advisors provide guidance to ANA and ANP units that may not be reinforcing policies at the ministerial level, and vice versa. Reestablishing command authority would improve coordination, and optimize U.S. efforts to coordinate ANDSF combat capabilities, ministerial institutions, and interoperability among various Afghan security elements.





U.S. Army photo

## CHAPTER 4 EQUIPPING THE FORCE

Since 2002, equipping the ANDSF has been a key component of U.S. efforts to develop effective security forces capable of providing security to the Afghan people and preventing the reestablishment of terrorist safe havens. To equip the ANDSF, the United States has spent over \$18 billion—representing the second largest expenditure of all Afghanistan Security Forces Fund allocations.<sup>435</sup> Of this \$18 billion, approximately \$13.7 billion has been used to equip the ANA and approximately \$4.7 billion has been used to equip the ANP.<sup>436</sup>

In 2018, GAO reported that between 2003 and 2016, the United States provided the ANDSF with:

- 600,000 weapons, such as pistols, rifles, machine guns, and grenade launchers;
- 76,000 vehicles, such as trucks, High Mobility Multipurpose Wheeled Vehicles (HMMWV), and Mine-Resistant Ambush Protected (MRAP) vehicles;
- 163,000 tactical and non-tactical radios, such as handheld radios and base stations;
- 30,000 items for detecting and disposing explosives, such as mine detectors;
- 16,000 intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) assets, such as night vision devices and surveillance drones; and
- more than 200 aircraft, such as helicopters, light attack aircraft, and cargo airplanes.<sup>437</sup>

This chapter describes how the United States equipped the ANDSF and examines the effectiveness of equipping decisions. Specifically, the chapter considers the benefits and

drawbacks of the equipping process used in Afghanistan and whether the right people and organizations were tasked with making equipping decisions. While U.S. equipping decisions do not account for all of the ANDSF's shortcomings, SIGAR has found that U.S. decision-making concerning the provision of military equipment and training has proven shortsighted. The United States has provided equipment to the ANDSF without adequate training and sustainment, and provided equipment that did not meet ANDSF-identified needs.

Ultimately, the frequent turnover of U.S. personnel meant that any long-term, comprehensive plans for equipping the ANDSF existed only on paper. That, combined with unclear roles and responsibilities across relevant organizations, a lack of technical expertise and experience among personnel involved in equipping decisions, and insufficient oversight over ASFF expenditures, has contributed to a situation in which the ANDSF is still unable to provide needed security or defeat the Taliban.

## BACKGROUND: THE PSEUDO FMS PROCESS

The United States provides defense articles and related assistance to partner nations through several security assistance and security cooperation programs. Through the State-led Title 22 Foreign Military Sales (FMS) program, the United States sells defense articles and services to foreign countries.<sup>438</sup> With traditional foreign military sales, the partner nation pays for the sale using national funds, or receives U.S. assistance through the Foreign Military Financing (FMF) program—a program that provides grants or loans to a partner nation for the purchase of U.S. defense articles, services, and training.<sup>439</sup> In the early 2000s, to better support U.S. efforts in places like Afghanistan and Iraq, DOD petitioned Congress for the legal authority to allow the use of U.S. appropriated funds (other than FMF funds) to transfer defense articles and services to partner nations.<sup>440</sup> These efforts, now known as Building Partner Capacity (BPC) programs, provide equipment to partner nations through a modified FMS process, known as pseudo FMS (See Figure 11.).<sup>441</sup>

A **Letter of Offer and Acceptance** is the document used by the U.S. government to offer equipment and services for sale or transfer to a partner nation. The LOA becomes an agreement when it is signed by the partner nation. With BPC cases, this form is referred to as a **pseudo Letter of Offer and Acceptance** because it is not signed by the partner nation.

**Security cooperation organizations** are U.S. organizations permanently located in a foreign country responsible for carrying out security cooperation management functions such as equipment and services sales case management.

First introduced in 2005, pseudo FMS cases refer to foreign military sales that are (1) funded with U.S. government appropriations rather than partner-nation funding and (2) initiated by the United States without a formal request from the partner nation.<sup>442</sup> Additionally, whereas traditional FMS cases involve an agreement between the receiving country and the United States as to what equipment and services are provided (referred to as a **Letter of Offer and Acceptance** or LOA), there is no signed agreement with pseudo FMS cases in terms of the content of the sale.<sup>443</sup> DOD began using the pseudo FMS process to acquire equipment for partner nations like Afghanistan, which lacked financial resources and the capability to define their own requirements.<sup>444</sup> The responsibility for equipment sales and management generally falls to the in-country **security cooperation organization** (SCO). Under Resolute Support and the International Security Assistance Force mission that preceded it, CSTC-A serves this SCO function. Within CSTC-A, the Security Assistance Office (SAO) is responsible for FMS case management.<sup>445</sup>



## Security Assistance and Security Cooperation Programs

Generally, the term “security assistance” is used to refer to State Department programs that are authorized by the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 and the Arms Export Control Act (AECA) of 1976, as amended, and administered by the DOD.<sup>446</sup> These programs include Title 22-funded programs such as FMF and International Military Education and Training.<sup>447</sup> In the 1980s, Congress began increasing the number of programs DOD could implement with State concurrence. Known as “security cooperation” programs, these are authorized under Title 10 of the U.S. Code and annual National Defense Authorization Acts and are funded with U.S. government appropriations.<sup>448</sup> BPC programs, such as ASFF, are examples of security cooperation programs. BPC programs are authorized by the Economy Act (31 U.S.C., § 1535), which allows the transfer of defense articles and related services to other U.S. government agencies for the purpose of building a partner nation’s capabilities.<sup>449</sup>

While the pseudo FMS process allowed the United States to rapidly equip the ANDSF, SIGAR found that the United States was ultimately unprepared to take on the responsibility of equipping a force at the scope and scale required in Afghanistan. The pseudo FMS process limited Afghan involvement and increased responsibilities for CSTC-A, which was neither structured nor staffed to adequately equip a developing force. Further, given the frequent turnover of U.S. personnel and the limited oversight over ASFF expenditures, DOD was ill-prepared to spend billions of dollars effectively.

## EQUIPPING DECISIONS THROUGH 2014 NOT GUIDED BY ENDURING, COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Following the fall of the Taliban in 2001, the United States and its coalition partners concluded that an internationally trained and equipped Afghan national security force would serve both Afghan and U.S. security objectives.<sup>450</sup> Initially, the military decided to model the ANA on a “very light American light infantry division.”<sup>451</sup> The ANA was therefore designed to have only minimal combat power, and to rely on United States and international partners for such capabilities as close air support, medical evacuation, and

## U.S. Organizations Involved in the Equipping of the ANDSF

Currently, responsibility for identifying requirements falls to various military organizations—known as **requirement owners**—within CSTC-A and the Resolute Support Mission. Under the current process, requirement owners submit a **Letter of Justification** (LOJ) to the commanding general of CSTC-A, and work with CSTC-A’s SAO to generate a **Memorandum of Request** (MOR). The signed MOR is then passed to the Defense Security Cooperation Agency, which is responsible for validating the requirements and assigning responsibility to an **implementing agency** (IA) for management and implementation of the pseudo FMS case. DSCA and the assigned implementing agency then prepare and finalize a **pseudo Letter of Offer and Acceptance** (pseudo LOA). The IAs may work with other organizations (for example, a program management office or the security assistance management directorate at a life cycle management command) if additional expertise is needed.<sup>452</sup>

The term **requirement owner** is used to refer to a military organization within the Resolute Support Mission authorized to request equipment or services in support of the ANA, ANP, Afghan Special Forces, and the AAF.

A **Letter of Justification** is prepared by the requirement owner and identifies needed materials, services, training, and equipment. The Letter of Justification is used to prepare a Memorandum of Request.

A **Memorandum of Request** is a document prepared by the SAO that identifies what is needed, when it is needed, and the funding available. Unlike Letters of Request, which are used in traditional FMS cases, MORs are not signed by the partner nation.

An **implementing agency** is the military service—Air Force, Army, or Navy—or defense agency assigned responsibility by DSCA to prepare an LOA (or pseudo LOA) and to provide the training, services, equipment, or supplies being requested.

FIGURE 11

COMPARISON OF FMS AND PSEUDO FMS PROCESSES

CASE DEVELOPMENT			CASE IMPLEMENTATION		
Requirement Identification	Requirement Generation	Agreement Development and Acceptance	Acquisition	Delivery	
<b>FMS CASES</b>	The partner country identifies a need for defense articles or related services.	The partner country—with the assistance of the in-country security cooperation organization, DSCA, and IA—submits a Letter of Request (LOR).	After receiving the LOR, DSCA assigns responsibility for case management and implementation to an IA.	The assigned IA manages the requisition or contracting of items specified in the LOA.	The partner nation provides delivery addresses and manages the transportation of materials.
			DSCA and the assigned IA prepare and finalize a formal agreement (the LOA). The partner nation accepts the agreement and pays for the defense articles or services.		
<b>PSEUDO FMS CASES</b>	A U.S. government requesting authority, usually the geographic combatant command or in-country security cooperation organization, identifies a need for defense articles or related services.	The U.S. government requesting authority, with input from the partner nation and implementing agencies, formulates and submits a MOR.	After receiving the MOR, DSCA assigns responsibility for case management and execution to an IA.	The assigned IA manages the requisition or contracting of items specified in the pseudo LOA.	The in-country security cooperation organization provides delivery addresses. The U.S. military or another U.S. government-acquired transportation system manages transportation of the items, which are paid for by the U.S. government.
			DSCA and the assigned IA prepare and finalize a formal agreement, known as a pseudo Letter of Offer and Acceptance, DSCA approves the final agreement, and the IA accepts the agreement.		

Note: The above summary does not include all steps and actors that are involved in the FMS and pseudo FMS processes, including needed approvals from State and Congress.

Source: GAO, *Foreign Military Sales: DOD Needs to Improve Its Use of Performance Information to Manage the Program*, GAO-17-703, August 2017, p. 7; DSCA, *Security Assistance Management Manual*, April 2012.

intelligence gathering.<sup>453</sup> The decision was also made to arm the ANA and ANP with Warsaw Pact weapons that were recovered through disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration efforts, donated by former Soviet-bloc nations, or seized during military operations.<sup>454</sup>

This initial light infantry design would soon prove problematic, however. While appropriate for tasks expected in 2002 to 2004, such as providing security for the 2004 Afghan presidential election, it proved inadequate for sustained confrontation with a growing insurgency. Specifically, the U.S. focus on the forming, training, and fielding of infantry battalions kept ANA corps and brigades deficient in firepower, armor, and mobility at a time when the Taliban was resurging.<sup>455</sup> With limited armored mobility and firepower, the Afghan army was unable to play a significant role in combat and grew increasingly vulnerable to insurgent-employed tactics (e.g., IEDs, roadside bombings, and sniper attacks). These shortfalls were noted in 2006 by then-commanding general of Combined Forces Command – Afghanistan Lt. Gen. Karl Eikenberry, who described the ANDSF’s critical combat support systems as “extraordinarily weak.” Eikenberry further stated that the Afghans “lack precision firepower,” and “need more help in terms of having more heavy mobile weaponry, more mortars that they can bring to bear very quickly in a fight.”<sup>456</sup> As one analysis by the Center for Military History noted, “Keeping the army small and organizing it as light infantry with limited firepower made



the prospects less likely that [the Afghan security forces] could deal with the enemy successfully on its own.”<sup>457</sup>

These capability gaps forced DOD to acknowledge the mismatch between desired ends—an ANDSF capable of securing the people and territory of Afghanistan—and the provided means. In 2006, therefore, the United States began considering ways to upgrade the ANA’s armored, mobility, and firepower capabilities.<sup>458</sup> This expansion in capabilities included plans for a future Afghan air capability and the development of special operations forces.<sup>459</sup> By addressing these shortfalls, DOD proved responsive to the Taliban’s growing threat. Facilitating the ANDSF’s evolution from a light-infantry force to a combined arms service with air force and special forces elements also indicated DOD’s willingness to invest greater time and resources in the ANDSF.

Thereafter, however, equipping decisions were ad hoc and inconsistent from year to year, often subject to change depending on the commander.<sup>460</sup> Specifically, through 2014, equipping decisions appeared to lack the guidance of a long-term plan for how the force should be equipped over time. This was corroborated by one U.S. officer heavily involved in the equipping of the Afghans from 2007 to 2010, who told SIGAR that equipping decisions never appeared dictated by “any type of long-term, synchronized, coordinated plan,” as “incoming commanders always wanted something different than their predecessor.”<sup>461</sup> The officer recalled an instance when the CSTC-A commanding general asked why infantry equipment continued to arrive when he wanted field artillery and engineering equipment; the officer had to explain that due to lead and delivery timelines, he was receiving equipment ordered by the former commanding general.<sup>462</sup>

A former DOD official involved in the equipping of the ANDSF for eight years agreed that changes were frequent, noting that “annual reviews [conducted by incoming commanding generals] would often be based on some new ‘idea’ for the force, completely forgetting the conclusions of the last review.”<sup>463</sup> The lack of consistent decision-making was also prevalent lower in the chain of command. According to one former CSTC-A ANA requirements manager, he had three different directors in a four-month period, each of whom attempted to take the program in a “different direction.”<sup>464</sup> Lt. Gen. Daniel Bolger, former commander of NTM-A/CSTC-A, described the ANDSF as a “collection of compromises,” and compared looking at the ANDSF to “a cross section of sedimentary rock [with] each year’s U.S. budget priorities and ‘good ideas’ layered across the older ones.”<sup>465</sup> Under pressure from the national security establishment to “turn the corner now,” commanders often prioritized the tactical fight and equipped the ANDSF with little regard for past equipping decisions or future expenses.<sup>466</sup>

This problem was not limited to Afghanistan. According to a 2011 report on DOD’s internal security cooperation processes, many of DOD’s security cooperation programs lacked a long-term vision for partner force capabilities. The report found that “security cooperation planning at the country level—in particular FMS planning—is too often oriented toward responding to, rather than anticipating, the capability requirements of

allies and partners.” The report also found that broader discussions about which partner country capabilities and capacities should be developed did not occur.<sup>467</sup>

The **Afghanistan Resource Oversight Council** is a congressionally mandated organization within DOD responsible for providing oversight of the ASFF program. Responsibilities include approving requests for funding (as specified in the Justification Book) and Financial Activity Plans.

The **Afghan Plan of Record** identifies the ANDSF force structure that, based on the projected operational environment, the United States is willing to support via security cooperation programs and funds.

Over time, external checks were applied to CSTC-A’s requirement generation process. The **Afghanistan Resource Oversight Council** was established to increase oversight over equipping decisions, and the OSD-generated **Afghan Plan of Record** (APOR) was implemented to provide strategic guidance to CSTC-A on the future development of the ANDSF.<sup>468</sup> While these initiatives represent significant attempts to mitigate CSTC-A’s short-term outlook, some have questioned their effectiveness. According to those interviewed for this report, the impact of these efforts was often limited by deference to commanders in the field and by command-and-control arrangements that allowed CSTC-A to circumvent established guidance.<sup>469</sup> For example, one interviewee familiar with the APOR process pointed out that the APOR does not carry much weight with CSTC-A because OSD is not technically in CSTC-A’s chain of command.<sup>470</sup>



ANP officers participate in an M16 class at Bost Airfield in August 2017 as part of the ANP’s transition from AK-47s to the M16 rifle. NATO standard weapons such as the M16 rifle became basic issue for the ANA in 2010. (U.S. Marine Corps photo by Justin Updegraff)

### Limited Interoperability Impacts ANA and ANP Coordination

Interoperability is the ability of a military’s systems, units, or forces to operate in conjunction with other systems, units, or forces.<sup>471</sup> Interoperability is critical to effective operations, training, and maintenance, but U.S. equipping decisions for the ANDSF did not fully take this need into account. For example, CSTC-A did not begin transitioning the ANP to NATO standard weapons until 2016, eight years after they began transitioning the ANA, citing as its reason the ANP’s preexisting reliance on former Warsaw Pact weapons and the cost associated with re-equipping the entire force.<sup>472</sup> The consequences of limited interoperability were highlighted in 2018, when during a Taliban-led attack on Ghazni Province, the ANA was unable to resupply besieged ANP officers because ANA ammunition differed from that of the ANP.<sup>473</sup> It also sowed battlefield confusion. The ANA is equipped with NATO standard equipment such as M16 rifles and M249 squad automatic weapons, which sound distinctly different from the AK-47 and RPK light machine gun the ANP and Taliban use. As one former commanding general of NTM-A/CSTC-A told SIGAR, having the ANP and Taliban employ the same weapons “increased friction and the likelihood of tragic friendly fire incidents.”<sup>474</sup>



U.S. Army UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters about to land near an ANA M1151 HMMWV at a mission support site in Nangarhar Province in June 2018. (U.S. Air Force photo by Sharida Jackson)

## EQUIPPING DECISIONS LACKED CONSISTENT AFGHAN INVOLVEMENT AND INPUT

SIGAR found conflicting reports concerning the extent of Afghan involvement in equipping decisions. According to the Security Assistance Office in Afghanistan in 2019, Afghan input has been and is currently considered at the working group-level during the Afghanistan Resource and Requirement Validation Process, biannual *Program Management Reviews*, and during MOD and MOI key leader engagements.<sup>475</sup>

However, others have questioned the extent to which Afghans are involved and their input considered. According to one former U.S. advisor to the MOI's General Logistics Department, the SAO would buy new equipment and Class IX (repair) parts without input from the MOI; while the advisor was with the MOI from 2013 to 2014, he claimed there was no communication between the two organizations on needs or orders.<sup>476</sup> Another retired officer who spent four years in Afghanistan told SIGAR that Afghan involvement and input simply meant "acquiring an Afghan signature."<sup>477</sup> A former deputy commander of programs at CSTC-A told SIGAR that only having one year on the ground and needing to make progress fast meant that listening to the Afghans was a low priority.<sup>478</sup> Further, Lt. Gen. Bolger told SIGAR, "The Afghans were informed and directed, not asked or consulted" and that "Afghan leaders made reasonable requests and were told 'it's not part of the plan.' [But] what plan?"<sup>479</sup> Because of this, Bolger said, the "U.S. lost critical buy-in and our most valuable stakeholder."<sup>480</sup>

**Afghan Program Management Reviews** refer to biannual meetings where key stakeholders such as CSTC-A, the MOD, the MOI, DSCA, and implementing agencies meet to discuss ASFF-funded efforts to train and equip the ANDSF.

Congress has also expressed concerns over the lack of Afghan involvement in equipping decisions. In 2017, for example, the Senate Committee on Appropriations wrote, "The Committee is concerned about reports that ASFF procurements made on behalf of the



An Afghan commando provides security during a meeting between the ANDSF, coalition forces, and the district governor in Helmand Province in March 2013. (U.S. Marine Corps photo by Pete Thibodeau)

[ANDSF] may be exceeding Afghan needs and not meeting other requirements identified by the Afghans.”<sup>481</sup>

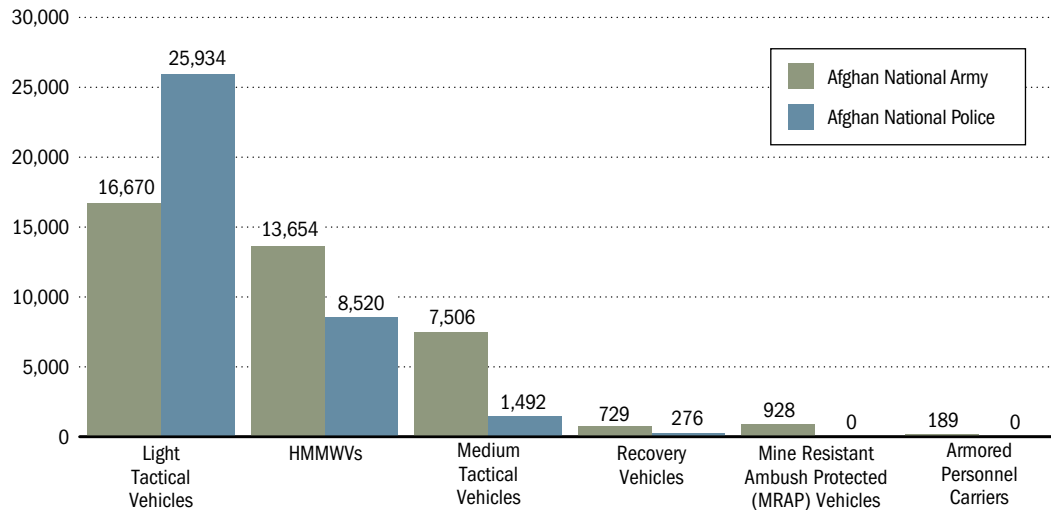
While the Afghans often requested equipment that was not required, SIGAR found that Afghan input was disregarded even in cases where the request appeared valid. In 2015, for example, the MOD’s Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics Department requested that hundreds of millions of dollars not be spent on unarmored trucks that the ANA did not need. Rather, the MOD requested that the money be spent on procuring armored vehicles such as MRAPs and Mobile Strike Force Vehicles (MSFV).<sup>482</sup> The need for protected mobility assets had been identified a year earlier by MOD Chief of General Staff, General Sher Karimi, who wrote to CSTC-A:

As you are aware, mines continue to account for nearly 90 percent of the ANA casualties for the past year and we anticipate this will continue to be a favorite tactic of our enemy for the foreseeable future. We have observed over the past decade the coalition provided its forces with improved armored vehicles based on the same threat reality, and we anticipate that our light force is incapable of operating freely with similar freedom of movement without sustaining significant casualties for the foreseeable future.<sup>483</sup>

Nevertheless, CSTC-A went forward with its decision to procure unarmored cargo trucks, on the grounds that the MOD was underestimating the future employment of unarmored cargo trucks.<sup>484</sup> U.S. officials also continued to buy Up-Armored (UA) HMMWVs despite a 2014 CSTC-A briefing which identified UA HMMWVs as a feasible but unsuitable candidate for the ANDSF given “insufficient protection from IEDs.”<sup>485</sup> (See Figure 12.). General Karimi had also requested the ANA be provided with precision direct-fire capabilities, writing that due to “the loss of ISAF air support, the political restrictions on the use of

FIGURE 12

U.S.-FUNDED VEHICLES PROVIDED TO THE ANDSF BY TYPE AND FORCE, FY 2003–2016



Source: Adopted from GAO, *Afghanistan Security: U.S.-Funded Equipment for the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces*, GAO-17-667R, August 10, 2017, p. 12.

*“We have observed over the past decade the coalition provided its forces with improved armored vehicles based on the same threat reality, and we anticipate that our light force is incapable of operating freely with similar freedom of movement without sustaining significant casualties for the foreseeable future.”*

—MOD Chief of General Staff, General Sher Karimi

ISAF air support, and a desire to reduce civilian casualties,” there was a need for more accurate direct-fire capabilities.<sup>486</sup> CSTC-A did not support this request.

General Karimi’s requests were not unfounded. In 2016, an internal OSD Cost Assessment and Program Evaluation study found that ground weapons and vehicles could fill important gaps in the ANDSF’s firepower and mobility, as they were “affordable, available in the near-term, [and] employable and sustainable by the Afghans.”<sup>487</sup>

Given the Afghans’ minimal armored protection and direct fire capabilities and the 2014 drawdown of U.S. and coalition forces, the United States has increasingly turned to U.S. airstrikes (See Table 4.). According to U.S. Air Force Central Command, the United States conducted 5,982 airstrikes through October 2018 in Afghanistan—more than the number carried out during 2017 (4,361) and three times as many as were carried out in 2016.<sup>488</sup> Notably, the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) recorded 649 civilian casualties (313 deaths and 336 injuries) due to aerial operations by pro-government forces from January 1 to September 30, 2018, a 39 percent increase





A Mobile Strike Force Vehicle provided to an Afghan commando unit. MSFVs, such as the one pictured above, provide more mobility, protection, and firepower than the ANSDF’s HMMWVs. (U.S. Army photo by Connor Mendez)

TABLE 4

<b>NUMBER OF U.S. AIRSTRIKES IN AFGHANISTAN, 2015–2018</b>				
	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>
<b>Total</b>	947	1,337	4,361	5,982

Source: Combined Forces Air Component Commander, “2013–2018 Airpower Statistics,” as of October 31, 2018.

over the same period in 2017. The 2018 figures reflect the highest number of civilian casualties caused by airstrikes since UNAMA began recording such data in 2009.<sup>489</sup>

While the lack of consistent involvement in equipping decisions could be attributed to the fact that the pseudo FMS process does not require host nation involvement or approval, DSCA does state that partner nations should be involved in equipping decisions. For example, partner nations should “provide details of their existing capabilities, capacity, and security requirements to enable identification and prioritization of [pseudo FMS] requirements.”<sup>490</sup> There is also general agreement that involving a partner nation is critical to ensuring partner nation buy-in and a sense of ownership.<sup>491</sup> This point was emphasized in a 2015 Afghanistan Program Management Review briefing when U.S. advisors stated that increasing Afghan involvement and leveraging their unique capabilities (such as “requirement awareness” and “continuity”) during the requirements development process was essential for “more sustainable results” and a “greater sense of ownership.”<sup>492</sup>

# LIMITED COMMAND EMPHASIS ON TEACHING FMS PROCESS HINDERS INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Command-and-control relationships in Afghanistan do not resemble those of traditional security cooperation missions. Traditionally, the U.S. ambassador manages relations with the host nation and implements U.S. foreign policy, including security cooperation. The security cooperation organization, as a staff section within the country team, helps manage the military aspects of this relationship. Housed in the U.S. Embassy and overseen by the geographic combatant command, a traditional security cooperation organization is tasked with maintaining a close, cooperative relationship with the host nation.<sup>493</sup> According to the Defense Institute of Security Cooperation Studies (DISCS), DOD's school for the professional education of personnel involved in security cooperation management, the SCO is vital for pursuing security cooperation's key focus areas: "creating access, building relationships, and creating or improving capabilities/capacities in the partner nation security forces."<sup>494</sup>

However, when U.S. military units are conducting large-scale combat operations in support of the host nation's military, the commander of the deployed force assumes responsibility for security cooperation activities. As the Defense Institute of Security Assistance Management (DISAM, now DISCS) wrote in 2011:

The organizations in Afghanistan and Iraq can loosely be termed "pseudo SCOs" for a variety of reasons. First, their mission, including operational advice and training, exceeds that of a normal SCO under U.S. law. Second, these organizations are part of operational commands, rather than U.S. Embassy country teams. As such, they do not report to the U.S. ambassador, but to the GCC [Geographic Combatant Command] through [military] channels.<sup>495</sup>

This is reinforced by the Economy Act (31 U.S.C., § 1535), which requires defense articles to be transferred to U.S. government organizations during building partner capacity efforts.<sup>496</sup> As the U.S. government organization tasked with receiving defense articles for the Afghans, it is CSTC-A's responsibility for determining the extent to which the Afghans are exposed to and involved in the equipping process.<sup>497</sup>

After 18 years, however, the Afghans do not have a consistent, formal role in the equipping process.<sup>498</sup> CSTC-A's SAO is not part of the embassy's country team and does not have a formal relationship with the MOI and MOD.<sup>499</sup> In December 2018, for example, CSTC-A told SIGAR that SAO commodity managers do not work directly with the Afghans in the MOD and MOI.<sup>500</sup> While multiple factors contribute to the Afghans' inconsistent role—such as the SAO's non-traditional SCO structure and the fact that other directorates within CSTC-A have lead responsibility for working directly with the MOD and MOI—the lack of a consistent requirement from CSTC-A to work with the Afghans during the equipping process is the most significant.<sup>501</sup> By limiting Afghan exposure to U.S. systems and processes, and by failing to issue a formal requirement to involve the Afghans, the current advisory effort has hindered the development of an institutional capacity that is foundational for a long-term defense relationship.

While personnel have implemented initiatives aimed at increasing Afghan involvement in the equipping process, and while DISCS has sent Mobile Training Teams to Afghanistan to train Afghans on the



equipping process, these initiatives were often short-lived.<sup>502</sup> For example, although CSTC-A issued guidance in 2015 that all ASFF Letters of Request and Justification be approved and signed by CSTC-A and the MOD and MOI, this guidance was not implemented.<sup>503</sup> Further, while Afghan liaison officers have served at the SAO, there are currently no Afghan MOD or MOI officers assigned as liaison officers to the SAO.<sup>504</sup> There have also been a few instances in which DOD converted ASFF funds into grant aid for execution by the Afghans as normal FMS cases, which fully involved them in the process.<sup>505</sup> Despite these efforts, DOD officials told SIGAR that the rapid turnover of U.S. personnel often resulted in initiatives for including the Afghans being discontinued when personnel rotated out of Afghanistan.<sup>506</sup>

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*By limiting Afghan exposure to U.S. systems and processes, and by failing to issue a formal requirement to involve the Afghans, the current advisory effort has hindered the development of an institutional capacity that is foundational for a long-term defense relationship.*

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As a result, the Afghans currently have limited ownership and understanding of the equipping process.<sup>507</sup> If and when the military transitions to a more traditional security cooperation mission in Afghanistan, the Afghans will need be able to play a larger role in the direction, execution, and tracking of their own equipment procurement, training contracts, and sustainment. “For that to happen,” one former SAO officer wrote in 2011, “it is critical for security cooperation personnel to teach, mentor, and then stand back and let their Afghan colleagues take over acquisition.”<sup>508</sup>

## POST-2014 EQUIPPING DECISIONS MADE WITH LIMITED DATA AND INPUT FROM FIELD

Since the 2014 shift to sustaining the force, CSTC-A has been primarily focused on replenishing stocks of equipment already authorized for the ANDSF.<sup>509</sup> However, SIGAR found conflicting claims concerning the extent to which these equipping decisions—such as how much ammunition to order or how many vehicles to buy—are informed by input from U.S. advisors and Afghan forces in the field. In 2018, GAO reported that military advisors’ limited contact with ANDSF conventional ground forces in the field meant that DOD had limited information on the ANDSF’s ability to operate and maintain equipment.<sup>510</sup> That same year, CSTC-A told SIGAR that they did not maintain a tactical perspective on how equipment was being maintained and used by the ANDSF.<sup>511</sup> DOD officials made similar comments in 2019, telling SIGAR that field advisors and operators do not have a way to talk to the SAO.<sup>512</sup>

In 2019, when SIGAR questioned the extent to which CSTC-A solicits and tracks information on the usability, sustainability, and operational effectiveness of U.S.-provided equipment, CSTC-A told SIGAR that such information is collected through various channels and at multiple points. According to CSTC-A, TAACs present equipping concerns during TAAC synchronization meetings hosted by CSTC-A, and U.S. and coalition advisors record equipping issues via the Afghan Advisor Network.<sup>513</sup>

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*“CSTC-A is more focused on accountability of ANDSF equipment rather than determining if it is the right equipment.”*

—DOD Official

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It is unclear, however, whether these mechanisms provide sufficient data, or if CSTC-A uses these data. According to a former SAO officer who served in Afghanistan from 2016 to 2017, the lack of data and limited contact with ANDSF forces meant that equipping decisions—how many HMMWVs to buy, for instance—are determined by regression formulas that “seemed arbitrary” and algorithms that “never made sense.”<sup>514</sup> DOD officials corroborated this, telling SIGAR in 2019 that decisions concerning the replenishment of existing types of equipment are determined not by input from the field, but by CSTC-A-developed algorithms, assumptions about equipment life expectancy, and models they described as arbitrary and not always accurate.<sup>515</sup> When SIGAR asked 1st SFAB personnel if CSTC-A sought information on the status of equipment, 1st SFAB personnel described information sharing “as more of a push rather than a pull.”<sup>516</sup>

DOD officials also told SIGAR that the focus is on sustainment and replicating past orders, and that assessing capability gaps and considering new capabilities or upgrades is not CSTC-A’s priority.<sup>517</sup> In 2019, for example, a DOD official told SIGAR that “CSTC-A is more focused on accountability of ANDSF equipment rather than determining if it is the right equipment.”<sup>518</sup> Because of this, DOD could be missing out on opportunities to provide the ANDSF with more appropriate or cost-effective equipment.

### Capability Upgrades Not Considered for Afghan HMMWVs

The United States normally provides allies receiving U.S. equipment with information on equipment upgrades and improvements, but this did not always occur with equipment provided to the ANDSF. For example, CSTC-A provided M1151A1 HMMWVs to the Afghans without several upgrades, including the Objective Gunners Protection Kit, Overhead Cover, and the Objective Weapons Elevation Kit. While these upgrades were applied to U.S. forces' HMMWVs operating in Afghanistan from 2007 to 2009 to improve operational capabilities and reduce losses—and while they are now considered standard for U.S. Army vehicles—the ANA and ANP have not been provided with these protection and capability upgrades.<sup>519</sup> Moreover, newly procured M1151A1 HMMWVs and excessed M1151A1 HMMWVs being refurbished for the ANA and ANP do not include any of these improved capabilities. While the addition of some of these capabilities would require some modifications to carry the extra weight, such modifications were successfully made to U.S.-operated M1151A1s.<sup>520</sup> Meanwhile, the Afghans have attempted to reproduce the protection provided by these upgrades by using parts from destroyed HMMWVs.<sup>521</sup>



An Afghan gunner in a HMMWV outfitted with an older gunner protection kit and no Overhead Cover in 2017. (Photo provided by the Asymmetric Warfare Group)



A U.S. gunner in Afghanistan in a HMMWV outfitted with the U.S. Objective Gunner Protection Kit and Overhead Cover in 2013. (Photo by Jessi McCormick)

## FMS STAKEHOLDERS DO NOT COORDINATE SUFFICIENTLY, LACK EXPERTISE

Equipping the ANDSF requires the involvement of multiple U.S. organizations in both Afghanistan and the United States (See Figure 13.). While these organizations have specific roles and responsibilities when it comes to requirement generation, case development, and case implementation, the equipping effort is meant to be largely collaborative. Personnel at the various organizations are expected to leverage the expertise and experience across DOD’s FMS system to provide equipment to partner nations that is both appropriate and sustainable.<sup>522</sup> For example, while the implementing agencies are typically considered best positioned to assemble equipment packages given their specific commodity expertise, in-country security cooperation organizations are generally considered best fit to work with the partner country to translate capability shortfalls into specific requests for defense articles and services.<sup>523</sup>

FIGURE 13

REQUIREMENT GENERATION AND CASE DEVELOPMENT PROCESS IN AFGHANISTAN



Note: <sup>a</sup> Requirement owner refers to a military organization within the Resolute Support Mission authorized to request equipment or services in support of the ANDSF.

<sup>b</sup> Afghanistan Resource and Requirement Validation Process approval is required for new capabilities not already authorized on the tashkil.

Source: SIGAR correspondence with CSTC-A/SAO, June 2018; SIGAR correspondence with DSCA, June 2018; DSCA, *Security Assistance Management Manual*, April 2012.

Generally, however, SIGAR found that equipping decisions and the equipping process lacked the desired level of expertise and cooperation. This stems in part from the fact that CSTC-A lacked, and continues to lack, a capability development process that consistently involves and leverages the expertise housed within the military services and DOD. Army officials said that CSTC-A often submitted requirements to the services expecting them to be filled without question, and rarely asked for help when generating requirements for the ANDSF.<sup>524</sup> If and when they sought assistance, CSTC-A officers tended to rely on informal, or back-channel communications with U.S.-based staff-level officers, who may or may not know the range of capabilities the services can provide. As a result, CSTC-A did not always receive the services’ official input, and alternative capabilities or equipment were not always proposed or considered.<sup>525</sup>

The **Afghanistan Resource and Requirement Validation Process** validates new requirements not already authorized on the *tashkil*. Once a requirement is validated by the Council of Colonels, it is passed to the General Officer Steering Committee to determine whether to proceed with the pseudo FMS case. The commanding general or deputy commanding general may approve a requirement in lieu of this process.

Further, the process used to approve requests for new capabilities, the **Afghanistan Resource and Requirement Validation Process**, is staffed with key stakeholders from within CSTC-A. The military services and those organizations within DOD with combat development expertise do not have a formal, consistent role in this process.<sup>526</sup>

The foreign military sales system also lacks the mechanisms needed to ensure proper coordination and collaboration. According to one 2011 DOD report on security cooperation, the FMS process is largely decentralized, as it lacks a unifying framework and process that mandates coordination among various stakeholders.<sup>527</sup> As a result, the equipping process has become “segmented, largely sequential, and virtually autonomous.”<sup>528</sup> A former U.S. Army Security Assistance Command (USASAC) official substantiated this finding, telling SIGAR that “responsibility [for filling the request] was generally passed down the line, with no effort to refine or question the initial requirement.”<sup>529</sup>

With no actual capability or combat development process, and with no means to hold organizations accountable for cooperation and collaboration, key actors responsible for certain commodities or major end items were often not included in equipping decisions or the case development process. In 2012, for example, the DOD OIG reported that NTM-A/CSTC-A did not involve subject matter experts or obtain assistance from life cycle management commands when developing sustainment requirements for equipment used by the ANA, even though life cycle management commands had relevant maintenance data available. Because NTMA-A/CSTC-A did not always have such expertise accessible in country, the DOD OIG concluded that “NTM-A/CSTC-A officials were not in a position to make informed decisions on sustainment of ANA individual equipment items.”<sup>530</sup>

**Essential Function 5 (EF-5)** (now referred to as the Operational Sustainment directorate) is the directorate responsible for assisting the Afghan MOD and MOI in the areas of logistics, sustainment, and maintenance. CSTC-A has identified operational sustainment as a requirement owner able to submit LOJs requesting equipment, training, services, and supplies already authorized by the *tashkil*.

Additional examples illustrate the lack of coordination and cooperation. In 2015, a CSTC-A **Essential Function 5** officer submitted a request for 50,000 Russian S-5 rockets that were not needed; U.S. Air Force advisors in Afghanistan and the relevant Afghan munitions chief were not consulted prior to the order. Concerned by the request, OSD-Policy officials contacted U.S. Air Force advisors in Afghanistan, who confirmed with the Afghan munitions chief that “TAAC-Air and the AAF [did] not have a requirement for 50,000 additional S-5 orders.”<sup>531</sup>

In 2018, DOD officials told SIGAR that instead of reaching out to the services and subject matter experts, officers in the SAO “conduct a lot of unnecessary internet research.”<sup>532</sup> SIGAR found this to be the case in 2017, when the agency determined that CSTC-A personnel responsible for assisting the MOD with identifying new camouflage patterns for uniforms in 2010 did so via internet research rather than consultations with experts. As a result, CSTC-A procured approximately \$94 million worth of uniforms that may be inappropriate for Afghanistan’s operational environment.<sup>533</sup>

DOD’s \$468 million purchase of 20 C27A/G222 medium-lift cargo planes for the AAF provides an example of poor coordination within a single organization. The AAF G222 program ended in March 2013 because critical parts were expensive and difficult to

obtain.<sup>534</sup> However, the U.S. Air Force had already identified these problems when they were operating the aircraft from 1990 to 1999, deciding to retire the C27A/G222 because parts were—as CSTC-A realized years later—expensive and difficult to obtain. It remains unclear why the U.S. Air Force would buy 20 used C27A/G222 for the Afghans when it already knew the aircraft was not sustainable.<sup>535</sup>

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*“Responsibility [for filling the request] was generally passed down the line, with no effort to refine or question the initial requirement.”*

—Former USASAC official

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Equipping efforts have also been hindered by confusion among personnel concerning the various organizations’ roles and responsibilities. Personnel interviewed for this report often expressed unclear and contradictory understanding of organizations’ roles within the FMS system. For example, there was no consensus among interviewees as to which organization was responsible for ensuring the total package approach (See section on total package approach, pp. 87–88.). Similar confusion over roles and responsibilities was identified by a 2017 SIGAR report on U.S.-provided organizational clothing and individual equipment. According to the report, CSTC-A did not document roles and responsibilities in the acquisition process following the transition to the Resolute Support Mission in 2015, despite requirements to do so.<sup>536</sup> DOD and coalition officials told SIGAR that the lack of clearly defined responsibilities increased the possibility of duplication and created problems in accurately identifying requirements.<sup>537</sup> The risk for duplication was highlighted by one EF-5 advisor who told SIGAR in 2015 that various organizations can submit pseudo FMS requests to the SAO without consulting the EF-5, the organization responsible for ordering equipment and supplies already authorized by the *tashkil*.<sup>538</sup>

The *tashkil* is the official Afghan government table showing the personnel and equipment that an ANA or ANP unit is authorized.

The removal of proponent leads responsible for the development of the ANA and the ANP (Deputy Commander – Army and Deputy Commander – Police, respectively) in 2014 further obfuscated responsibilities.<sup>539</sup> While the U.S.-led coalition continued to provide advisors to senior leaders in the MOD and MOI, these advisors did not have the same control over U.S. funding and coalition support held by the DCOMs.<sup>540</sup> Eliminating the DCOM-Army and DCOM-Police positions and their organizations resulted in a diffusion of responsibilities and resources, making it difficult to identify who or what organization was accountable for critical equipping decisions related to the ANA and ANP. This is highlighted in a 2017 SIGAR audit, which found that the lack of ANA and ANP proponent leads resulted in critical shortages of clothing and equipment.<sup>541</sup>

In contrast, the AAF and Afghan Special Forces were left with U.S. and coalition headquarter elements that maintained control and oversight over the specific missions and advising efforts at all levels. According to one former commander of the 9th Air Expeditionary Task Force (AETF) and NATO-Air Command – Afghanistan—the commands responsible for supporting the AAF—having a proponent command element was critical to identifying and addressing the AAF’s needs.<sup>542</sup>

## Personnel Lack Relevant Technical Expertise, Acquisition Experience, and Training

SIGAR also found that U.S. personnel at the various organizations within the FMS system lacked the relevant technical expertise, acquisition experience, or training necessary to effectively carry out their roles and responsibilities. On multiple occasions, personnel selected to fill security cooperation positions—including key positions at the SAO and military departments’ implementing agencies—did not have the training or background needed to ensure that equipping decisions were appropriate, cost-effective, and in accordance with DOD procedures.

In many cases, military officers assigned to the SAO had no security assistance experience or technical background in the areas for which they were responsible. In 2008, for example, the DOD OIG found that CSTC-A’s Joint Manning Document allocated only nine personnel billets to the SAO, and that none of the nine billets were filled by personnel who had received mandatory security assistance training or who possessed security assistance experience.<sup>543</sup> The DOD OIG concluded, “This staffing level was not commensurate with the staffing levels provided to other SAOs working in countries critical to U.S. interests, much less an SAO engaged in supporting a country at war.”<sup>544</sup> According to a former deputy commanding general of programs at CSTC-A, keeping the Security Assistance Office understaffed while pouring billions of dollars’ worth of equipment into a foreign army made mistakes inevitable.<sup>545</sup> Others agreed: One former USASAC official told SIGAR that neither USASAC nor the SAO were staffed well enough to ensure that billions of U.S. dollars were spent effectively, and DOD officials told SIGAR in 2019 that at one point, three consecutive SAO directors had no FMS experience.<sup>546</sup>

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*“This staffing level was not commensurate with the staffing levels provided to other SAOs working in countries critical to U.S. interests, much less an SAO engaged in supporting a country at war.”*

—DOD Office of Inspector General

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In many ways, these concerns reflected larger personnel issues within DOD’s security cooperation workforce. A 2011 DOD security cooperation task force concluded that personnel selected to fill security cooperation positions, including key positions at DSCA and SCOs, “often lack the experience, skills, and training necessary to carry out their responsibilities effectively.”<sup>547</sup>

For much of the past decade, personnel assigned to the SAO continued to serve one-time FMS roles and were assigned to commodities with which they had little to no experience. For example, multiple U.S. Navy lieutenants were assigned responsibility for ground ammunition and weapons, and U.S. Air Force first lieutenants have been assigned responsibility for tactical vehicles.<sup>548</sup> In 2015, a SAO officer told SIGAR that the “SAO [in Afghanistan] is manned by generalists” rather than officers with specific



equipping experience or expertise.<sup>549</sup> That same year, DOD officials told SIGAR that CSTC-A did not have a trained logistician on staff with expertise in buying military clothing or individual equipment, increasing the likelihood that the EF-5 ordered the wrong items at the wrong times.<sup>550</sup> DOD and coalition officials also told SIGAR that CSTC-A and Resolute Support personnel generally do not understand the pseudo FMS process, U.S. procurement laws and regulations, or best practices for large-scale acquisition processes.<sup>551</sup>

There also appears to be no consensus as to what type of expertise is needed where. Although some have argued that efforts should be made to increase the number of foreign area officers (FAO) serving FMS-related roles in Afghanistan, FAO experience does not equate to FMS, force development, or equipping experience. As one DOD official told SIGAR, “despite common thinking, FAOs are not trained to do FMS; rather, their job is the management and oversight of security assistance writ large.”<sup>552</sup>

Although efforts have been made to improve the staffing of organizations involved in the FMS process, these efforts often occurred outside of normal staffing processes for FMS billets. Commanders intent on improving staffing used personal networks to recruit competent personnel.<sup>553</sup> According to a former deputy commander of programs at CSTC-A, the pseudo FMS process could have worked if the U.S. military had consistently prioritized the staffing of the organizations responsible for equipping and training the ANDSF.<sup>554</sup> However, because there was no institutionalized effort to improve staffing, gaps in experience and expertise persist.

DOD institutions responsible for training and education have also struggled to keep pace with the speed, scope, and scale of DOD’s security cooperation efforts.<sup>555</sup> Often, key security personnel did not receive training from DSCA’s Defense Institute of Security Assistance Management (now known as the Defense Institute for Security Cooperation Studies, or DISCS), the DOD institution responsible at the time for providing security assistance and security cooperation training.<sup>556</sup> Personnel who did receive training were often not exposed to non-traditional FMS processes such as the pseudo FMS process used in Afghanistan. As one 2011 DOD report noted, “DOD is increasingly focused on efforts to build partner country capabilities that are beyond the scope of traditional security assistance activities, but DOD has not fully developed the training required to support this new reality.”<sup>557</sup> The report also found that training failed to address security cooperation more broadly, including important topics such as linking requirements generation to capabilities analysis.<sup>558</sup>

Overall, few improvements have been made to DOD’s security cooperation training and educational programming. An officer who worked at the SAO in 2016 told SIGAR that the DISAM/DISCS training he received was geared toward officers filling defense attaché roles who must understand how to coordinate between the embassy and the host nation government, and that only one hour of a five-week course was dedicated to pseudo FMS cases.<sup>559</sup> He added that the DISAM course “did not prepare him for the actual, practical day-to-day work at the SAO.”<sup>560</sup> In late 2018, a DOD official told SIGAR that DOD’s



A member of the ANA in 2014 handles a center mast line used to bring in an aerostat, an aerial surveillance balloon capable of providing real-time video surveillance. (Photo by Frankie J. Colbry)

security cooperation training “has not changed much over the years and was never any good in the first place.”<sup>561</sup> One interviewee mentioned that examples from Afghanistan were included in their training, however.<sup>562</sup>

Without relevant experience and expertise, and without sufficient training, personnel serving in critical equipping roles struggled to identify appropriate and cost-effective requirements. According to one OSD-Policy official, personnel involved in equipping decisions were generally unaware of time- and cost-saving options available to them, such as sales from stock, blanket order FMS cases, or the use of **excess defense articles** (EDA).<sup>563</sup> DOD officials also told SIGAR that personnel unfamiliar with the item or commodity to which they were assigned rarely questioned the work of their predecessor, leading them to “double down on failure.”<sup>564</sup>

**Excess defense articles** are items no longer needed by the U.S. armed forces. In most cases, EDA can be transferred to partner nations at no or reduced cost.

These problems were only exacerbated by the frequent turnover of personnel at CSTC-A, which resulted in limited knowledge about past equipping decisions. For example, in its FY 2014 budget request, CSTC-A requested \$195.2 million for armored Mobile Strike Force Vehicles for the ANA.<sup>565</sup> Due to a changing rotation of personnel, however, incoming CSTC-A personnel were unaware that the National Security Council and the White House had already approved their request to purchase the Mobile Strike Force Vehicles. Because they were unaware the request had been approved, and under pressure to obligate funds quickly, unarmored cargo trucks were procured despite the MOD notifying CSTC-A that unarmored cargo trucks were not needed.<sup>566</sup> This occurred again in 2016, when a new rotation of CSTC-A personnel submitted a request for ammunition that their predecessors had determined six months earlier was not needed.<sup>567</sup>

## TOTAL PACKAGE APPROACH NOT CONSISTENTLY APPLIED

DOD has long held that successful foreign military sales and partner-nation satisfaction stem from careful planning and foresight. According to DISCS, “Effective planning for an FMS weapon system sale involves anticipating not only the requirements for the weapon system itself, but also the associated initial and follow-on support articles and services necessary for introduction and sustainment of the system.”<sup>568</sup> This philosophy, known as the total package approach (TPA), refers to DOD’s commitment to provide partner nations with the opportunity to acquire the full complement of material, training, and services necessary to field, use, and maintain equipment efficiently and effectively.<sup>569</sup> This includes providing partner nations with items such as training, technical assistance, manuals, parts, and follow-on support.<sup>570</sup> According to Army Pamphlet 12-1, “Security Assistance Procedures and Operations,” failure to implement TPA could result in “reduced performance, lower operational readiness rates and, potentially, an increased safety risk to partner nation personnel.”<sup>571</sup>

Yet equipment was often provided to the ANDSF without appropriate training, spare parts, or manuals. A DOD OIG assessment team observed in 2012 that the 215th Corps did not have technical manuals in Dari or Pashto for their HMMWVs, Ford Ranger Light Transport Vehicles (LTV), or international trucks; rather, all their manuals were in English. When this issue was raised to CSTC-A, it provided some of the technical manuals on compact discs—an impractical solution, given the scarcity of working computers, printers, and copiers at the corps level and below.<sup>572</sup> The lack of Dari or Pashto manuals was identified as early as 2007, when the MOD’s Assistant Minister of Defense for Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics wrote to CSTC-A requesting technical manuals for equipment and weapons they had received, such as HMMWVs, Medium Tactical Vehicles (MTV), LTVs, M113s, M577s, and M16s.<sup>573</sup> In 2014, the Army Contracting Command, Orlando, noted that U.S.-procured Pilatus PC-12s, the Special Mission Wing’s Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance aircraft in Afghanistan, lacked “training devices, training aids, and equipment necessary for different types of mission/training capabilities in support of their counterterrorism and counternarcotics operations.”<sup>574</sup> In 2016, individual weapons (M4 carbines, for instance) were provided to the ANDSF without appropriate cleaning materials or the equipment required to perform required maintenance.<sup>575</sup>

Multiple factors contributed to gaps in the TPA. First, there appears to have been considerable confusion among organizations involved in the equipping process concerning roles and responsibilities. During interviews conducted for this report, there were varying answers as to which organization was responsible for ensuring the TPA, with one interviewee telling SIGAR that the total package approach has generally been thought of as a “pickup game.”<sup>576</sup> For example, while Army regulation identifies the implementing agency (i.e., USASAC) as responsible for ensuring that requests are processed with the TPA, not one individual identified USASAC as responsible.<sup>577</sup> A former official at USASAC thought CSTC-A and the SAO were responsible, while a former SAO officer thought it was the requirement owner (i.e., the military organization within the Resolute Support Mission requesting the material or services) who was

responsible.<sup>578</sup> In a 2018 data call response, the SAO told SIGAR that their organization was responsible for ensuring the total package approach.<sup>579</sup> However, former SAO officers interviewed for this report stated that their job was fulfilling requirements passed down, not developing or refining them.<sup>580</sup>

Additionally, SIGAR found that tools used to ensure the total package approach were either inadequate or not used. For example, implementing agencies can use commodity-specific checklists to help identify the various items or services that should be included in an item sale.<sup>581</sup> However, a USASAC official told SIGAR that while USASAC has checklists to support the TPA, they were not confident these checklists were used or up to date.<sup>582</sup> Because DSCA recognizes that commodity-specific checklists are not always sufficient for anticipating all the variables needed during case development, teams can be organized and deployed to conduct assessments of military capabilities to better identify and clarify requirements. For example, DSCA can send Expeditionary Requirements Generation Teams to help SCOs with translating partner nation capability needs into more comprehensive requests.<sup>583</sup> When asked if DSCA has ever deployed such teams to Afghanistan, DSCA told SIGAR in 2018 that they have not. “These teams,” according to DSCA, “are generally used for SCOs that require assistance due to either their lack of subject matter expertise or other factors. CSTC-A’s presence in Afghanistan provides the required expertise.”<sup>584</sup>

Another problem was the tendency to rely on contractors without providing adequate oversight. In 2014, an OSD Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics task force found the “TPA has repeatedly been refused by the coalition requirements owners with the assumption that support would be provided directly by coalition forces or through other emplaced contracts.”<sup>585</sup> This assumption was not always warranted. As the task force noted, “In many cases, neither the coalition nor emplaced contracts were able to provide the required support to successfully develop an effective organic sustainment capability. The result has been equipment provided without technical manuals, training, or parts packages.”<sup>586</sup> The lack of required support was corroborated by a 2014 SIGAR audit on U.S.-provided Mobile Strike Force Vehicles, which found that the coalition was often unable to provide the security needed for the contractors to conduct maintenance and training.<sup>587</sup>

The rapid fielding of equipment has also led to gaps in the total package approach. According to DOD in 2015:

During the ISAF mission, DOD efforts focused on the expedited fielding of equipment required to keep pace with the rapid expansion of the ANDSF, while simultaneously maintaining operational readiness during active combat operations. In particular, wheeled vehicles, weapons, and other ground equipment were provided to the ANDSF without the total package approach traditionally used for foreign military sales with security cooperation partners. As a result, the standard array of initial spare parts, maintenance manuals, support equipment, training, technical assistance, and follow-on support was not provided for ANA and ANP equipment.<sup>588</sup>

## ARMORED AMBULANCES

Senior U.S. military leaders have repeatedly reported that the ANDSF is suffering an unsustainable number of casualties.<sup>589</sup> While recent ANDSF casualty data have been classified, reported losses for 2016 were 6,700 dead and 12,000 wounded.<sup>590</sup> A November 15, 2018, *New York Times* article reported that since 2015, there have been more than 28,000 Afghan military deaths.<sup>591</sup> Yet even with losses of this magnitude, the MOD's requests for additional armored ambulances have been ignored.

### ANA and ANP Lack Armored Ambulances, Only Authorized for Special Forces

The U.S. military uses armored ambulances to move wounded personnel from areas of active fighting to secure locations where they can either be treated or transferred to helicopters or unarmored ambulances for movement to medical facilities. However, the ANDSF, with an authorized force of 352,000, is authorized only 38 armored ambulances, all of which are assigned to the Afghan Army Special Forces.<sup>592</sup> These 38 armored ambulances, a variant of the MSFV, have room for two stretchers and two extra seats that can be used to transport the less seriously wounded. Unlike U.S. armored ambulances, the MSFV ambulance does not have a large rear ramp for loading stretchers. Stretcher patients must be loaded through a small side door which can be difficult and time-consuming, and which could expose the wounded and medical personnel to enemy fire.<sup>593</sup>

CSTC-A has provided the ANA and ANP with two types of unarmored ambulances: the Ford Ranger ambulance, also referred to as the “urban ambulance,” and the M1152 HMMWV ambulance.<sup>594</sup>

### No Action Taken on ANA Request for Armored Ambulances, Missed Opportunity for Use of EDA

To address the ANDSF's need for armored ambulances that can move in areas where there is active fighting, the Afghan MOD has requested that CSTC-A provide the ANA with the MaxxPro armored ambulance.<sup>595</sup> Per the MOD's request, armored ambulances would be used to “replace unarmored Ford Ranger and M1152 ambulances in infantry kandaks operating in high threat areas.”<sup>596</sup> The MaxxPro ambulance provides needed protection, is designed to support en route medical care, and has a large rear ramp that simplifies the loading of stretchers. However, CSTC-A has taken no action on these requests—even though the U.S. Army has surplus MaxxPro ambulances that the U.S. military does not need and even though Congress has passed legislation that supports giving excess MaxxPro ambulances to U.S. partners.<sup>597</sup> Instead, the U.S. Army has sent surplus MaxxPro ambulances to the Defense Logistics Agency (DLA) Disposition Services (DS) to be destroyed. In 2017, for example, 287 MaxxPro ambulances were sent to DLA-DS for destruction.<sup>598</sup>



An ambulance variant of the Mobile Strike Force Vehicle. (Photo provided by the U.S. Army Program Executive Office for Combat Support & Combat Service Support)



An Afghan HMMWV ambulance. (U.S. Army photo by James Fidel)





ANA soldiers enter a Ford Ranger in eastern Afghanistan. Ford Rangers are one example of non-standard equipment the United States procures for the ANDSF. (Photo by Austin Berner)

## Non-Standard Equipment Complicates Process

Since 2002, the United States has been equipping the ANDSF with non-standard equipment, a term used to describe equipment that is neither managed nor maintained in DOD's supply system because it has been retired or because it was never purchased for U.S.-military components.<sup>599</sup> Examples of U.S.-supplied nonstandard equipment include Russian-made Mi-17 helicopters, Ford Rangers, Navistar Medium Tactical Vehicles, AK-47s, and RPG-7s.<sup>600</sup> While the ANA and ANP have benefited from this equipment and continue to use it, non-standard equipment has historically been difficult for DOD and the FMS system to support. This is because there is no organization in DOD responsible for the management, fielding, and sustainment of non-standard equipment like there is for standard equipment. For example, while Army's Product Manager for Individual Weapons is responsible for the M16 rifle provided to the Afghans, there is no organization in the U.S. Army responsible for supporting the AK-47s the U.S. Army provides the Afghans.<sup>601</sup> According to one officer who worked at USASAC, the organization responsible for ensuring the total package approach for Army FMS cases, USASAC, "had no one with expertise working with or acquiring non-standard weapons" during the initial fielding of equipment to the ANDSF.<sup>602</sup>

Without specific organizations supporting these weapons, the FMS system is not designed to reproduce the fielding and sustainment planning that is supposed to occur within the military departments' **program management offices**. As a result, non-standard equipment was often provided without the tools, parts, manuals, and training needed to operate and maintain the equipment. According to one senior DOD official, for example, non-standard radios were repeatedly sent to the Afghans without the antennae needed to operate them.<sup>603</sup> The lack of expertise was also highlighted by a 2011 U.S. Army

**Program management offices** are organizations responsible for developing and fielding a specific category of items.

Audit Agency report, which concluded that the U.S. Army did not have the technical knowledge needed to establish and sustain an airworthiness certification for the Mi-17s at the same standard as Army military aircraft.<sup>604</sup>

In 2010 and 2011, the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Acquisition, Logistics, and Technology attempted to address the lack of program management offices by creating several “non-standard” program management offices and directorates, such as the U.S. Army’s Non-Standard Rotary Wing Aircraft Program Management Office (now known as Multinational Aviation Support Special Project Office), a Non-Standard Ammunition Product Manager, and Product Manager Allied Tactical Vehicles.<sup>605</sup>

## CHANGES TO ASFF INCREASE FLEXIBILITY BUT LIMIT OVERSIGHT

Created in 2005, the Afghanistan Security Forces Fund provides DOD with the authority and funding needed to staff, train, equip, and sustain the ANDSF.<sup>606</sup> Since its establishment, the ASFF account has been the largest of DOD’s security cooperation accounts, generally receiving more than 50 percent of security cooperation funding provided to DOD, and in FY 2011 receiving 74 percent.<sup>607</sup>

Since the establishment of CSTC-A, its commander has been assigned responsibility for ASFF-funded assistance to the ANDSF.<sup>608</sup> In addition to determining program requirements, the commander is responsible for developing and submitting budget requests, justification materials, and Financial Activity Plans (FAP).<sup>609</sup> These documents are reviewed and approved by the Under Secretary of Defense Comptroller in coordination with the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy for submission to Congress.<sup>610</sup>

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*“[CSTC-A] wanted to burn through remaining funds and so they asked me to burn it on HMMWVs we had been trying to cancel. . . . Even if I saved money they’d just try to burn it elsewhere.”*

—Former SAO officer

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To meet the needs of a fluid military environment, Congress authorized several changes designed to provide DOD with additional flexibility. For example, ASFF was made a two-year appropriation, eliminating the normal constraints of a single-year reconciliation of obligations and commitments.<sup>611</sup> This change did not appear to reduce the pressure to quickly obligate funds, however. Personnel interviewed for this report acknowledged feeling compelled to spend money prior to funds expiring even when requirements were being questioned or when lower cost procurement options (such as using excess defense articles) were available.<sup>612</sup> As one former SAO officer said, “[CSTC-A] wanted to burn through remaining funds and so they asked me to burn it on HMMWVs we had been trying to cancel. . . . Even if I saved money they’d just try to burn it elsewhere.”<sup>613</sup> Pressure to obligate funds also stemmed from the fact that CSTC-A often received funding months into the fiscal year, which shortened the two-year time frame.<sup>614</sup>



CSTC-A has also been afforded added flexibility through the submission of FAPs, which allow CSTC-A to modify budget submissions. While reprogramming ASFF has allowed CSTC-A to meet emerging requirements, this reprogramming has complicated oversight efforts and indicates a lack of planning. According to one former DOD official, money is often requested for one purpose, approved by Congress, and then reprogrammed over the two-year period “in some cases more than ten times.”<sup>615</sup> Another interviewee told SIGAR, “The FAPs are too open-ended. . . . What we say we are spending money on we are not actually spending money on.”<sup>616</sup> With the flexibility afforded to CSTC-A through FAPs, CSTC-A was able to turn an initial \$220 million request for HMMWVs into a \$1.5 billion purchase of 6,000 HMMWVs from 2016 to 2018.<sup>617</sup>

In 2018, Congress noted that the frequency of budget modifications had reached the point that Congress was no longer able to provide adequate oversight, writing that, “the budget flexibility allowed within the ASFF appropriation in the past has led to a lack of budget discipline that challenges effective congressional and executive branch oversight and risks wasteful spending.”<sup>618</sup>

## **KEY FINDINGS**

Overall, this study of the U.S. experience equipping the ANDSF since 2002 finds:

1. On multiple occasions, the United States procured equipment for the ANDSF that either disregarded Afghan-identified requirements, did not meet operational needs, or resulted in excess equipment.
2. For the majority of the conflict in Afghanistan, equipping decisions lacked the guidance of a long-term, consistent plan, allowing equipping decisions to be ad hoc and inconsistent from year to year.
3. Equipping decisions were made without the consistent involvement of U.S.-based experts within the military services and DOD. As a result, alternative capabilities or equipment were not always proposed or considered, and—at times—incorrect equipment was requested or equipment was sent without necessary accessories.
4. Deployed U.S. personnel involved in past and current equipping decisions often lacked the relevant technical expertise and acquisition experience needed to ensure equipping decisions were appropriate, cost-effective, and in accordance with DOD and military department procedures.
5. While both DOD and the U.S. military services emphasize following the total package approach when providing equipment to partner nations, this standard was not always met. On multiple occasions, equipment was provided to the Afghans without the full complement of material, training, and services necessary for the Afghans to use and maintain equipment effectively.
6. Current mechanisms that track and solicit data on the usability, sustainability, and operational effectiveness of U.S.-provided equipment provide an insufficient amount of data, and the data that are acquired is not consistently used by CSTC-A.
7. CSTC-A failed to adequately involve the Afghans in the requirements generation and development process. As a result, Afghans today have limited ownership and understanding of the equipping process.

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## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **OSD-Policy, DSCA, and the military services should conduct a thorough analysis of U.S.-procured equipment for the ANDSF to determine short- and long-term security assistance. The analysis should consider how best to balance long-term sustainability against near-term threats.**

For those items the ANDSF will be required to sustain and maintain in the long-term, the United States should continue to train and advise ANDSF personnel and consider more cost-effective solutions to maintain capabilities (for example, procuring more indirect-fire capability versus aircraft). For those capabilities the United States and Afghans determine will be unnecessary to maintain in the long-term, the United States should create a plan to provide such capabilities to the ANDSF until the United States determines conditions are met and the requirement for the capabilities is reduced.

2. **Resolute Support, in coordination with the appropriate organizations in the ANDSF, should conduct an analysis of how ANDSF casualties occur and then work with the Afghan Ministries of Defense and Interior to make equipping decisions aimed at reducing casualties.**

The ANDSF has suffered casualties at alarming rates, but there are insufficient data on how these casualties occurred. Resolute Support, in partnership with the ANDSF, should conduct a thorough investigation into ANDSF casualties suffered in the past year to identify trends and mitigation strategies. This investigation should explore whether the United States is providing equipment with the necessary protections, if the ANDSF has enough medical and casualty evacuation capabilities by ground and air. Resolute Support should also work with the Afghans to create a formal data collection system that can be used to analyze future ANDSF casualties.

3. **When the U.S. government empowers a temporary organization like CSTC-A to transfer equipment to a partner nation, DSCA must establish a formal process that ensures all relevant U.S.-based stakeholders approve of and provide input on equipping decisions.**

Selecting capabilities that are appropriate and cost-effective and fielding equipment with its complement of required accessories requires using the expertise housed within DOD and the military services. Appropriate selection and effective fielding is even more important when the United States decides to equip fragile states like Afghanistan. However, CSTC-A lacks an equipping process that routinely involves all stakeholders, and decisions about equipping have been made without formal input from the military services. In the future, the successful equipping of a partner nation will require a process that involves all stakeholders during the requirement identification and case development process.

- 4. DSCA should create a course that familiarizes U.S. personnel with the pseudo FMS process. To ensure that U.S. efforts are geared toward increasing partner nation capabilities, this course should educate U.S. personnel on how best to involve a partner nation in the equipping process over time.**

In places like Afghanistan and other fragile states, where the United States uses the pseudo FMS process, deployed U.S. personnel must be able to simultaneously provide equipment to partner nations and develop the partner nation's institutional capabilities. However, SAO officers received limited to no familiarization with the pseudo FMS process and no training on how to be an advisor, unlike personnel assigned to advise at other directorates within CSTC-A.

- 5. CSTC-A should formalize Afghan involvement in the pseudo FMS process.**

Currently, Afghans do not have a formal, consistent role in the pseudo FMS process. Past efforts to include the Afghans have been short-lived and subject to change based on rotating personnel. Identifying ways to formally and consistently increase Afghan involvement (for example, by assigning Afghan liaison officers to the SAO) will increase Afghan ownership and understanding of the equipping process, will build institutional capabilities, and will decrease Afghan dependence on U.S. forces over time.

- 6. Congress should consider evaluating the benefits and challenges associated with using the pseudo FMS process and its impact on overall U.S. foreign policy objectives.**

Starting in 2005, DOD began using the pseudo FMS process to acquire equipment for partner nations like Afghanistan, which lacked financial resources and the capability to define their own requirements. However, there is no formal requirement to develop a host nation's institutional capabilities that would allow for a successful transition toward a more traditional foreign military sales process and, after 18 years, the Afghans have a limited understanding of the U.S. foreign military sales process. After over a decade of implementing the process, it would be beneficial to evaluate the process's impact on partner nations, identify best practices, and modify authorities accordingly.

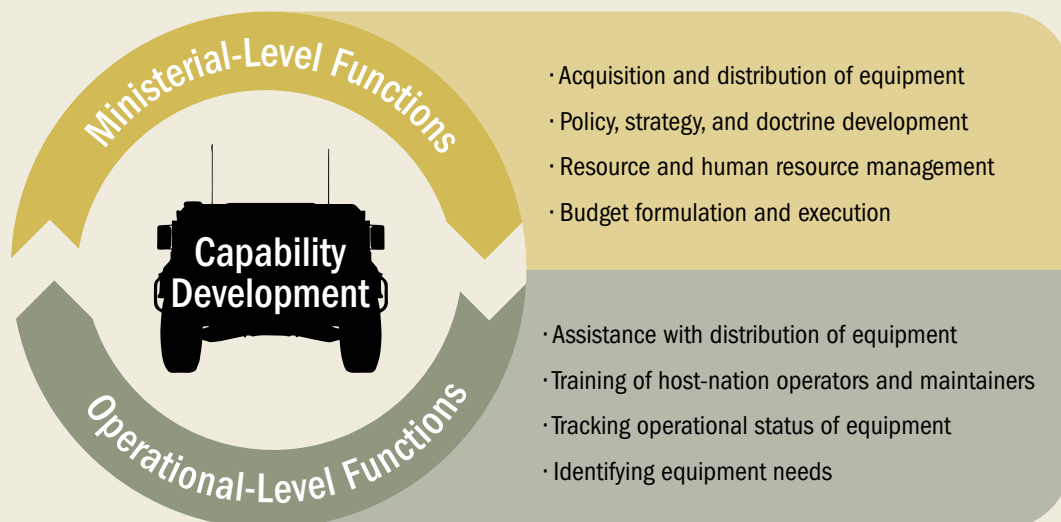
# BEYOND PROCUREMENT

Equipping a partner nation’s security forces with the appropriate type and quantity of equipment warrants careful consideration of a range of factors, such as that nation’s ability to pay for, distribute, and sustain equipment provided to them. Assessing these factors requires effective communication and cooperation both across the defense sectors (that is, across ministerial and operational level organizations) and within specific defense sectors (for example, at the ministerial level) (See Figure 14.). An effective national logistics system, for example, requires formal policy and guidance—a ministerial-level function—and a functioning distribution network that can ensure the timely dispersal of equipment, which involves operational units.<sup>619</sup> An effective logistics system also requires routine communication between the various organizations across these levels, to ensure that actions at each level are mutually reinforcing and to ensure that appropriate modifications can be made when needed. However, as Thomas Ross Jr., the former Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Security Cooperation, points out, the United States frequently adopts a narrow, short-term view when it comes to equipping partner forces. In 2016, Ross wrote the United States has “too often directly equated developing a capability with delivering a weapons system and a minimal operator training course. . . . Capability is not simply a weapon or piece of equipment; it is a complex system of mutually reinforcing inputs that combine to enable a military to achieve a necessary function in support of specific mission.”<sup>620</sup>

This proved to be the case in Afghanistan. For example, there has been no consistent requirement for U.S. personnel at the SAO in Afghanistan to coordinate with U.S. personnel working in other directorates or at the MOD and MOI as advisors.<sup>621</sup> As one former director of CSTC-A’s Capabilities Development Directorate told SIGAR, the various directorates’ efforts were often stovepiped.<sup>622</sup> It was not until 2016, according to the former director, that an affordability and sustainability analysis, conducted in conjunction with other CSTC-A directorates, was included in the equipment requirement validation process.<sup>623</sup> U.S. advisors best positioned to understand Afghanistan’s fiscal and logistical absorptive capacity were also often excluded from major equipping decisions. Further, without the consistent feedback from U.S. field advisors, equipping decisions often failed to account for the operational status and quantity of equipment already in the field (See page 79.).

FIGURE 14

## BEYOND PROCUREMENT



Source: Thomas Ross Jr., “Enhancing Security Cooperation Effectiveness: A Model for Capability Package Planning,” *Joint Force Quarterly*, vol. 80, 1st quarter, January 2016; Thomas Ross Jr., “Defining the Discipline in Theory and Practice,” in *Effective, Legitimate, Secure: Insights for Defense Institution Building*, eds. Alexandra Kerr and Michael Miklaucic (Washington, DC: National Defense University Press, 2017).





## CHAPTER 5

# U.S.-BASED TRAINING

U.S. Air Force photo

Since 2003, the United States has trained over 3,000 military and civilian members of the ANDSF at U.S. installations, at a cost of approximately \$112.6 million, as a means of professionalizing the force and fostering future international cooperation (See Figure 15.).<sup>624</sup> In addition to building the capacity of foreign governments, U.S.-based training programs are designed to expose foreign students to a professional military in a democratic society, influence and maintain relationships with foreign students who may rise to positions of prominence in foreign governments, and increase military and technical interoperability with the United States.<sup>625</sup>

Despite the benefits of U.S.-based training, the ANDSF was unable to fully leverage these efforts. First, Afghan soldiers absconded from training while in the United States at a higher rate than trainees from any other country. Because of this, the United States plans to stop all U.S.-based aviation training for the Afghan Air Force by December 31, 2020. Additionally, Afghan government policy requires Afghan soldiers who are in training longer than one year to be changed from active duty to reserve status. As a result, their pay is halved and some benefits are forfeited. Since aviation training can extend beyond a year, pilots risk returning to Afghanistan unable to fly combat operations with the improved skills learned at U.S.-based training centers.

This chapter discusses funding sources for U.S.-based training, which have varied goals and limitations, and examines the successes and the challenges of U.S.-based



aviation training for the AAF. The chapter also highlights the lack of effective means of evaluating U.S.-based training outcomes and how U.S.-based training programs are disjointed between State and DOD. Lastly, this report will discuss the importance of U.S.-based English language training.

## STATE AND DOD IMPLEMENT DIFFERENT PROGRAMS USING DIFFERENT AUTHORITIES

Traditionally, foreign military training in the United States is led by State and implemented by DOD at military schools. However, starting in the 1980s, Congress increased DOD’s Title 10 authorities, allowing DOD to conduct a range of U.S.-based training separate from State programs. The expansion of Title 10 security assistance authorities resulted in a shift in the burden of U.S.-based training programs between DOD and State. While State has long had clear requirements for tracking most security assistance funding, DOD programs and activities have differing requirements and are reported in different formats, making comparisons difficult.<sup>626</sup> For ANDSF students, DOD relied on its growing constellation of security cooperation authorities, such as Section 1004 of the Counterdrug Training Support program, ASFF, and the Counterterrorism Fellowship Program, while State continued to leverage its International Military Education and Training (IMET) and Foreign Military Financing authority. (See Figure 16).<sup>627</sup>

FIGURE 15

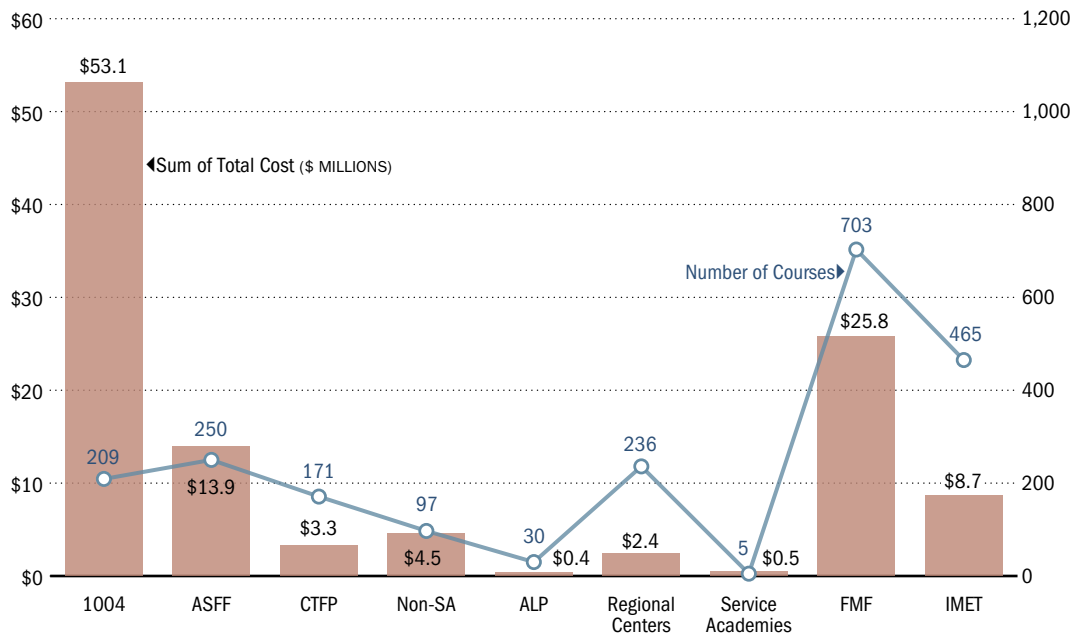
ANNUAL COST OF U.S.-BASED TRAINING FOR THE ANDSF (\$ MILLIONS)



Source: SIGAR analysis of DOD and State, *Foreign Military Training Report*, vol. 1, sec. 4, “Country Training Activities,” 2003–2016

FIGURE 16

COST AND NUMBER OF U.S.-BASED TRAINING COURSES BY PROGRAM, 2003–2016 (\$ MILLIONS)



Note: The *Foreign Military Training Report* is composed of two volumes. This analysis relies on section 4 of the report’s first volume, “Country Training Activities,” which lists “Completed Training” activities for each year. The other sections, “Ongoing Training” and “Planned Training,” were excluded because Afghans had not completed the course, could go AWOL, or fail and be sent back to Afghanistan. Some trainees attended multiple training courses in the United States. The FMTR vol. 1, sec. 4 recognizes that some trainees are counted twice and does not account for the total number of Afghans who attended training in the United States. However, this is the only section of the report that distinguishes between training within the United States from training in other countries.

Source: SIGAR analysis of DOD and State, *Foreign Military Training Report*, vol. 1, sec. 4, “Country Training Activities,” 2003–2016; DOD and State, *Foreign Military Training Report, Fiscal Years 2016–2017: Reading the Report*, April 24, 2017, p. RP-3.

Members of the ANDSF mostly attended training courses focused on English language, aviation, and professional military education. SIGAR analysis of data from *Foreign Military Training Reports* (FMTR) found that DOD spent over \$78 million for 1,449 slots for Afghans in U.S.-based training courses, compared to State’s outlay of about \$34 million on training for 1,654 slots for Afghans.<sup>628</sup> The total number of actual Afghan trainees was lower than the number of slots, since some Afghans attended multiple training courses during a given year. Afghan pilots, for example, were required to attend English language classes before they could enroll in pilot training at one of the U.S.-based Air Force installations.

DOD spent more per Afghan student than State did for U.S.-based training. The average cost to train an Afghan participating in a State-funded program was about \$21,000 per trainee, while the average DOD cost per trainee was about \$54,000.<sup>629</sup> State-led FMF programs accounted for roughly 32 percent of all training courses, and were the principal means of bringing Afghans to attend U.S.-based training courses.<sup>630</sup>

Although the annual *Foreign Military Training Report* is the principal report used by DOD and State to document all U.S.-based training activities, SIGAR found that the data included in the report do not adequately convey all training information. For example,

SIGAR analysis of FMTR reports for completed training for the ANDSF from 2003 to 2011 found that many training locations were listed as either “various” or “unknown.”<sup>631</sup> According to U.S. law, the annual *Foreign Military Training Report* must specify all training locations.<sup>632</sup> While all training locations are specified in the reports following 2012, the missing data from 2003 to 2011 makes it difficult to determine the extent of U.S.-based military training provided to the ANDSF.

## IMET Bolstered Training by Bringing International Military Students to the United States

The International Military and Education Training Program was designed as a “low-cost policy program to provide training in U.S. Defense Department schools to predominantly military students from allied and friendly nations.”<sup>633</sup> The program aims to bolster international security by encouraging mutually beneficial relationships and by improving foreign military forces’ self-reliance.<sup>634</sup> Congress appropriates IMET funding annually under the Foreign Assistance Act, and the Defense Security Cooperation Agency disburses IMET funds to specific programs through the military departments.<sup>635</sup>

### IMET Fostered Cooperation with Allies in Afghanistan

During the Cold War, IMET served as a diplomatic tool to encourage “mutually beneficial relations” between the United States and foreign countries and to further “goals of international peace and security.”<sup>636</sup> Since then, U.S.-based training programs like IMET afforded opportunities for allies to develop interoperability with the United States and NATO.

These efforts paid dividends after ISAF established its peacekeeping mission in Afghanistan. Allies like the Romanians were able to support Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) because IMET and other security cooperation programs enabled efforts to identify, train, equip, and deploy their 26th Infantry Battalion to Afghanistan. Officers from the battalion, including their liaison officer to the U.S. brigade, attended training in the United States through the IMET program. Romanian noncommissioned officers attended the Romanian Noncommissioned Officer Academy, which was led by instructors who attended training in the United States under IMET.<sup>637</sup>

IMET has been described as the cornerstone of U.S.-based security assistance training and an “integral part of the long-term [ANA] training program.”<sup>638</sup> In 2016, for example, IMET was assessed by DOD and State as a “low-cost, highly effective component of U.S. security assistance.”<sup>639</sup> However, IMET does not provide the bulk of U.S.-based training for Afghanistan: SIGAR analysis of the FMTRs from 2003 to 2016 found that IMET funded only 21 percent of all U.S.-based training courses.<sup>640</sup> One weakness of the IMET program is that it prohibits providing police training to military or civilian police if they perform a civilian law enforcement function.<sup>641</sup>

### E-IMET Targets Civilian Officials

While IMET is intended for military personnel, Expanded IMET (E-IMET) was created to extend training to civilian personnel who work in a partner nation’s ministry of defense.<sup>642</sup> E-IMET was formed as a subcomponent of IMET in 1990 under the Foreign Operations

Appropriations Act for FY 1991 in recognition that IMET needed to grow in response to a changing global political scene. E-IMET can also be used to fund training for legislators or personnel from non-defense related ministries. Like IMET, E-IMET emphasizes values like civilian control of the military and international human rights norms. Training locations include the Defense Resource Management Institute at the Naval Postgraduate School, the Naval Justice School, and the Center for Civil-Military Relations.<sup>643</sup>

At the 2012 NATO Chicago Summit, the Afghan government agreed that the ANDSF would operate under civilian leadership. While the 2014 Bilateral Civilianization Agreement set milestones for the conversion of 15,000 military positions to civilian status by December 2015, the Afghan government did not meet the milestones in the agreement.<sup>644</sup> DOD's 2016 report to Congress listed civilian governance of the Afghan security institutions as an essential function of the Resolute Support Mission.<sup>645</sup>

### **ASFF Funds Fill the Gaps**

Since at least 2010, money from ASFF complemented IMET by filling U.S.-based training gaps for the ANDSF that were beyond the scope of IMET, and later enabled the expansion of the AAF. Though most ASFF funding was directed towards training members of the ANDSF within Afghanistan, ASFF's broad authorities also enabled CSTC-A to send Afghan soldiers to the United States for advanced training.<sup>646</sup> ASFF augmented IMET funding to secure additional training seats for professional military education at U.S.-based military institutions.<sup>647</sup> Training opportunities included leadership and technical education at the Army War College and FBI Academy, as well as programs such as the U.S. Army Force Management Course and the Army Captain's Career Course.<sup>648</sup>

In addition to increasing the number of training seats, ASFF is more flexible than IMET. State and DSCA are unlikely to approve requests to fund technical courses, such as aviation training through IMET, since that program's objectives emphasize human rights and professionalization of the force. This makes ASFF the preferred funding source for technical training.<sup>649</sup> According to the 2016 "Country Training Activities" section of the FMTR, ASFF training in the United States focused on professional military education, rotary-winged and fixed-wing aviation training, and English language training.<sup>650</sup>

### **English Language Training: The Linchpin of ANDSF Professionalization**

Between 2003 and 2016, about a third of all U.S.-based training courses for the ANDSF were English language classes, taught primarily at the Defense Language Institute English Language Center (DLIELC) in San Antonio, Texas (See Figure 17.).<sup>651</sup> Since English is the international language for aviation, the NATO Training Command – Afghanistan was especially concerned about the AAF's lack of English language proficiency; it assessed that 45 percent of the AAF must be literate in English for the AAF to be "a credible and competent air force."<sup>652</sup>

English language proficiency is a prerequisite for all international military students to attend U.S.-based training courses.<sup>653</sup> While the Security Assistance Office in Afghanistan is responsible for providing English language testing in Afghanistan to ensure that

students meet proficiency requirements, many foreign students arriving at DLIELC fail to pass initial exams designed to validate the host nation's vetting system. As a result, students are placed in lower proficiency classes, which extends the student's time at DLIELC, leading to potential scheduling conflicts for follow-on training.<sup>654</sup>

According to a 2012 study by the RAND Corporation, the high demand for English language training is driven by the need to train foreign military personnel to employ

### **Planning and Student Selection Process**

The Annual Training Allocation Process is the standard means for foreign military students to attend training in the United States. In Afghanistan, training allocation begins when State produces an annual Mission Performance Plan and CSTC-A produces the Combined Education and Training Program Plan, which details plans for training ANDSF students. These plans propose requirements for all funding sources and training locations, including IMET, Counterterrorism Fellowship Program, ASFF, and FMS recommendations. These are submitted for inclusion to the annual Congressional Budget Justification for Foreign Operations. IMET programming data are forwarded to the appropriate military service by September for review.<sup>655</sup>

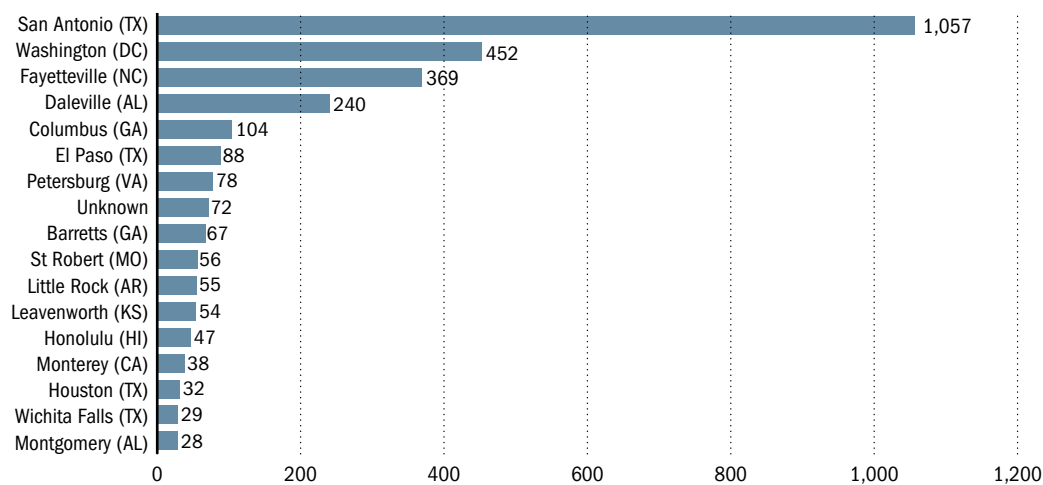
The Combatant Commands host annual Security Cooperation Education and Training Working Groups to "accept, reject, change, or add training lines and training teams to country programs within policy guidelines."<sup>656</sup> Attendees include representatives from CSTC-A, DSCA, military departments, training agencies, and security cooperation training management personnel.<sup>657</sup> After the working groups are over, the military services receive a complete copy of the refined country program that is conditional, based on the ability to provide the training in relation to total worldwide requirements. The military services then coordinate with military schools to ensure seats are available and to schedule start dates.<sup>658</sup> Once funding is received, the military services authorize CSTC-A to send international military students to training.<sup>659</sup>

CSTC-A is responsible for ensuring potential Afghan IMET students are "selected from career personnel likely to occupy key positions in the foreign country's defense establishment."<sup>660</sup> The SAO coordinates with the Afghan MOD, MOI, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Afghan National Security Council, and the Afghan parliament to identify candidates for U.S.-based training. However, according to DOD officials, Afghanistan's nomination process to select candidates for foreign military training is "lengthy and opaque." Every April, CSTC-A receives the list of available school slots approved by the working groups. CSTC-A releases the list to the Afghan Ministry of Foreign Affairs for distribution to other ministries. The Afghan ministries require six to eight months to nominate a candidate. Once CSTC-A slates a name for a course, it takes another three to four months for internal Afghan vetting processes and for CSTC-A to receive a completed visa package. CSTC-A then submits the visa to the consular section of the U.S. Embassy in Kabul for vetting, which takes another one to two months. This 10- to 14-month process causes CSTC-A to forfeit 50 percent of annual training slots.<sup>661</sup>

After completion of training, CSTC-A is required to conduct post-training interviews with international military students to assess the relevance of the training and to gain feedback on student preparation and CSTC-A support.<sup>662</sup> However, in response to a SIGAR request for information, CSTC-A did not explain why it does not conduct post-training interviews with students.<sup>663</sup>

FIGURE 17

NUMBER OF AFGHAN STUDENTS TRAINED IN THE UNITED STATES BY LOCATION, 2003–2016



Source: SIGAR analysis of DOD and State, *Foreign Military Training Report*, vol. 1, sec. 4, “Country Training Activities,” 2003–2016.

newly purchased weapon systems.<sup>664</sup> For this reason, DLIELC has been described as the linchpin that enables the United States to build partner capacity. Without it, the security assistance process that provides education and advanced technical training on U.S. weapon systems could crumble.<sup>665</sup>

### U.S.-Based Aviation Training Increased Afghan Capabilities

In 2005, the United States committed to developing an Afghan air capability. Initially named the Afghan National Army Air Corps, the AAF at first consisted mostly of Russian-made helicopters. Over time, the United States introduced U.S. aircraft.<sup>666</sup> Between 2005 and 2010, AAF training was mostly stationed in Afghanistan at the “Thunder Lab” in Kabul, an English immersion program designed to improve the English, aviation, and professional skills of Afghan air force officers awaiting pilot training.<sup>667</sup> The goal was to develop an effective AAF that did not have to rely on the United States for close air support, tactical lift, or logistical sustainment, even though it still relied on the United States for spare parts and aircraft.

By 2009, Afghan pilots began attending aviation training in the United States, even though the AAF fleet at that point still consisted of old Soviet-era aircraft.<sup>668</sup> The addition of the U.S. C-130 (2013), A-29 (2016), and UH-60 (2018) to the AAF fleet not only required intensive technical training, but also coincided with a reduction of forces and a smaller U.S. training mission.<sup>669</sup> The development of a capable AAF during the reduction of forces was a significant challenge, especially since it takes a minimum of three to four years to train a pilot and five to seven years to train an expert airplane mechanic.<sup>670</sup>

U.S.-based aviation training has been touted as a success. In 2018, the DOD OIG reported that “Western-trained pilots and aircrew typically progress to more advanced qualifications or higher leadership positions faster than their non-Western-trained counterparts.”<sup>671</sup> One U.S. Army official described U.S.-based aviation training for Afghans as “head and shoulders above aviation training in Afghanistan.”<sup>672</sup> The



commander of NATC-A concluded that, despite the challenges, Western training is worthwhile because it improves Afghan professionalism. Moreover, Western-trained personnel helped counter the influence of Soviet-trained pilots.<sup>673</sup>

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*One U.S. Army official described U.S.-based aviation training for Afghans as “head and shoulders above aviation training in Afghanistan.”*

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### **A-29 Training Program: Tailored to Afghan Requirements**

In 2013, the ISAF commander concluded that A-29 training in Afghanistan was not feasible due to the force drawdown and asked the U.S. Air Force to prepare options for conducting A-29 training outside of Afghanistan.<sup>674</sup> The U.S. Air Force proposed Moody Air Force Base in Georgia as the new location for A-29 aviation and maintenance training due to lower costs and better security.<sup>675</sup> The training began in February 2015.<sup>676</sup>

The U.S. Air Force 81st Fighter Squadron was tasked with training Afghan A-29 pilots using U.S. Air Force fighter pilots, who were predominately A-10 pilots.<sup>677</sup> The goal was to provide the AAF with 20 A-29 aircraft capable of sustained operations, 30 pilots, and up to 90 maintainers.<sup>678</sup> As of January 2018, 12 of the 20 A-29 aircraft were in Afghanistan and seven were at Moody supporting pilot training. Following the completion of A-29 training at Moody, the rest of the aircraft will be sent to Afghanistan.<sup>679</sup>

Depending on the student’s English language capabilities, a typical A-29 maintainer would require 15 to 18 months of U.S.-based training and a typical A-29 pilot would require 24 to 30 months of U.S.-based training to be operational when redeployed back to Afghanistan.<sup>680</sup> Afghan pilots are trained using inactive weapons and are prohibited from using live ordnance. Accompanied by a U.S. Air Force instructor pilot, Afghan pilots fly a variety of training missions including in Colorado, where the terrain resembles Afghanistan’s mountainous geography.<sup>681</sup> TAAC-Air informed SIGAR that the U.S. Air Force will transition AAF A-29 training from Moody to Afghanistan at the end of 2020.<sup>682</sup> (For more information on the A-29 program, see pp. 112–113.).

### **UH-60 Black Hawk Program Illustrates Value of U.S.-Based Training**

In 2012, members of Congress wrote U.S. Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta expressing their concerns with the U.S. purchase of 10 Russian-made Mi-17 helicopters for the ANDSF. Members of the House of Representatives further encouraged DOD to provide the ANDSF with U.S.-made helicopters.<sup>683</sup> In 2017, the Afghan Air Force Modernization (AAFMM) program directed the replacement of Russian-made Mi-17s with U.S.-made UH-60 Black Hawks.<sup>684</sup> Although the Mi-17 is gradually being phased out, TAAC-Air will continue to train Mi-17 pilots, with 10 scheduled to graduate by the end of 2019 to replace pilots who converted to the UH-60 Black Hawk.<sup>685</sup>

### **Afghan Policy for International Training and Education**

The Afghan MOD Policy for International Training and Education recognizes the value of international training and notes that the “use of these opportunities has been insufficient.”<sup>686</sup> The policy established ANA requirements and principles to identify and select qualified ANA soldiers to attend international training. Soldiers must take a test to qualify for the program, and are supposedly selected based on test scores and merit. SIGAR has been told by CSTC-A that selection of individual candidates may be based on patronage or family ties rather than merit, though some Afghan trainees dispute this.<sup>687</sup> Offices in the Afghan MOD share responsibility for vetting and selecting qualified Afghan soldiers for participation in international training programs.<sup>688</sup> The MOD Education and Doctrine Directorate is responsible for tracking participation in international training, along with those who failed to meet training requirements, to “prevent unqualified personnel from participating until deficiencies are resolved.”<sup>689</sup> Upon completion of international training, the Personnel Directorate is supposed to ensure ANA soldiers receive a position appointment based on training and requirements.<sup>690</sup> Afghan government policy requires Afghan trainees that are in training longer than one year to be changed from active duty to reserve status. As a result, their pay is halved and some benefits are forfeited.<sup>691</sup>

As part of the AAFM, Afghan pilots were sent to four countries—the United Arab Emirates, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, and the United States. For the U.S. portion of the training, Afghan UH-60 pilots attended the U.S. Army Aviation School at Fort Rucker, Alabama, followed by qualification training in Afghanistan.<sup>692</sup> A SIGAR audit noted that the U.S.-based program provided more comprehensive training than the other two training locations. At Fort Rucker, pilots complete the UH-60-specific Aircraft Qualification Course (AQC) and are trained in combat and night operations, while at training in the Czech Republic, Slovakia, and the United Arab Emirates, Afghan pilots are only taught how to fly civilian helicopters.<sup>693</sup> This means Afghan pilots not training in the United States must wait for AQC training slots to open in Kandahar to receive all training required to be fully operational.<sup>694</sup>

### **C-130 Program: Reliance on DOD Contractor Logistics Support Hampered the Development of AAF Maintenance Capabilities**

In January 2013, after experiencing “continuous and severe operational difficulties” with the Italian G222 medium airlift program, the Secretary of the Air Force was directed to provide four C-130s to the AAF.<sup>695</sup> By late 2013, the first two C-130s were delivered to the AAF, with two more scheduled for delivery by the end of 2014.<sup>696</sup> The C-130 aircraft provided a strategic airlift capability to the AAF that supported personnel, casualty evacuation, and equipment transport across Afghanistan.<sup>697</sup> A NATC-A feasibility assessment on the AAF assumed, among other things, that initial training of Afghan C-130 aircrews and maintainers would be conducted in the United States.<sup>698</sup>

Afghan C-130 pilots were trained by the 538th Air Expeditionary Advisory Squadron at Arkansas’ Little Rock Air Force Base in 2013. By 2015, training courses in the United States for the AAF included language training, pilot training, and aviation safety, along with specialty training for aircrews and maintenance personnel.<sup>699</sup> By 2016, the AAF had four qualified aircrews available to fly its fleet of four C-130s.<sup>700</sup>

While the AAF had a full complement of C-130 aircrews, it struggled to provide the maintenance and logistical support for its C-130 fleet. A July 2014 SIGAR audit questioned the requirement to fund four C-130 aircraft when the AAF was struggling to maintain the two C-130s it already had.<sup>701</sup> In 2018, the DOD OIG found that the transition from ISAF to the Resolute Support Mission forced the AAF to provide the majority of air support to the ANDSF, but the AAF was unable to maintain the aircraft it needed to do so. For the C-130 program, 100 percent of maintenance was provided by Contractor Logistics Support (CLS) contractors, even though 45 trained Afghan C-130 mechanics were available. The DOD OIG also found that the contracts required a mechanic credentialed by the U.S. Federal Aviation Administration to certify the aircraft's maintenance, which led to contractors performing the maintenance. This requirement has been dropped in a new contract.<sup>702</sup> The preference for CLS contractors stemmed from DOD policy, which requires that all aircraft and aircraft systems used by DOD personnel and contractors have completed airworthiness assessments to ensure that aircraft meet safety requirements.<sup>703</sup> This policy essentially prohibits U.S. air advisors from flying in Afghan aircraft without an airworthiness assessment. While this mitigates risk for the U.S. advisors who conduct in-flight training with the Afghans on the C-130, it also inhibits the AAF from assuming control of its maintenance program.<sup>704</sup>

The DOD OIG also found that the contracts did not require contractors to meet training goals to support the proficiency of the Afghan mechanics. To rectify this capability gap, the DOD OIG recommended amending the contracts to emphasize “building the Afghan aircraft maintenance capability” and “increasing the Afghan responsibility for daily aircraft maintenance.”<sup>705</sup> Even with CLS support, the DOD OIG found in January 2018 that half of the AAF's C-130s were grounded awaiting maintenance, and that the AAF could only support its highest priority missions.<sup>706</sup>



A U.S. Air Force C-130 maintenance advisor from the 440th AEAS works with Afghan Air Force counterparts to remove an engine panel for training at Kabul Air Wing. (U.S. Air Force photo by Veronica Pierce)

## DOD AND STATE LACK WAYS TO EVALUATE U.S.-BASED TRAINING AND TRACK ALUMNI

Prior to 2007, almost 40 years after the establishment of IMET, DOD and State had never conducted a comprehensive analysis of the IMET program's effectiveness.<sup>707</sup> In 2011, GAO concluded that State and DOD's ability to assess the IMET program's effectiveness was limited by weaknesses in program monitoring and evaluation. These weaknesses included the lack of an established performance plan, objectives, and measures for the IMET program; the lack of a monitoring system designed to track graduates after training; and limited input from DOD training managers. GAO found, for example, that even though State's May 2011 program evaluation policy required its bureaus to submit evaluation plans for all programs, State had not established a performance plan for IMET. GAO's review of the 2013 State Bureau Strategic Resource Plans (BSRP) "found little or no mention of IMET overall."<sup>708</sup>

DSCA's Strategic Plan 2009–2014, Campaign Support Plan 2010, and directorate-level performance plan also did not include IMET performance measures or evaluation plans. According to GAO, a DSCA official said the lack of DOD performance plans for IMET was based on the belief that it is an efficient and effective program, and is less of a priority for evaluation than newer programs.<sup>709</sup>

State and DOD have used three main sources of information to measure IMET performance: a survey of IMET graduates, a report on IMET graduates who have attained prominent ranks or positions, and country-level narrative performance information. However, a GAO report found that none of these three sources captures higher-level performance information for the program worldwide.<sup>710</sup>

## U.S. Advisors Have No System to Identify Afghans Who Have Received Training in the United States

**Positions of prominence** include general and flag rank officers, heads of state, cabinet and deputy cabinet ministers, ambassadors, and ministers of parliament.

Source: GAO, *IMET Agencies Should Emphasize Human Rights Training and Improve Evaluations*, GAO-12-123, October 27, 2011, p. 18.

One of DOD and State's metrics for the outcome of IMET training is the number of trainees who reach a **position of prominence** in their country.<sup>711</sup> The performance of foreign military students is tracked through U.S. military academic alumni programs and the Security Cooperation Training Management System (SC-TMS). U.S.-based academic institutions, such as the National Defense University, maintain alumni programs that allow U.S. government professors to stay connected with foreign students.<sup>712</sup> There is no comparable system in place for a U.S. advisor in Afghanistan to identify Afghans who have trained in the United States.

The SC-TMS is the common information system of record used by security cooperation organizations for the day-to-day management of training programs; a replacement system is under development.<sup>713</sup> SC-TMS contains information that would be useful for advisors, including Invitational Travel Orders, course dates, program training summaries, student data records, and student career progression, but this information is often not used by U.S. advisors assigned to Afghan officials who were trained in the United States.<sup>714</sup> Likewise, alumni programs could offer information on a former student's background, training, and career progression, but alumni programs struggle to stay in touch with graduates and are dependent on students who volunteer to participate in alumni events. Further, alumni organizations may also not be comfortable providing information to the U.S. government, as they may prefer to remain in the realm of academic professional relationships.<sup>715</sup>

As of June 2011, DSCA indicated that only 1 percent of the nearly 88,000 IMET trainees in the SC-TMS had attained a position of prominence in their respective militaries.<sup>716</sup> The SAO in Afghanistan reported in 2018 that just 13 Afghans out of the several thousand who attended training in the United States had earned a position of prominence.<sup>717</sup> In Afghanistan, the SAO is responsible for updating the SC-TMS with information on the career progression of IMET alumni. These reports aim to track graduates of security cooperation programs as they progress through the ranks.<sup>718</sup> While foreign countries have little incentive to provide information to the United States, especially if countries are suspicious of U.S. motives for requesting the data, the United States is uniquely positioned to obtain such data in Afghanistan.<sup>719</sup> The United States has been involved in the management and creation of human resource systems for the MOD and MOI, and therefore could possibly influence the sharing of data from human resources databases to compare against SC-TMS data.<sup>720</sup>

## AWOL TRAINEES UNDERMINE PROGRAM EFFECTIVENESS

In 2017, SIGAR found that Afghan trainees go AWOL in the United States at a far higher rate than trainees from any other country. Between 2005 and 2017, 253,977 foreign trainees attended training in the United States, 2,537 of whom were Afghan. Of those, 320 went AWOL, 152 of whom were Afghan; of that number, 103 were junior officers, such as captains and lieutenants. Most of the Afghans went AWOL while attending

English language training at Lackland Air Force Base in San Antonio, Texas. Rates of Afghan AWOLs peaked in 2009, 2015, and 2016—years that coincided with higher reported levels of violence in Afghanistan. As of March 2017, 83 Afghans had fled the United States or remained unaccounted for.<sup>721</sup>

The most common reasons among Afghans for going AWOL included personal or family safety concerns and perceived job insecurity in Afghanistan following training. There are no consequences for Afghan trainees who go AWOL. Often, AWOL Afghan trainees attempt to flee to Canada, where access to asylum is perceived to be easier and asylum benefits better.<sup>722</sup> According to interviews with Defense Language Institute officials, foreign military trainees have an A-2 diplomatic visa which makes it more difficult for DOD sponsors to prevent Afghan students going AWOL, and an underground network of previous trainees provides information to Afghans who want to disappear into American society.<sup>723</sup>

The Afghan Student Management Office was formed in 2011 in an effort to curtail AWOL rates for U.S. Air Force-sponsored Afghan students in the United States. Even so, the AWOL rate doubled in 2016 from the historical average of around 6 or 7 percent to 13 percent.<sup>724</sup> In response, Maj. Gen. Richard Kaiser, commander of CSTC-A, raised concerns that the “MOD does not have a comprehensive policy for preventing its members from going AWOL while enrolled in U.S.-funded training or addressing what happens when AWOLs occur.”<sup>725</sup> To curtail the rate of Afghans going AWOL, CSTC-A canceled several FY 2017 training slots. Afghans who are allowed to attend U.S.-based training now face greater restrictions intended to reduce opportunities for going AWOL.<sup>726</sup>

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*“MOD does not have a comprehensive policy for preventing its members from going AWOL while enrolled in U.S.-funded training or addressing what happens when AWOLs occur.”*

—Maj. Gen. Richard Kaiser

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Afghans who go AWOL not only cost the United States money and resources, but hinder the ANDSF’s operational readiness.<sup>727</sup> ANA officer training does not include advanced schools like the Basic Officer Leadership or Captains Career Courses, which are standard in the U.S. military. Instead, FY 2018 courses were limited to graduate courses, Ranger training, Special Forces training, and courses to build the Afghan Air Force. Other courses were not available due to an unusually high rate of unfilled slots and increasing numbers of AWOL students. While reducing access to courses obviously reduces the risk of AWOLs, it also limits Afghans from receiving training from U.S. military institutions.<sup>728</sup>



## KEY FINDINGS

Overall, this study of U.S.-based training of the ANDSF finds:

1. U.S.-based aviation training has resulted in a quantifiable improvement in AAF capabilities and improved professionalization of Afghan personnel.
2. The success and sustainability of U.S.-based training has been undermined by students who go AWOL while in the United States.
3. DOD and State lacked mechanisms needed to evaluate U.S.-based training and track alumni, a key outcome metric.
4. Information collected on ANDSF personnel trained in the United States is accessible to advisors in Afghanistan, but advisors are rarely aware of these databases and therefore the information is rarely used.
5. Complementary programs like ASFF and IMET increase the volume of funding and capacity for training at U.S. military schools.
6. English language training courses made up a third of all U.S.-based training for Afghans and is a prerequisite for follow-on technical training.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **DOD and State should develop new metrics of effectiveness for foreign military training. Current metrics of effectiveness are misleading, as they are often based on the future career prospects of students. This “position of prominence” criterion reflects a statistically insignificant number of Afghans who have trained in the United States.**

The evaluation of U.S.-based training for the AAF is based on concrete, precise measurements of success in terms of Afghan capabilities—for example, the number of targets hit by Afghan pilots, the number of aerial resupply missions conducted, or the number of fully trained ground crews available. Non-aviation training is evaluated solely in terms of the number of U.S.-trained Afghans who rise to senior leadership. While it may have some utility for security cooperation efforts in other countries, this metric does not link U.S.-based training to desired outcomes in Afghanistan. Gauging the effectiveness of U.S.-based training as it relates to broader SSA plans requires more specific metrics, aligned with goals for ANDSF development.

2. **DOD and State should track the performance of Afghan students trained in the United States by implementing a system to consolidate information and should inform advisors of its availability. This can be done through enhancing the existing SC-TMS.**

The SC-TMS comprises useful information on Afghan trainees, but it has functionality limitations and is not presently employed by most advisors. In addition to making SC-TMS more functional for the tracking and evaluation of U.S. training outcomes, DOD should take advantage of the human resource information

systems of the Afghan MOD and MOI to populate SC-TMS with updated information and allow the tracking of U.S.-trained students.

- 3. State, in coordination with DOD, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, and state and local governments, should strengthen efforts aimed at preventing foreign military students from going AWOL. This can include changing the visa status of AWOL students to make obtaining U.S. identity documents more difficult, and working with local authorities to ensure students only have access to limited or restricted documents.**

Afghan students at U.S.-based training go AWOL at a higher rate than students from any other country. This results not only in a loss of the investment in a particular student's training, but also the reduction of other school seats to reduce AWOL opportunities. A change in visa protocols for Afghan military students and coordination with other state and federal entities will reduce the ease with which Afghan students can go AWOL.

## A-29 TRAINING PROGRAM: A SUCCESSFUL, INTEGRATED MODEL

The U.S. Air Force's A-29 program has proven to be a best practice for creating a comprehensive and consistent advisor model that effectively connects the U.S.-based training program with continued professional development and training in Afghanistan.

Since the United States does not operate A-29s, the U.S. Air Force used A-10 pilots to staff the A-29 program, based at Moody Air Force Base, Georgia. Typically, air advisors serve short-term assignments, but in order to increase training continuity, the U.S. Air Force assigned its instructor pilots to serve a three-year tour as an A-29 advisor, and permanently relocated them to Moody Air Force Base.<sup>729</sup> In order to do this, the U.S. Air Force reactivated the 81st Fighter Squadron in January 2015.<sup>730</sup>

Advisors assigned to the program were first required to attend the Air Academy for training and certification.<sup>731</sup> As noted by Brig. Gen. Christopher Craige, former acting commanding general at TAAC-Air, "This rapidly developed program for Afghanistan is unique for the A-29 development because this is the first time U.S. Air Force pilots and maintainers have been trained as instructors to conduct training for Afghan students in the United States."<sup>732</sup> Following training, advisors joined the 81st Fighter Squadron. As part of the unit, advisors would provide introductory training to Afghan pilots in Georgia, and upon graduation would deploy to Afghanistan as a member of TAAC-Air to provide additional mentoring. Following the advisor's tour, the advisor would return to Georgia to train the next class of Afghan students. This consistent rotation between the United States and Afghanistan allowed the advisors to provide a consistent approach to developing an Afghan A-29 capability. The model also allowed advisors to establish necessary rapport and a close working relationship with their Afghan counterparts, which has contributed to the success of the program.<sup>733</sup> The rotational model also creates a bond between the Afghan pilot and U.S. Air Force advisor, as noted by Lt. Col. Johnnie Green, the 438th Air Expeditionary Squadron commander:

We have developed a close relationship with the Afghan A-29 pilots over several years now, not just in training, but also in the development of their own fighter squadron and advising them while they conduct operations. Training in the United States allows us the freedom and flexibility to control the environment and instruct to specific objectives, and the standards we hold them to directly translate into what they do in combat.<sup>734</sup>

The A-29 program started in September 2014 and was initially set to finish December 2018; it is now planned to end December 2020.<sup>735</sup> The program called for 41 U.S. Air Force air advisors—17 pilot advisors and 24 maintainers—that would train 30 Afghan pilots and 90 Afghan maintainers.<sup>736</sup> The United States and Afghanistan would select and vet the most qualified Afghan pilots, who have had former pilot training or experience with other aircraft, to attend language school and training for the A-29 aircraft.<sup>737</sup> The goal of the program was to have the Afghan pilots and maintainers trained at an initial operational capacity by January 2016, and at a full operational capacity by December 2018.<sup>738</sup> As of September 2018, nine aircraft were used to train 30 AAF pilots and 90 ground staff, which included a maintenance crew. DOD announced a contract extension—from August 2019 to December 2024—for the delivery of the remaining A-29 Super Tucano light attack aircraft.<sup>739</sup>



An Afghan A-29 stopped for crew rest and refueling at Little Rock Air Force Base in Arkansas. (Photo by Stephanie Serrano)

As noted in DOD's December 2018 report to Congress, the program has advanced to the point that the Afghan A-29 pilots "are becoming more precise, with over 88 percent of their laser-guided munitions landing within one meter of their target" and are regularly conducting airstrikes with decreasing levels of coalition assistance.<sup>740</sup> The A-29 program has proven that an incremental training approach that includes U.S. Air Force and maintenance advisors for years to come is important to ensuring the Afghans increase their capability to perform their missions adequately. SIGAR has learned from the Secretary of the Air Force for International Affairs that the A-29 Afghanistan program will be deactivated in December 2020, with the majority of training continuing in Afghanistan.<sup>741</sup>





## CHAPTER 6

# BY, WITH, AND THROUGH NATO

U.S. Marine Corps photo

On September 12, 2001, for the only time in its history, NATO invoked **Article 5** of the North Atlantic Treaty.<sup>742</sup> While Article 5 was formed to safeguard against traditional military invasions by other nations, NATO members recognized that threats to global security had changed significantly in the 52 years since the alliance was founded. Although NATO had previously recognized terrorism as a risk to its security, NATO's response to 9/11 was the alliance's first response to the actions of a non-state actor and its first operation outside of the Euro-Atlantic area.<sup>743</sup>

Even though the United States was grateful for NATO members' support, it neither requested nor expected collective NATO military action in the months following the 9/11 attacks. "If we need collective action, we'll ask for it," U.S. Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz remarked at a September 2001 press conference. "We don't anticipate that at the moment."<sup>744</sup> The Bush administration's decision to operate independently in Afghanistan was based on two assumptions: incorporating non-U.S. military units would reduce speed and effectiveness, and the United States would have to assist those countries seeking to participate in combat operations.<sup>745</sup>

In 2003, the U.S. position changed. As the United States became preoccupied with Iraq, it turned to NATO to assume responsibility in Afghanistan. In 2003, NATO assumed command of the UN-authorized International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), the mission responsible for assisting the Afghan government with maintaining security

**Article 5** of the North Atlantic Treaty states that "an armed attack against one or more [NATO members] in Europe or North America shall be considered an attack against them all." If such an attack occurs, NATO members will assist the attacked member by conducting "such action as it deems necessary, including the use of armed force."

Source: NATO, "The North Atlantic Treaty," April 4, 1949.

in and around Kabul. It would not be until 2009 that the United States refocused its attention on Afghanistan and dramatically increased its involvement in the country. The 2009 military surge resulted in the deployment of approximately 100,000 U.S. soldiers coupled with a large U.S. civilian surge.<sup>746</sup> From this point forward, the United States worked through NATO to optimize international involvement in support of its overarching security objectives in Afghanistan, including reconstructing the ANDSF.

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*“If we need collective action, we’ll ask for it.”*

— Former U.S. Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz

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This chapter examines how NATO’s mission in Afghanistan added complexity to the security sector assistance mission. While NATO’s involvement has changed over the course of the Afghan conflict, its involvement complicated operations, strained unity of command, and required the United States to devote additional resources to support allies and partners. Restrictions placed by NATO members on how their forces could be used impeded unity of effort. This chapter also examines how the United States capitalized on NATO involvement by leveraging the niche capabilities of NATO members, such as their familiarity with Soviet-made aircraft and police advising expertise.

## **NATO GETS INVOLVED IN AFGHANISTAN**

Following the Bonn Agreement in December 2001, the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 1386, which created ISAF. It was tasked with providing security to the interim Afghan government in and around Kabul.<sup>747</sup> The UN resolution provided political legitimacy for international involvement in Afghanistan, leading to increased participation by NATO nations and individual member states assuming responsibility for the ISAF mission on six-month rotations.<sup>748</sup> Initially, the United States opposed putting U.S. forces in ISAF and sought to keep ISAF from expanding beyond Kabul, under the assumption that such an expansion would embroil U.S. forces in peacekeeping or nation-building activities.<sup>749</sup>

By 2003, however, as the United States’ attention began to shift to Iraq, DOD pushed NATO to take over reconstruction activities in Afghanistan.<sup>750</sup> On August 11, 2003, NATO assumed command of ISAF, making the alliance responsible for the command, coordination, and planning of the international force, including the provision of an in-country headquarters and a force commander.<sup>751</sup> In October 2003, the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 1510, expanding ISAF’s mandate from providing security in and around Kabul to providing security to the rest of the country. By October 2006, ISAF expanded nationwide through the establishment of Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRT) and regional commands.<sup>752</sup>



## NATO Seeks to Establish a Unity of Purpose through International Forums

While NATO's mission in Afghanistan struggled to implement unity of command and unity of effort, the alliance used international forums and conferences to create an internal unity of purpose:

- **June 2003 (Madrid, Spain):** At the Foreign Ministers' Meeting, NATO agreed to take over the ISAF mission from the UN in August 2003.
- **June 2004 (Istanbul, Turkey):** NATO countries agreed to continue expanding operations in Afghanistan with the establishment of additional PRTs.
- **November 2006 (Riga, Latvia):** NATO reviewed the progress in Afghanistan in light of ISAF's nationwide expansion and called for broader international engagement. Allies discussed the potential reduction of national caveats.
- **April 2009 (Strasbourg, France, and Kehl, Germany):** NATO agreed to establish the NATO Training Mission – Afghanistan, responsible for higher level training for the ANA and additional training and mentoring for the ANP.
- **November 2010 (Lisbon, Portugal):** NATO agreed to begin transitioning security responsibility to the ANDSF in 2011, with the goal of completing this transition by the end of 2014.
- **May 2012 (Chicago, Illinois):** NATO confirmed that the transition to ANDSF-led security was on track for completion by the end of 2014 and announced a new, non-combat post-2014 mission to train, advise, and assist the ANDSF.
- **September 2014 (Wales, UK):** NATO reasserted its commitment to Afghanistan through the Resolute Support Mission, financial contributions to the ANDSF, and the NATO – Afghanistan Enduring Partnership.
- **July 2016 (Warsaw, Poland):** NATO agreed to extend the Resolute Support Mission beyond 2016 and provide funding for Afghan forces until 2020.
- **July 2018 (Brussels, Belgium):** NATO agreed to finance the Afghan security forces until 2024.<sup>753</sup>

## NATO Assumes Command of ISAF: Lack of Early U.S. Involvement Creates Tension

With NATO assuming command of the Afghanistan mission, ISAF became the main coordinating body for the international military effort. ISAF also offered a way for member states to contribute to the mission in Afghanistan without becoming involved in Operation Enduring Freedom, the United States' counterterrorism mission.<sup>754</sup> While ISAF was tasked with coordinating international activities, the United States operated independently, refusing to place its military forces under international command. The United States' initial decision to reject NATO's offers of help and operate independently caused some resentment, especially when the United States called for larger force deployments in later years. As one British diplomat reportedly remarked, "It's quite something for Washington to criticize NATO for its troop levels in Afghanistan in January 2004 when Washington scorned NATO's genuine offers of assistance in September 2001."<sup>755</sup>

## Provincial Reconstruction Teams Follow Traditional NATO Approach

As the NATO-led ISAF mission was confined to Kabul in the early years, individual nations looked for ways to expand the international presence nationwide to improve governance, economic development, and security. Countries created PRTs, which were “small, joint civil-military cells used to expand legitimate governance across Afghanistan and [enhance] security through security-sector reform and reconstruction efforts.”<sup>756</sup>

The first PRT was established by the United States in Gardez, the capital of Paktiya Province, in 2002.<sup>757</sup> Headed by a U.S. military commander and manned by a small complement of military and civilian advisors from USAID and State, the Gardez PRT was the first attempt to bridge the gap between the central government in Kabul and the country’s predominantly rural provinces. Over time, more teams were established in regions of strategic importance and in parts of the country where Afghanistan’s major ethnic groups resided.<sup>758</sup> The earliest teams were largely ad hoc and adapted to the needs of a given province, operating “without a great deal of guidance in terms of mandates and essential tasks.”<sup>759</sup>

NATO’s first step toward expanding beyond Kabul in early 2004 started with assuming command and coordinating responsibility of existing PRTs and establishing new PRTs nationwide, while still deferring to a specific nation to manage day-to-day operations. NATO assumed responsibility of the German-led PRT in December 2003 and, in June 2004, announced that it would establish four new PRTs in northern Afghanistan. In early 2005, NATO expanded PRTs into western Afghanistan.<sup>760</sup> By the start of 2006, NATO had established 22 PRTs across the country.<sup>761</sup> ISAF-led PRTs were typically located in more secure regions of the country and were restricted by caveats imposed by the lead nation, including restrictions on straying too far from encampments or conducting nighttime operations.<sup>762</sup> While caveats led to some tension between partner nations, PRT participants reported feeling that their teams were most effective in secure regions.<sup>763</sup>

Since each PRT was commanded by individual nations, implementation of reconstruction programs was disjointed and not standardized, and international PRTs often had differing priorities and staffing sizes. For example, while some PRTs were led by a civilian leader and prioritized governance and economic growth, others were led by military officers and prioritized security; UK PRTs focused on disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration over humanitarian operations, and German teams had comparatively high civilian staffing.<sup>764</sup> Further, while each PRT had the same overarching mission, individual teams adapted their approach to the needs of their particular location in Afghanistan.<sup>765</sup>

As the war unfolded and the ISAF mission expanded, PRTs became the backbone for civilian and military operations, extending the central government’s influence in remote provinces.<sup>766</sup> While the primary goal of PRTs was to improve governance, security, and reconstruction, U.S. commanders viewed improvements to governance as the most critical of these objectives.<sup>767</sup> The security component was limited to the protection of reconstruction efforts, meaning that PRTs did not pursue insurgents or engage in poppy eradication activities.<sup>768</sup> Moreover, PRTs afforded NATO countries the opportunity to



A U.S. Army soldier discusses an operational order with a Czech military counterpart during an Operational Mentoring and Liaison Team training exercise. (Photo by William Livingston)

have control over designated areas in Afghanistan to conduct security sector reform and reconstruction—an example of NATO’s **framework nations** concept.<sup>769</sup>

### Operational Mentoring and Liaison Teams: NATO’s Complement to the United States’ ETTs

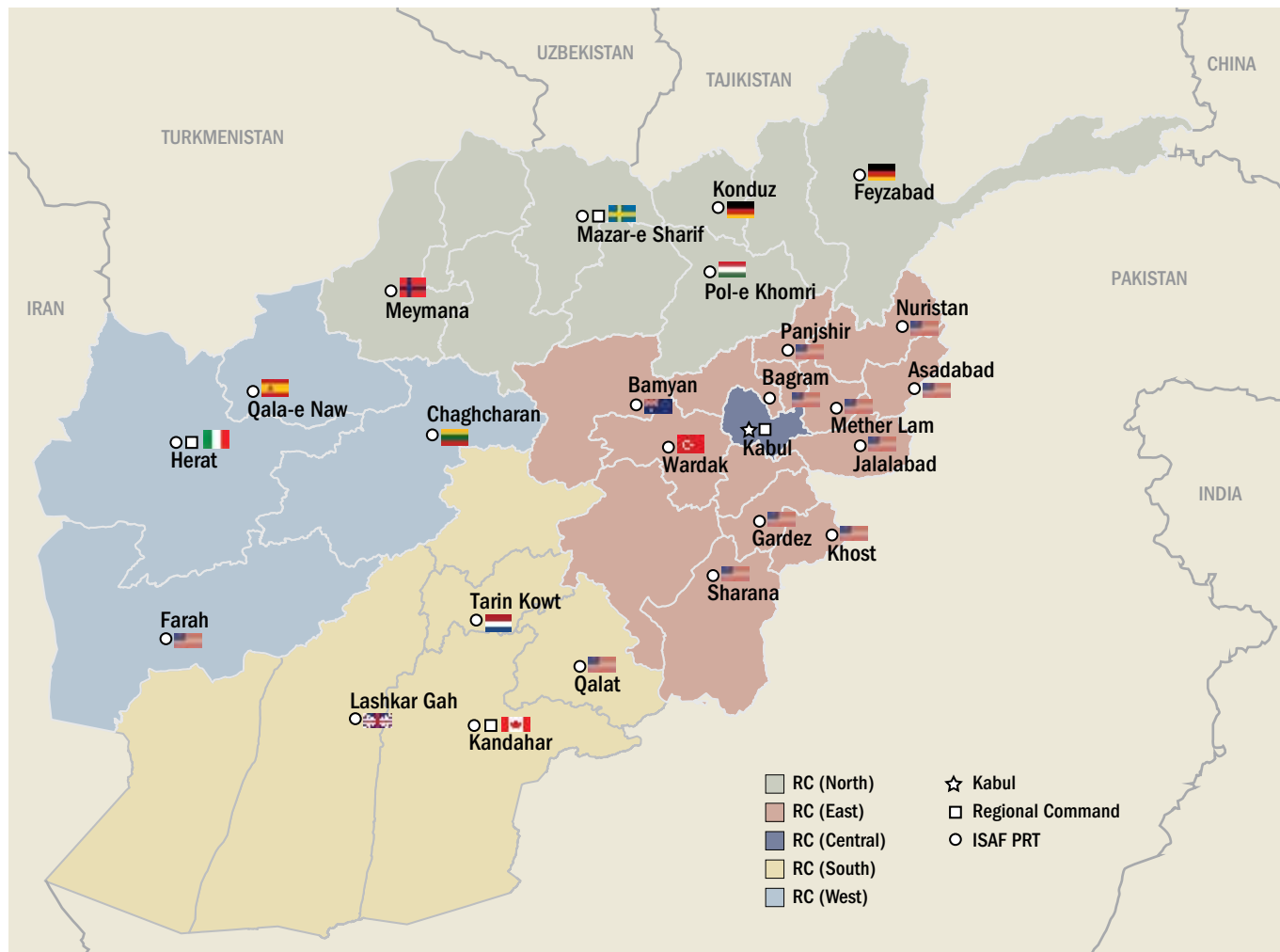
As reconstructing the Afghan National Army became a primary focus for the United States and ISAF, NATO mirrored the U.S. deployment of Embedded Training Teams with the deployment of Operational Mentoring and Liaison Teams (OMLT). The OMLT program was an important part of NATO-ISAF’s contribution toward the development of the ANA by providing them with training and mentoring, and by serving as a liaison between the ANA and ISAF forces. The NATO-ISAF OMLTs performed similar duties to the U.S. ETTs, and were generally composed of 13 to 30 personnel—depending on the size and function of the ANA unit it was partnered with—from one or several countries.<sup>770</sup> According to NATO, in October 2009, 27 nations had contributed or pledged to contribute to the OMLT program.<sup>771</sup> These OMLTs were located in all five regions of Afghanistan, reported to the regional commander, and supported the Afghanistan Regional Security Integration Command.<sup>772</sup>

Marine Lt. Col. Drew West, an ANA/OMLT leader for ISAF, remarked that “the OMLT program is the single greatest contribution that NATO’s ISAF mission can make towards developing the Afghan National Army.”<sup>773</sup> The Joint Multinational Readiness Center in Hohenfels, Germany, provided OMLTs from all nations the opportunity to practice coaching and mentoring techniques with ANA staff and company representatives prior to deployment.<sup>774</sup>

**Framework nations** is the traditional NATO approach to stabilization and military operations, in which one nation is in charge of coordinating all civil and military activities in one geographic area and has operational command in that area.

FIGURE 18

ISAF REGIONAL COMMANDS AND PRT LOCATIONS



Source: International Security Assistance Force, "ISAF Regional Commands & PRT Locations," April 20, 2007.

### Regional Commands Established to Centralize Control of Counterinsurgency Operations

As NATO expanded nationwide, it recognized the need to create a command structure to coordinate PRT activities (See Figure 18.). Each regional command was led by a lead nation and had a command-and-control headquarters as well as a forward support base.<sup>775</sup> Following the traditional framework nation concept, NATO initially established five regional commands under the control of different NATO nations: the United States in the east, Italy in the west, Turkey in the capital, Germany in the north, and, in the south, a rotating command of Canada, the United Kingdom, and the Netherlands.<sup>776</sup> In addition to coordinating the PRTs in the region, regional commands also organized ISAF's combat forces. Overall, however, coordination suffered because each region was under the control of a different nation.

## United States Assumes Command of NATO Forces, Takes Steps to Further Centralize Control over NATO Activities

As security deteriorated in Afghanistan and political pressure within the United States increased, the United States assumed military command of ISAF in 2007. One year later, the United States gave the commander of ISAF (COMISAF) the dual-hatted role of commander of U.S. Forces – Afghanistan. “This new command structure,” according to a 2009 DOD report, was to “ensure synchronization of U.S. and ISAF forces and proper coordination of ANSF development efforts.”<sup>777</sup> In 2009, with the appointment of U.S. General Stanley McChrystal, U.S. Special Forces would also come under the purview of the COMISAF, creating a more unified command-and-control structure.<sup>778</sup> General McChrystal also took additional measures aimed at improving command and coordination by creating the ISAF Joint Command and the NATO Training Mission – Afghanistan.<sup>779</sup>

## Establishment of NATO Training Mission Aims to Improve Coordination of International Security Force Assistance Activities

At the April 2009 NATO Summit, NATO members agreed to establish the NATO Training Mission – Afghanistan to oversee NATO’s development, training, and advising of the ANA and ANP, parallel to the U.S.-led CSTC-A organization.<sup>780</sup> NTM-A became fully operational in February 2010 under the command of U.S. Lt. Gen. William Caldwell, who was dual-hatted as the commander of CSTC-A and NTM-A.<sup>781</sup> As one NATO expert noted, combining NTM-A and CSTC-A under one command was a “testimony to [a] more coherent and strategic thinking within the alliance.”<sup>782</sup>

Thereafter, NTM-A became responsible for coordinating international efforts to train, equip, and sustain the ANA, ANP, and AAF at the institutional level.<sup>783</sup> With the ISAF Joint Command focused on training forces in the field and conducting combat operations, NTM-A was able to focus on professionalizing the ANDSF and strengthening the forces’ training institutions, structures, and processes.<sup>784</sup> With the ANA, for example, NTM-A focused on training, advising, and assisting ANA leadership in developing and fielding institutional capabilities such as logistics and military education.<sup>785</sup>

The establishment of NTM-A changed how countries participated. Instead of countries providing units that would operate largely independently, NATO nations would now provide individual advisors to serve as a part of a multinational command structure responsible for developing core capabilities within the ANDSF and supporting institutions.<sup>786</sup>

## NATO Training Mission Suffers from Chronic Shortfalls

Deploying advisors to staff the NTM-A was a consistent challenge. Many NATO members were reluctant to commit forces to Afghanistan, a mission seen as financially, politically, and militarily costly. As one NATO official wrote, “Sending forces to Afghanistan is a heavy burden, in political and psychological as well as financial and military terms, and therefore the temptation is great to let others carry as much as possible of that burden.”<sup>787</sup> Over the past 17 years, NATO has participated in at least 11 missions outside

of Afghanistan. While these have not required as many forces as in Afghanistan, they have further strained NATO members' resources.<sup>788</sup>

The **Combined Joint Statement of Requirements**, the NATO equivalent of a request for forces, details the requirements for a NATO operation.

One area where NATO has fallen short in generating forces for Afghanistan is in providing trainers for the ANDSF. As detailed in SIGAR's first lessons learned report on security sector assistance, NATO consistently struggled to fill the personnel requirements set forth by the **Combined Joint Statement of Requirements** (CJSOR), the NATO document that identifies requirements for NATO operations.<sup>789</sup> According to former NATO Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR) General John Craddock, "NATO nations have never completely filled the agreed requirements for forces needed in Afghanistan."<sup>790</sup> In March 2010, SACEUR Navy Admiral James Stavridis told Congress that of the 1,287 NATO trainers U.S. military leaders had requested, only 541 were pledged. "It absolutely is correct to say NATO has fallen short on providing these vital trainers," he said.<sup>791</sup>

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*"It absolutely is correct to say NATO has fallen short on providing these vital trainers."*

—Former SACEUR Admiral James Stavridis

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As of March 2017, 13,459 troops staffed the Resolute Support Mission. The United States was the largest contributor with 6,941 personnel, followed by NATO with 4,833; 13 non-NATO nations provided 1,647 troops.<sup>792</sup> At a February 2018 defense ministerial meeting, NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg announced that at least 28 allies and partners were increasing their troop contributions to the training mission by approximately 3,000 trainers.<sup>793</sup>

In November 2018, NATO reported that over 16,000 personnel from 39 NATO allies and partner countries were contributing to the Resolute Support Mission, and at the July 2018 NATO Summit, NATO members and allies agreed to extend their financial support through 2024.<sup>794</sup> According to the Lead Inspector General for Overseas Contingency Operations, 95 percent of billets in NATO's CJSOR were filled in 2017 and 2018.<sup>795</sup>

### **ISAF Joint Command Establishes Control of Regional Commands**

In 2009, to provide more effective unity of command and to better implement a new counterinsurgency campaign plan, General McChrystal created the ISAF Joint Command as a corps-level headquarters.<sup>796</sup> The IJC would oversee the implementation and coordination of day-to-day combat operations on the ground in Afghanistan. To do this, the IJC was assigned responsibility for all regional commands.<sup>797</sup> As scholar Theo Farrell noted, "The establishment of an ISAF Joint Command in 2009 led to tighter control of the various regional commands and thus narrowed the room for specific national arrangements."<sup>798</sup> The IJC was also assigned responsibility for all operational training and mentoring teams.<sup>799</sup> According to General McChrystal's COMISAF Initial

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Assessment, the IJC would also allow CSTC-A and NTM-A to focus on institutional-level development.<sup>800</sup>

### **Train, Advise, and Assist Commands**

By 2015, NATO and the United States dramatically reduced their collective military footprint in Afghanistan and transitioned from ISAF to the Resolute Support Mission.<sup>801</sup> The cornerstone of the new mission became functional security force assistance, described by DOD as “an advisory effort focused on developing functions, systems processes, and organizational development connected between the ministry and operational levels.”<sup>802</sup> Additionally, regional commands were renamed Train, Advise, and Assist Commands and were still led by framework nations.<sup>803</sup> Despite the shift in focus toward training, TAACs continued to report through the operational chain of command rather than transitioning under the training command (CSTC-A) (See essay on pp. 63–65.).

## **NATO’S POLICIES AND PROCESSES CREATE CHALLENGES IN ESTABLISHING UNITY OF EFFORT**

While NATO adapted over the course of its involvement in Afghanistan, the NATO mission suffered from challenges inherent to NATO’s policies and processes. Since NATO was created as a collective defense mechanism in the 1940s to counter the Soviet threat, it was not initially designed to operate as a fully integrated multinational military organization. Even within Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty, which calls for collective action, the treaty allows flexibility for how each nation wishes to provide support.<sup>804</sup> Therefore, NATO will not force or compel any nation to operate beyond its national mandate and seeks to project public unity as an organization. Each nation maintains full control over its deployed forces during NATO operations, which impedes unity of command. Another challenge is that military capabilities within the alliance are not equal, especially with the expansion of NATO to include smaller Eastern European countries previously under Soviet influence. Even if a country wants to increase its support for NATO operations, it cannot do so without the support of other larger NATO ally forces.

### **Senior NATO Commander Does Not Have Absolute Control over NATO Forces**

Command and control was complicated by NATO’s command structure. For U.S. forces, the U.S. commander in country is given authority over subordinate U.S. forces. This is the same for NATO countries, as each NATO member in a NATO operation has its own separate chain of command back to its national government. As noted in the NATO *Allied Joint Doctrine for the Conduct of Operations*, “no NATO or coalition commander has full command over the forces assigned to them since, in assigning forces to NATO, nations will delegate only operational command or operational control.”<sup>805</sup> In most cases, NATO countries will also deploy a Senior National Representative or national contingent commander who holds a “red card” that can be used to prevent their national



force from being used in certain operations or to complete certain tasks.<sup>806</sup> This red card can even be used if there is no specific caveat on that force.<sup>807</sup>

As a result, ISAF commanders and Resolute Support commanders wielded restrictive authority over subordinate forces. This was highlighted by Canadian General Rick Hillier, who commanded ISAF forces from February to August 2004. He wrote, “I did not turn to Canada as my go-to nation when I wanted a job done, because of the complex and cumbersome system in Ottawa and bureaucratic approach to operations.”<sup>808</sup> One of Hillier’s successors, U.S. General David McKiernan, later remarked, “I was [ISAF commander] and I did not have command of U.S. forces.”<sup>809</sup> Given the influence of contributing member nations over their forces’ operations, the ISAF commander’s role was often relegated to one of strategic guidance, or ensuring operational and strategic cohesion.<sup>810</sup>

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*“I was [ISAF commander] and I did not have command of U.S. forces.”*

—Former ISAF Commander U.S. General David McKiernan

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In addition to having limited control over the forces assigned to them, the NATO commander in Afghanistan is required to consult with the North Atlantic Council (NAC) and await consensus on decisions, which inevitably delays operations. In some instances, this led commanders to dismiss NATO’s policies. When he was ISAF commander, General David Richards of the UK did not ask for permission to conduct Operation Medusa, a Canadian-led offensive aimed at establishing government control over an area of Kandahar Province, because he “knew there would be a two-month period when all the nations and NATO would agonize over whether they could attempt such a big thing. So [he] just did it.”<sup>811</sup>

## NATO Members Required to Fund Their Own Military Operations

Member countries make direct and indirect contributions to NATO. Direct contributions are made to finance requirements that serve the interests of all NATO members (such as NATO-wide air defense systems) and generally follow the principle of **common funding**. Indirect, or national, contributions are the largest contributions and include member troop and equipment contributions.<sup>812</sup>

With **common funding**, all NATO members contribute a small percentage of their defense budget according to an agreed upon cost-share formula based on gross national income.

Unlike UN operations, in which participating nations are reimbursed, NATO members are required to fund their own operations, including operations in Afghanistan.<sup>813</sup> For most NATO members, this presents a significant problem. In the post-Cold War era, many NATO militaries atrophied after years of declining defense spending, and operations in Afghanistan required a rapid increase in spending in a short amount of time. Further, NATO members—especially smaller countries—struggled to meet the costs associated with supporting frequent rotations of military forces in Afghanistan while dealing with competing domestic financial priorities.<sup>814</sup> The result, according

### Operating by Consensus Is a Key Aspect of NATO Decision-Making

Consensus has been the sole basis for decision-making in NATO since the creation of the alliance in 1949. NATO decisions are viewed as the “expression of the collective will of all the sovereign states that are members of the alliance.”<sup>815</sup> Consensus is not just required for the most important decisions in the North Atlantic Council, but for thousands of decisions every year, ranging from broad political and military strategies to force structure to resource and budgeting issues. Consensus is also used at all levels of NATO, including at the committee and working group levels.<sup>816</sup> Although cumbersome, this mechanism of achieving unanimity is what gives NATO its international credibility.<sup>817</sup>

While the consensus rule applies to the potential use of military force, such as the invocation of Article 5, NATO defers to member states when it comes to determining exactly how those countries contribute to operations. For example, Norway and Denmark do not allow peacetime stationing of foreign troops.<sup>818</sup> As political scientist Stephen Saideman notes, “Because [NATO] operates by consensus, countries must not be forced to give up control of their troops; otherwise, some (or all) would never agree to a mission in the first place.”<sup>819</sup>

to former NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen, is that “it costs about 50 times more to support a NATO soldier in Afghanistan than it costs to support an Afghan soldier.”<sup>820</sup>

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*“It costs about 50 times more to support a NATO soldier in Afghanistan than it costs to support an Afghan soldier.”*

—Former NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen

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### Force Generation: NATO’s Process for Deploying Personnel

When NATO became more involved in operations throughout the 1990s, it established a formal way to generate forces for missions. The most important step of this process occurs when the Deputy Supreme Allied Commander Europe (DSACEUR) and joint force commander for the NATO operation hold a force generation conference, where representatives from all member states meet to discuss the CJSOR.<sup>821</sup> Following the conference, member states relay their troop commitments through a force preparation message and a transfer of authority message (transferring command of the national contingent over to NATO) about a month before the actual deployment.<sup>822</sup> The force generation process is continuous, as troop rotations and revised concepts of operations require new force requests and approvals.<sup>823</sup>

Commitments made at NATO’s force generation conferences do not always indicate actual force commitments, however. “In a perfect world in which alliance concerns trumped national concerns,” remarked scholars David Auerswald and Stephen Saideman, “requested forces would be forthcoming at the force generation conferences, the deployed

## **How Requirements Are Generated for NATO**

After the North Atlantic Council agrees on a new operation, the NAC-appointed joint force commander drafts an operational plan and preliminary statement of requirements for the operation. Following the NATO Military Committee's endorsement of these plans, the NAC approves them and issues a force activation directive. The Supreme Allied Commander Europe then sends an activation warning message to NATO's member states and provides them with a spreadsheet listing the equipment, manpower, and resources needed for an operation. The DSACEUR and force commander then hold a force generation conference where member states are asked to provide the capabilities needed.<sup>824</sup>

In 2004, to improve NATO's ability to monitor members' contribution and manage burden sharing, NATO began holding annual global force generation conferences. At these conferences, the **Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe** presents force requirements and reviews what forces are available or committed.<sup>825</sup> These conferences also provide a more comprehensive and longer-term view of NATO's operational needs and of the allies' overall efforts to meet them; it is easier, for example, for a country to provide forces when they have a 12-month warning rather than a 30-day warning.<sup>826</sup> While global force generation conferences are generally held annually, force generation conferences for Afghanistan are held biannually to better respond to the emergent needs of the commander.<sup>827</sup>

The **Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe** is the headquarters of NATO's Allied Command Operations.

commanders would get on with the business of implementing the NATO [operational plan], and the force generation process would end until the next set of requests was sent from the field commanders."<sup>828</sup> However, the process rarely worked this smoothly. The number of troops that a country pledges to contribute must be validated after the conference by a country's internal political authorities (such as a nation's parliament), which may change the number of troops or rescind the offer altogether.<sup>829</sup>

The force generation process is also complicated by national caveats, which are restrictions a country places on the use of its forces. After the force generation conference takes place, NATO members notify the organization of the specific contributions they will make and their caveats. The latter are outlined in a document known as the transfer of authority, which is sent to the in-country headquarters, sometimes only a few days before troops arrive.<sup>830</sup> At the commencement of the mission in Afghanistan, some NATO members placed heavy caveats on their forces out of reluctance to follow the Bush administration and to protect them from being pulled to support missions that were directed by the United States with no alliance input.<sup>831</sup>

Since NATO allows each nation to maintain control over its forces, national direction always supersedes NATO orders, even those that come from agreed-upon and NAC-approved operational plans, strategic directives, and rules of engagement. This makes it difficult for NATO commanders to plan appropriately, as troops may be constrained to specific geographic locations or be unable to participate in certain types of operations.

## How the U.S. Government Handles CJSOR Shortfalls

According to DOD officials, DOD tracks CJSOR requirements and sometimes coordinates with Resolute Support, CENTCOM, and others to identify shortfalls. DOD officials told SIGAR that there is little to no interagency coordination when it comes to the CJSOR, and that when Resolute Support Mission and NATO submit the CJSOR, there is no discussion about filling gaps or shortfalls.<sup>832</sup> State told SIGAR it provides “input and reporting [that] helps feed their requirements,” but largely defers to DOD on this issue.<sup>833</sup>

## Benefits of NATO’s Force Generation Process

Although there are many criticisms of NATO’s force generation process, it does preserve NATO’s core tenets, one of which is to leave intact the autonomy and veto power of NATO members. If a nation does not agree with a potential operation, it may veto the NAC’s decision or withhold troops. Further, although the force generation process is complicated, it is structured in a way that makes it difficult for any NATO member to refuse participation. Force generation is a consultative process that gives nations the ability to resolve their specific concerns, which in turn reinforces their commitment and ensures their participation.<sup>834</sup>

The force generation process also enables NATO members to participate in an operation they would most likely be unable to undertake on their own. Since NATO pools resources across the alliance, it is much easier for countries with smaller armies to participate and support an operation—although NATO members are required to pay for their own military forces to participate. For NATO, it is better to have a member country participate with minimal forces than not at all.

## National Caveats Undermine Unity of Effort and Complicate Planning

While certain data concerning caveats in place in Afghanistan are classified, approximate numbers have been reported. In 2006, there were an estimated 50 caveats in Afghanistan affecting ISAF troops.<sup>835</sup> In 2009, a public DOD report stated that caveats increased from 57 to 58, attributing the slight increase to the addition of two nations to the mission in Afghanistan. “Of the 27 troop-contributing nations with caveats,” the report noted, “20 nations limit operations outside of originally assigned locations [and in] conducting counternarcotic operations with ISAF.” The report also noted that nearly 40 percent of the caveats are geographically based, “representing a significant challenge for COMISAF as they limit his agility.”<sup>836</sup> The complexity caused by caveats was also highlighted by one lieutenant colonel who stated in an interview with the Combat Studies Institute that “the commander would have to look down this matrix and say, ‘Okay, these guys can do something, but these guys can’t. These guys can fly over and observe. These guys can actually shoot at them.’ This really constrained the commander quite a bit.”<sup>837</sup>

As noted above, caveats can include restrictions on where a unit can serve and whether and under what conditions it can move outside of its geographic location to assist allies elsewhere. Caveats are also used to specify the size of a force or the limits placed

on the use of a force. For example, some countries only allow their forces to engage in defensive operations or during the daytime.<sup>838</sup> German troops were not allowed to operate outside of Kabul and Regional Command – North, and Belgian mentors to the ANA were not permitted to support operations conducted under U.S. command.<sup>839</sup> For the first three years of the conflict, Canadian commanders had to seek approval for all missions that required lethal force, or that risked collateral damage, significant casualties, or strategic failure.<sup>840</sup> Other countries, such as Poland and Denmark, had few if any caveats.<sup>841</sup>

Overall, national caveats created tension within NATO and hindered operational effectiveness. Caveats were known to produce resentment within the alliance: When countries were viewed as withholding their full effort, it created the perception of placing a disproportionate burden on others.<sup>842</sup> In some instances, caveats affected how the Afghans perceived their coalition counterparts. According to a study by the RAND Corporation comparing U.S. Embedded Training Teams and ISAF liaison teams, almost all Afghan leaders preferred U.S. ETTs because they were able to go into combat with them.<sup>843</sup>

However, caveats do have benefits—without them, some NATO members would be unable to participate in NATO operations because domestic policies or political sensitivities would make them unable to approve of all NATO operational plans.

## **THE UNITED STATES ENABLES AND OPTIMIZES NATO INVOLVEMENT IN AFGHANISTAN**

As the United States' priorities shifted to Iraq around 2003, it welcomed NATO's increased role in Afghanistan. The Bush administration recognized that greater NATO involvement entailed a greater need for U.S. support of NATO allies given the limited capabilities of some countries. "The United States often has to supply expensive enablers [to NATO countries]—airlift, logistics, combat services and support, force protection, special forces, [and] intelligence," Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld told Stephen Hadley, U.S. National Security Advisor to President Bush, shortly after NATO took over the ISAF mission.<sup>844</sup> It was a point Secretary Rumsfeld reiterated two years later to U.S. Ambassador to Afghanistan Zalmay Khalilzad: "When NATO agrees to do something, it means we are the ones who have to help with the lift, help with the money, help with intel, help with the quick reaction forces, and provide the enablers."<sup>845</sup> In 2007, U.S. Army Lt. Gen. Benjamin Freakley described the United States as "the glue that kept the NATO forces together."<sup>846</sup>

U.S. assistance to other countries took on a variety of forms. According to one former senior advisor to the Afghan MOD, the United States provided lift, sustainment, and training support to countries like Albania and Montenegro in exchange for personnel.<sup>847</sup> The United States did "almost everything for countries like Mongolia and Lithuania," one former NTM-A /CSTC-A commander told SIGAR, including paying stipends and providing logistical support. There was "not one country that didn't ask for some type



A Spanish mentor listens to an Afghan commando sniper student guide his classmates through scope adjustment procedures. (NATO Photo by Felix Figueroa)

of [U.S.] support,” the former commander added.<sup>848</sup> Lt. Gen. David Barno recalled one NATO-led PRT that refused to leave their compound until a U.S. unit arrived to disarm an improvised explosive device they discovered outside of their front gate.<sup>849</sup>

### **U.S. Financial Assistance to Coalition Countries Incentivized Their Continued Support**

The United States also enables NATO and partner nation involvement by providing financial support. Created by the FY 2002 Defense Appropriations Act, the Coalition Support Fund (CSF) initially allowed for money from the Defense Emergency Response Fund to be used to reimburse Pakistan and Jordan for their support of U.S. military operations in Afghanistan.<sup>850</sup> In 2006, the *Quadrennial Defense Review* recommended that DOD be given greater reimbursement authority to support coalition forces and expand logistics support to other nations supporting the Global War on Terror, and Congress subsequently authorized CSF reimbursements for any key coalition country offering support for the wars in Afghanistan or Iraq.<sup>851</sup>

Today, the United States is able to use the CSF to reimburse key cooperating nations for military and logistic support, as well as to finance specialized training, supplies, and equipment to coalition partners.<sup>852</sup> The Coalition Readiness Support Program, a subset of the CSF, allows DOD to lend equipment such as radios, counter-IED equipment, and night vision devices to coalition partners.<sup>853</sup>

The Lift and Sustain program provides funds to transport foreign forces from approximately 25 countries supporting U.S.-led operations as well as sustainment funds





An Operational Mentoring and Liaison Team commander from the Ohio National Guard talks with his Hungarian army counterpart while on duty in Afghanistan. (Ohio National Guard photo)

while they serve with U.S. forces.<sup>854</sup> In Afghanistan, this fund provided support to allied countries such as Poland and Romania.<sup>855</sup> According to DOD, Lift and Sustain funds allow coalition partners to not only participate in contingency operations, but to keep their forces in Afghanistan for extended deployments, decreasing requirements for U.S. forces.<sup>856</sup>

### **The National Guard State Partnership Program**

The National Guard State Partnership Program also enabled several NATO countries' involvement in Afghanistan. Implemented in 1993, it links a state's National Guard with a partner nation's security force. Through military-to-military engagements, the program aims to support a range of mutually identified security, government, economic, and social goals. As of 2019, there are 75 such partnerships with 81 nations around the globe.<sup>857</sup>

To support the train, advise, and assist mission in Afghanistan, U.S. National Guard soldiers formed OMLTs with their NATO partners or augmented their partners' OMLTs to fill vacancies. For many NATO countries, the National Guard's assistance and support facilitated their involvement in Afghanistan. For example, when Hungary offered to send a training team to Afghanistan, they requested that they train and deploy with their Ohio National Guard partners.<sup>858</sup> Since then, states such as Ohio, Illinois, New Jersey, Tennessee, Minnesota, and Michigan have supported their NATO partners on OMLT missions in Afghanistan.<sup>859</sup> By training, deploying, and completing multiple rotations together, the National Guard units worked to increase the likelihood that their NATO partners will one day be able to deploy without U.S. support.<sup>860</sup>





Italian *Carabinieri* advisors from NATO Training Mission – Afghanistan train the ANP in search and apprehension techniques at the Central Training Center. (Photo by Brian Brannon)

## Optimizing NATO: Niche Capabilities and Force Multipliers

While the United States enabled many NATO nations' involvement, several NATO nations provided unique capabilities that the U.S. government used to fill voids in the U.S. security sector assistance effort. As the former director for international security cooperation at NTM-A told SIGAR, “[NATO] allies brought capabilities that the United States could not replicate, and if [we] tried to replicate them, [it] would be very expensive.”<sup>861</sup> In most cases, the United States sought to leverage NATO nations with expertise on Soviet-style aircraft and weapons and with experience in police advising.

For example, the U.S.-led Combined Air Power Transition Force, the predecessor to NATC-A, relied heavily on Czech Air Force advisors to provide Mi-35 crew training.<sup>862</sup> Czech and older Afghan airmen spoke Russian, which eliminated the need for linguists and helped with rapport-building. The Czech Republic also deployed an air advisor team every four months from 2008 through at least 2015, and often redeployed the same advisors. As historian and former air advisor Forrest Marion noted, “Such continuity probably facilitated more accurate assessments than what some other coalition teams were able to provide.”<sup>863</sup> Given their experience operating and maintaining Russian Mi-17s, Lithuanian and Hungarian air advisors were also valued by the U.S.-led air command.<sup>864</sup>

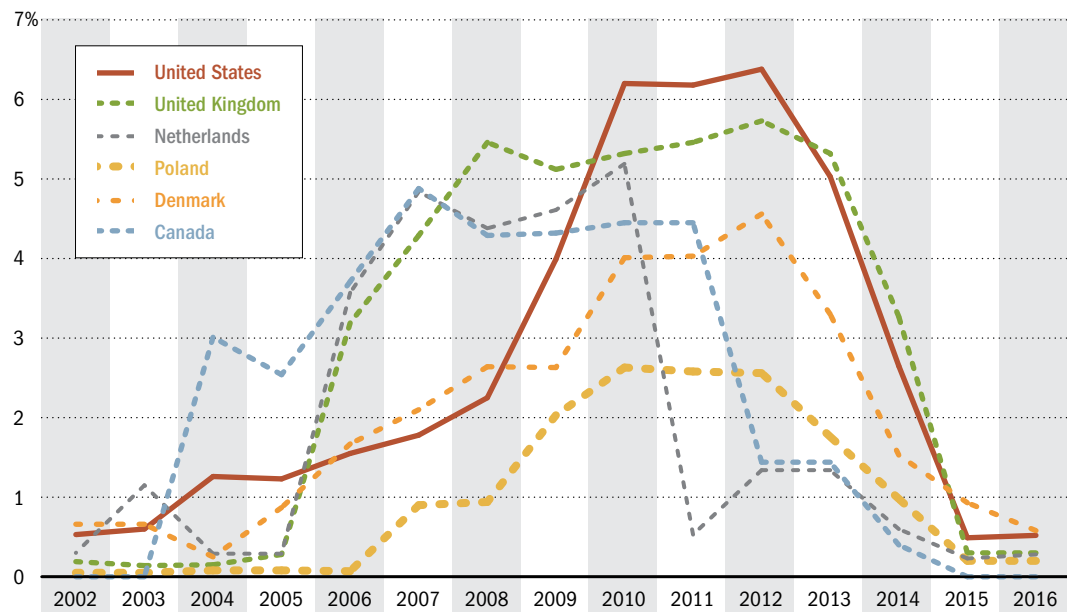
Because the United States does not have a national police force, it viewed countries with gendarmeries, or paramilitary units with jurisdiction in civil law enforcement, as particularly useful for police training. Unlike the United States, countries like Italy, Romania, and Turkey were able to provide military forces with civilian policing

## An Alternative Look at NATO Troop Contributions

The United States has repeatedly asked NATO members to contribute more troops. However, for several years, the number of troops contributed by many NATO allies as a percentage of their active force was proportional to the United States' contribution. For example, from 2006 to 2009, the Netherlands contributed a larger percentage of its active force (3.5 to 5 percent) compared to the United States (1.5 to 2.3 percent) (See Figure 19.).

FIGURE 19

### TROOPS COMMITTED TO AFGHANISTAN AS A PERCENTAGE OF COUNTRY'S TOTAL MILITARY STRENGTH



Note: Numbers include a country's contribution to ISAF and Operation Enduring Freedom.

Source: Total force strength numbers (2002–2017) from International Institute for Strategic Studies' *Military Balances*; ISAF and OEF contributions (2002–2006) from International Institute for Strategic Studies' *Military Balances* (2002–2008); ISAF and RSM contributions (2007–2016) from ISAF Placemats Archive.

experience and training tailored to police advising. The value of such expertise was highlighted by one former commander of NTM-A/CSTC-A, who told SIGAR that forces like the Italian *Carabinieri*, Italy's national gendarmerie, were "vital" to the ANP's training.<sup>865</sup> A former deputy commander for programs at CSTC-A told SIGAR that bringing in the *Carabinieri* to assist with the police mission was the "smartest thing [CSTC-A] has ever done."<sup>866</sup>

Unfortunately, however, NATO's force generation process allowed nations to volunteer for assignments, including leadership roles, regardless of that nation's expertise on the topic. For example, while the Italians, Romanians, and Turks serve as staff on CSTC-A's Military Advisory Group – Interior, the directorate responsible for advising the MOI, the directorate is headed by a two-star British marine with no civilian policing experience.<sup>867</sup>

Additionally, NATO's force generation process creates challenges for the United States in requesting country-specific support. For example, while U.S. commander General John Allen was able to request that the Italians take over the police training mission in Iraq, a similar request would be a far more burdensome process for the Resolute Support commander in Afghanistan.<sup>868</sup>

The United States also considered several NATO countries to be force multipliers for their willingness to contribute troops with limited caveats. After 2008, Poland contributed relatively large numbers of troops (over 2,600 in 2010) with minimal caveats: The Polish had no caveats when operating within Regional Command – East or with the United States outside of Regional Command – East, and Polish Special Operations Forces had no caveats other than not being allowed to operate outside of Afghanistan.<sup>869</sup> The Polish were also praised by several U.S. officers interviewed by SIGAR, who found them to be flexible and familiar with Afghanistan given repeat rotations.<sup>870</sup> Countries like Denmark and Romania were also known for their flexibility and limited constraints.

### **NATO's Experience in Afghanistan Improved its Interoperability**

During the Cold War, interoperability was not a high priority for NATO; land forces operated side by side without the need for regular interaction or direct engagement. In Afghanistan, where NATO countries operated alongside one another often in small units, the need for interoperability became much more significant.<sup>871</sup> This need was also seen as critical for the train, advise, and assist mission, where national military doctrines often determined how NATO members trained their Afghan counterparts. At one point during the mission, for example, the United States trained the ANA's enlisted soldiers while the UK trained noncommissioned officers and France trained officers.<sup>872</sup> As one advisor noted, these countries' military doctrines were different in significant ways.<sup>873</sup> For some countries, for example, noncommissioned officers are a foreign concept and not a universally applied element of the military hierarchy, even among NATO allies.

Over time, NATO's interoperability in Afghanistan improved. To enhance information sharing between NATO military and civilian advisors, NATO adopted the Afghan Advisor Network (ANET), a system used to record and track advisor engagements with Afghan counterparts.<sup>874</sup> NATO partners also implemented the Afghanistan Mission Network, now the primary Coalition, Command, Control, Communications, Computers, Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance network used by coalition forces in Afghanistan. Since its implementation in 2011, the Afghanistan Mission Network has increased information sharing and improved situational awareness.<sup>875</sup>

Despite these improvements, challenges and shortcomings remain, particularly when it comes to intelligence sharing and basic communication. For example, the lack of interoperable communication systems meant that 1st SFAB personnel at the company level and lower had to rely on WhatsApp—a messaging app owned by Facebook—to communicate with coalition partners.<sup>876</sup>

### **Afghan Advisor Network Has Limited Functionality for Field Advisors**

While the Afghan Advisor Network improved interoperability and helped to mitigate the effects of frequent rotations, the program had several shortcomings. In the beginning, users cited connectivity issues, limited usage, and flawed software that often resulted in reports that should have taken only minutes to complete instead taking hours.<sup>877</sup> For many advisors, working with ANET took hours out of their day. “You’d click the button,” said U.S. Air Force Lt. Col. d’Artagnan de Anda, “go get a soda, and come back and hope your page had loaded.”<sup>878</sup>

To address these issues, the Defense Digital Service developed ANET 2.0. In March 2017, the system was released on a classified network to 800 advisors, and the long-term maintenance and sustainment of the system was handed over to NATO developers in Europe.<sup>879</sup> As a result of ANET, Digital Defense Services began working on developing a larger version of ANET to support DOD security cooperation missions across the globe.

In December 2018, during a SIGAR trip to the Joint Readiness Training Center and the U.S. Army’s 3rd Battalion 353rd Regiment at Fort Polk, Louisiana, SIGAR observed that there were still ANET challenges. For example, ANET does not have an unclassified system, which prevents advisors from using the system during their predeployment training at certain locations in the United States. ANET is also still narrative-based. While this works well for ministerial-level advising, it does not for tactical- and operational-level advising because of the limited time and ability these personnel have to use the system. The JRTC is working on solutions to these problems.

## **NATO’S EFFORTS TO BUILD SECURITY SECTOR ASSISTANCE CAPABILITIES**

Over the course of NATO’s involvement in Afghanistan, the organization has worked to improve its capability in executing security sector assistance efforts. Such efforts include the development of allied joint doctrine and centers of excellence (COE), as well as assistance to countries in defense institution building. These initiatives reflect NATO’s understanding of the importance of security sector assistance.

### **NATO Introduces Defense Institution Building**

Recognizing the need for effective defense institutions under civilian democratic control, NATO launched the Partnership Action Plan on Defense Institution Building (PAP-DIB) at the 2004 Istanbul Summit.<sup>880</sup> PAP-DIB covers a wide range of objectives, such as the development of arrangements designed to ensure democratic control over defense activities and procedures aimed at promoting civilian participation in developing security policy.<sup>881</sup> The Building Integrity program, launched in 2007 by the **Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council** (EAPC), “stems from the PAP-DIB objective to assist nations in reforming their defense and security sector.”<sup>882</sup> To help nations develop democratic and effective defense institutions and reduce the risk of corruption, the Building Integrity program offers support through a range of tools, including a self-assessment questionnaire, consultations with subject matter experts, and educational

The **Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council** is a 50-nation forum for consultation on political and security-related issues. It also provides the political framework for NATO’s cooperation with partner countries in the region.

Source: NATO, “Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council,” last updated June 9, 2017.

## NATO Centers of Excellence

Following the 2002 Prague Summit, NATO reorganized its military command to create Allied Command Transformation (ACT). ACT focuses on addressing future challenges, in part, through NATO Centers of Excellence. NATO defines COEs as “international military organizations that train and educate leaders and specialists from NATO members and partners countries.”<sup>883</sup> The Joint Air Power Competence Center in Germany and the Defense Against Terrorism Center of Excellence in Turkey became the first two accredited COEs in 2005 and 2006, respectively.<sup>884</sup> COEs are designed to assist with identifying lessons learned, developing doctrine, improving interoperability and capabilities, and testing new concepts through experimentation. The COEs are funded at the national level, meaning they are not directly funded by NATO and are not in NATO’s formal command structure.<sup>885</sup> Typically, COEs specialize in becoming subject matter experts in one functional area. As of May 2019, there are 25 COEs within NATO.<sup>886</sup>

courses.<sup>887</sup> Through the Building Integrity program, NATO has developed programs for the ANDSF, predeployment training for ISAF, and has organized workshops and peer-to-peer consultations for Afghan officials.<sup>888</sup>

## NATO Doctrine Concerning SSA

NATO published the *Allied Joint Doctrine for Security Force Assistance* in May 2016 to provide guidance to NATO and NATO-led forces on how NATO provides security force assistance at the tactical, operational, and strategic levels. The doctrine identifies the training and development of local forces as “integral to the success of a broader strategy aimed at reinforcing the capacity of non-NATO nations within the broader framework of defense and related security capacity building.” The doctrine also details how security force assistance affects NATO’s other concepts, including security sector reform, stabilization, reconstruction, counterinsurgency, and military assistance, which includes training, advising, mentoring, and partnering with local forces.<sup>889</sup>

In July 2016, NATO published the first edition of the *Allied Joint Doctrine for Stability Policing* in recognition of the fact that the *Allied Joint Doctrine for Security Force Assistance* did not sufficiently address the training and development of local police forces. As noted in the doctrine, the *Allied Joint Doctrine for Stability Policing* stemmed from the recognition that “there may be a requirement to fully support the security sector reform by training and mentoring police forces and advising local government officials in the areas of law and order and rule of law when other actors are hampered and unable to do so.”<sup>890</sup> The doctrine identifies the overall goals of stability policing as the establishment of a safe and secure environment, the restoration of public order and security, and the establishment of a foundation conducive toward long-term governance and development.<sup>891</sup> The doctrine also clarifies that stability policing should be conducted by “specialized assets, which are police trained and equipped.”<sup>892</sup>

## NATO Stability Policing Center of Excellence

In May 2015, the NATO Stability Policing Center of Excellence received its accreditation from Allied Command Transformation. Located in Vicenza, Italy, it is sponsored by

nine countries: the Czech Republic, France, Greece, Italy, Poland, Romania, Spain, the Netherlands, and Turkey. The U.S. government maintains a relationship with the COE, which focuses on doctrine and standardization, education, training and exercises, and identifying lessons learned. The U.S. State Department provides financial support to the center and, as of 2019, the U.S. Army has agreed to staff the deputy position with a U.S. Army officer. A recent example of NATO COE's activities in relation to Afghanistan include a "Train-the-Trainers" course for the ANP.<sup>893</sup> The Italian Carabinieri conducted four two-week courses, with 100 members of the ANP in each class. Through this training, the COE hoped to increase the number of well-trained ANP warrant officers.<sup>894</sup> The COE also uses NATO's Lessons Learned Portal to gather observations and identify best practices.<sup>895</sup>

The Stability Police Concept—the NATO process used to validate requirements and create a police capability within NATO—is under review by NATO and has not yet been approved. Therefore, the NATO alliance remains unable to request stability police advisors to deploy in support of a NATO mission. Instead, it will continue to rely on individual countries volunteering police advisors through the force generation process.

### **NATO Security Force Assistance Center of Excellence**

In December 2017, NATO formally established the Security Force Assistance Center of Excellence, based in Rome, Italy. Its focus is to "improve [the] effectiveness of NATO in promoting stability and reconstruction efforts for conflict and post-conflict scenarios and to provide a unique capability to the alliance, NATO nations, and partners in the field of Security Force Assistance."<sup>896</sup> Italy, Albania, and Slovenia are the nations that support this COE, but more countries will likely become involved. In December 2018, the NATO Security Force Assistance Center of Excellence hosted its first workshop in Rome, with international scholars and government officials to identify lessons learned and best practices associated with selecting, training, and developing senior advisors to partner nations' ministries.

## **KEY FINDINGS**

Overall, this study of NATO's role in Afghanistan finds:

1. There is no one nation within NATO responsible for all security sector assistance activities in Afghanistan. While the NATO commander is responsible for providing direction and coordinating activities, the commander's authority can be ignored or dismissed by the commander of a nation's military forces in Afghanistan. This undermined unity of effort.
2. Even though nations agree to provide advisors during the force generation process, the actual numbers of advisors deployed, with what capabilities and under what national constraints, are often unknown to the senior military commander in Afghanistan until weeks before the advisors' deployment. This prevents effective planning and resource allocation.

3. NATO nations provided unique capabilities that the U.S. government used to fill voids in U.S. security sector assistance programs. However, problems with coordinating command and control hindered the United States' ability to make the most of coalition support.
4. Although national caveats hindered NATO's ability to execute the mission in Afghanistan and prevented standardization in training, advising, and assisting the ANDSF, caveats have allowed more nations to contribute troops.
5. Most NATO members relied on U.S. military support for key functions to operate effectively in Afghanistan.
6. While some NATO nations have gendarmerie forces that specialize in developing foreign police forces, NATO has not institutionalized this expertise as an approved NATO capability. Instead, NATO continues to rely on individual nations to provide these forces through the NATO force generation process.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **DOD should establish a close working relationship with NATO SSA-related COEs and schools to share best practices and lessons learned. DOD should also provide staff to SSA-related COEs to leverage capabilities for future operations.**

NATO COEs train and educate leaders and specialists from NATO and partner countries in particular areas, such as SFA and policing. DOD should position planners at relevant COEs in order to take advantage of their expertise for future SFA operations.

2. **In planning the drawdown of U.S. forces, DOD should analyze NATO partner dependency on U.S. support of their operations in Afghanistan to determine how to maintain NATO support while the United States reduces its military forces.**

Many NATO allies in Afghanistan rely heavily on the United States for enablers such as airlift, logistics, intelligence, and force protection. Reductions in U.S. forces could thus have a magnified effect on NATO forces involved in the advising effort.

3. **The Office of the Joint Chiefs of Staff should update U.S. doctrine to clarify how the U.S. military conducts SSA efforts as part of a multinational coalition. The doctrine should provide clear guidance for establishing and maintaining coordination between U.S. departments and agencies operating at the embassy in the host country.**

U.S. doctrine for multinational and coalition operations is predominately focused on coordinating warfighting functions and military operations, but does not fully cover how the United States should coordinate and synchronize SSA efforts.



Doctrine should focus on ways to improve unity of command, unity of effort, and standardization of activities in developing a partner nation's combat capabilities and associated security governance functions. Doctrine should also identify ways to mitigate interagency coordination issues that arise when a military coalition takes command of SSA activities.

- 4. DOD and State, in coordination with NATO, should conduct an assessment of NATO's core functions and capabilities related to SSA efforts. This effort should determine which activities should be military-led and therefore under the purview of NATO and which are civilian-led and may be conducted outside of a NATO command. Based on this analysis, NATO should consider updating its doctrine on conducting SSA efforts in the future.**

In Afghanistan, NATO has the lead to develop ANDSF military and police capabilities; however, developing police capabilities is seen by many nations as a nonmilitary and more civilian-led activity that should be conducted by the embassy. This is the case for the United States, where legislation identifies State as the lead for developing foreign police forces. This is the same for Germany and other European countries. However, within NATO, there are multiple countries that have gendarmerie-like forces that can develop civilian police capabilities under the umbrella of a military command. Countries like Italy, Romania, and France are some of the nations that have this capability. Without a common framework for conducting these types of activities as part of a NATO mission, efforts to develop a partner nation's capabilities are fractured between multiple actors. NATO would benefit from an analysis of these potential fracture points and create policy for future NATO operations to reduce these risks.

# NATO'S COMMAND STRUCTURE CREATES COORDINATION CHALLENGES

Using a NATO framework for SSA missions departs from the traditional way the United States conducts SSA activities and creates unintended challenges to interagency coordination. Traditionally, the U.S. ambassador, as the selected representative of the President and the Secretary of State, is the highest ranking U.S. official responsible for overseeing all U.S. government programs and interactions with a partner nation.<sup>897</sup> The ambassador oversees a country team generally composed of senior officials from different U.S. agencies, such as DOD, State, and the Department of Justice.<sup>898</sup> This allows for a coordinated, interagency approach to the execution of U.S. foreign policy in that country.<sup>899</sup>

In Afghanistan, however, NATO's authority to develop ANDSF capabilities diminishes the role of the U.S. ambassador in SSA-related decisions. While State told SIGAR in 2018 that the U.S. ambassador maintains a "close, consultative" relationship with the U.S. military commander, and while State conducts programming in Afghanistan, State recognizes NATO's Resolute Support Mission as the lead for security sector assistance.<sup>900</sup> This is in large part due to State's limited funding, but it has created unique coordination challenges. For example, civilians operating out of the U.S. Embassy often advise the same Afghan institutions (such as the Ministries of Interior and Finance) as U.S. military personnel from CSTC-A. However, there is no formal relationship or coordination between the U.S. Embassy's and CSTC-A's advisory efforts.<sup>901</sup> As former CSTC-A commander Maj. Gen. Kaiser highlighted, "[CSTC-A] should be working by, with, and through the Embassy. . . . [but] unfortunately, that is not the case." He went on to note that the lack of coordination can lead to unsynchronized efforts.<sup>902</sup>

Further, while establishing an international military command had a positive effect on the ANA and AAF, it had an adverse effect on police development and rule of law. Specifically, the NATO command allowed for multiple approaches in these areas, which created challenges for international civilian and military coordination and hindered unity of effort. Many NATO countries, for example, view police development and rule of law as a nonmilitary, civilian-led mission that should be conducted by embassies or civilian-led organizations such as the European Union. In the United States, State is the lead department for developing foreign police forces; similar arrangements exist in other countries, such as Germany. However, other NATO members—such as Italy, Romania, and France—used gendarmeries, military units trained in civil policing, to develop the ANP's capabilities. Despite State's traditional role working with foreign police forces, the United States also predominately used U.S. military personnel with limited to no civilian policing experience to conduct ANP training. Without a common framework for conducting these types of activities as part of a NATO mission, efforts to develop the ANP lacked a unified approach.<sup>903</sup>

International organizations also deployed advisors to Afghanistan independent of the NATO-led training mission, further complicating unity of effort. Established in 2007, the European Union Police Mission in Afghanistan (EUPOL) deployed police experts to develop MOI and ANP senior leaders and advise the Ministry of Justice.<sup>904</sup> However, EUPOL's focus on civilian policing did not align with training efforts elsewhere.<sup>905</sup> EUPOL eventually ended its mission in Afghanistan in December 2016. A senior EUPOL official noted that "when 70 percent of policemen are still fighting the war, it's quite impossible for them to concentrate on doing policing."<sup>906</sup> To improve coordination, NATO countries have relied on informal meetings and coordination boards. In 2018, for example, CSTC-A held an international conference in Turkey with the purpose of resolving differences among the efforts of the various entities involved in police training at the MOI.<sup>907</sup> However, the impact of such meetings has generally been hindered by their ad hoc nature and the frequent turnover of personnel.





## CHAPTER 7

# CONCLUSIONS

U.S. Marine Corps photo

No one person, agency, military service, or country has sole responsibility or oversight over all U.S. and international activities to develop the ANDSF, MOD, and MOI. While the dual-hatted U.S.-NATO commander has been recognized as largely responsible for this effort, the commander has no authority over civilians operating within embassies, the European Union, or the United Nations. The commander also does not have absolute command over all NATO military forces training, advising, and assisting the ANDSF nationwide, which has impeded the standardization of SSA programs. Instead, the United States, working as part of a larger NATO-led coalition, has implemented a patchwork of security sector assistance activities and programs undertaken by dozens of U.S. government entities and international partner nations in Afghanistan. This has strained unity of effort.

As specified in the 2017 National Security Strategy and 2018 National Defense Strategy, security sector assistance will continue to be a critical element of U.S. foreign policy and national security. These documents also note that the United States is unlikely to face conflicts alone, and that meeting the United States' global security needs will require working with our allies and partner nations. Even with the United States reprioritizing near-peer conflict (for example, conflict with China and Russia), security sector assistance is critical to building and strengthening a network of allied security forces capable of supporting future military engagements. When it comes to counterterrorism, the United States relies on partners to assume greater responsibility for internal and

external security, regain control of ungoverned areas, and combat terrorist threats.<sup>908</sup> A partner nation capable of addressing these issues reduces the need for U.S. military deployments and allows the United States to reduce its use of military force around the globe.

Recent discussions about a potential drawdown of U.S. forces in Afghanistan as part of a larger political settlement highlight the need to pay attention to the next phase of U.S. military support: the residual presence required for the SSA effort.<sup>909</sup> Until there is an enduring political settlement with the Taliban, training, advising, assisting, and equipping the ANDSF will be a key component of the U.S. mission.<sup>910</sup> The United States must determine whether the U.S. military assistance mission will continue to be part of a coalition effort under the NATO umbrella or if the U.S. military will transition to a more traditional posture operating out of the U.S. Embassy. As this study shows, either decision will pose coordination and synchronization challenges.

The United States must also determine how to use its military advisors and support teams in order to continue ongoing SSA programs. Currently, for example, the AAF requires U.S. or coalition logistical support at all of the major airfields. The United States relies upon trainers and advisors at Kandahar Air Field to implement the UH-60 program. The new SFABs are dependent upon the regional Train, Advise, and Assist Commands for logistical support, close air support, and sustainment. Any drawdown of these enabling forces will have a direct impact on ongoing U.S. support to the ANDSF.<sup>911</sup>

Congressional oversight is vital during this period of transition to ensure future funding and support for long-term SSA activities in Afghanistan and to institutionalize lessons learned. The 2017 National Defense Authorization Act took aim at DOD's contribution to SSA and mandated that DOD make major reforms related to staffing, programming, and training.<sup>912</sup> While these efforts will improve SSA efforts overall, Afghanistan is not the priority focus for reform, despite currently being the longest and most robust ongoing effort. For instance, the 2017 NDAA requires DOD to establish a monitoring and evaluation program to track security sector assistance milestones, but this is not being done today for Afghanistan. Congressional oversight is also critically important to review U.S. progress towards transitioning sustainment of the ANDSF to Afghan ownership and tracking U.S. activities to meet this goal.

Identifying lessons is one thing; learning them is another. After large reconstruction efforts in the past—for example, in Vietnam, Korea, and Germany—policymakers pledge to never make the same mistakes again. But only by institutionalizing best practices and resolving current challenges can the United States prepare for future missions and make the most of its experience in Afghanistan.

While each chapter concludes with a list of key findings for each topic, below is a list of the major findings from this report:

1. No single person, agency, military service, or country has ultimate responsibility for or oversight of all U.S. and international activities to develop the ANDSF and the Ministries of Defense and Interior. Instead, the NATO-led Resolute Support Mission relies on command directives and orders to provide overarching guidance and less formal mechanisms, such as weekly operations and intelligence briefings between Resolute Support and USFOR-A, to coordinate military activities.
2. SSA efforts in Afghanistan have been hindered by the lack of clear command-and-control relationships between the U.S. military and the U.S. Embassy, as well as between ministerial and tactical advising efforts. This has resulted in disjointed efforts to develop ANDSF capabilities.
3. There is no formal mechanism to resolve conflicts between SSA activities led by the United States through CSTC-A, and those conducted by other national embassies, international governmental organizations, or nongovernmental organizations working directly with the Afghan government. While international working groups and coordination boards have been created to resolve conflicts, they are often temporary and lack authority.
4. The SSA mission in Afghanistan lacked an enduring, comprehensive, expert-designed plan that guided its efforts. As a result, critical aspects of the advisory mission were not unified by a common purpose, nor was there a clear plan to guide equipping decisions over time.
5. DOD organizations and military services were often not assigned ownership of key aspects of the SSA mission. Responsibilities for developing ANDSF capabilities were divided among multiple agencies and services, each of which provided advisors who were usually deployed for no longer than one year.
6. Most predeployment training did not adequately prepare advisors for their work in Afghanistan. Training did not expose advisors to Afghan systems, processes, weapons, culture, and doctrine. It also did not expose advisors to other parts of the advisory efforts, nor did it link advisors who operated at different tactical, operational, and ministerial levels.
7. The U.S. government has taken incremental steps to improve SSA activities, such as creating the MODA program, implementing core aspects of defense institution building, and deploying advisor units like the SFABs. However, these capabilities have not been fully realized.
8. The United States has not adequately involved the Afghans in key decisions and processes. As a result, the United States has implemented systems that the Afghans will not be able to maintain without U.S. support.
9. The NATO command structure had benefits and drawbacks. While NATO's command structure broadened international military SSA coordination, it complicated U.S. interagency coordination.

# LESSONS

Our study identified the following lessons from the U.S. experience in Afghanistan:

- 1. The lack of a comprehensive and consistent long-term plan to train, advise, assist, and equip a partner nation's military and security forces results in misalignment of advisors and ad hoc decision-making.**

For the last decade and a half, the United States failed to implement—in coordination with Afghan leadership and NATO partners—a stable and comprehensive ANDSF force design that would guide the long-term structure of the U.S. advisory effort. Without a long-term plan that detailed desired operational capabilities, equipping decisions were often ad hoc and inconsistent from year to year. Commanders serving one-year rotations prioritized the tactical fight and equipped the ANDSF with little regard for past equipping decisions or future expenses.

- 2. Conducting SSA activities while the United States is engaged in major combat operations fractures the traditional way the United States develops partner forces and creates a disjointed command-and-control relationship between the U.S. military and civilian leadership. A long-term vision is required in order to transfer responsibility from the senior military commander back to the embassy and ambassador.**

Traditional SSA missions are under the purview of the U.S. ambassador, and reflect overarching goals of U.S. foreign policy. The U.S. Security Coordination Office, as a member of the U.S. Embassy country team, coordinates security sector assistance proposals with the embassy and combatant command. Any agreed-upon activities are then implemented by DOD. In Afghanistan, Resolute Support operates independently of the U.S. ambassador and other international organizations involved in developing Afghanistan's security capabilities, which hinders interagency coordination. The senior U.S. military commander reports back through the combatant command to the Secretary of Defense, with no responsibility for coordinating activities with the U.S. Embassy or ambassador. Instead, coordination among the most senior military commander and civilian representative is based on personalities and the initiative of both actors. Traditional SSA activities are a longer-term commitment than the deployment of U.S. military combat forces. Identifying a transition of responsibility of SSA activities from DOD to the U.S. Embassy is critical to sustaining U.S. foreign policy objectives.

- 3. SSA missions that involve NATO require a plan to improve coordination among all international stakeholders involved in the development of the host nation's defense and security forces.**



While a NATO command improved coordination among military advisors, embassies and international organizations continued to pursue individual SSA activities. The United States and coalition partners suffer from a lack of civilian-military coordination: Its military component serves as a member of the NATO-led coalition, while its embassy communicates directly with the Afghan government. Embassy coordination of SSA efforts among allies is based on informal working groups, coordination committees, or personal relationships, which have had various levels of success.

4. **Unless there is a plan to transition responsibilities to a partner nation, the foreign military sales process used in Afghanistan will likely limit the institutional development of a partner nation as well as that nation's ownership of and responsibility for its own resources.**

After 9/11, Congress created new authorities for DOD to provide military equipment to partner nations that did not have the institutional infrastructure within the ministries to make requests themselves (for example, Iraq and Afghanistan). Under this new authority, known as the pseudo FMS process, the United States generates the requirement for equipment, fills the requirement, and finances the requirement for the partner nation. While the pseudo FMS process was a successful tool to rapidly equip the ANDSF in the early years, CSTC-A did not include Afghans in the pseudo FMS process and has not detailed a transition plan for the Afghan military to gradually assume ownership of the requirements generation process.

5. **U.S. financing of partner nation security forces may be a continued requirement even as their capabilities improve.**

The U.S. government continues to provide close to \$5 billion a year in security sector assistance to Afghanistan. Even as the ANDSF becomes less reliant on day-to-day U.S. military support, projected financial support to sustain the ANDSF remains steady. Until the Afghan government can reduce the pace of military operations through a political settlement or increase the Afghan government's ability to increase revenue through taxes and trade, the ANDSF's sustainability will be fully reliant on international financial support.

6. **Creating professional military advisors requires long-term assignments, proper incentives, and the ability to refine advisor skills through multiple deployments and training cycles.**

DOD efforts to institutionalize security sector assistance programs suffered from high levels of personnel turnover, short-term rotations, and a failure to develop a cadre of advisors with regional and functional expertise. In 2009, DOD created the MODA program to improve the U.S. advisory effort at the ministerial level by recruiting civilian experts. The MODA program is a staffing function to recruit civilians from other DOD agencies to deploy on assignment to target countries.

Institutional memory depends upon the individual advisor's commitment to multiple deployments, as well as that civilian's home agency's approval for continued assignments.

In 2017, the U.S. Army created SFABs as a means to institutionalize tactical- and operational-level advising. While the brigades will remain a tool for the U.S. Army, personnel assigned to these units will regularly rotate out of the SFAB structure and into different non-SSA assignments. This will hinder institutional memory, specific regional expertise, and the personal relationships required to build rapport with the host nation. The 1st SFAB is scheduled to lose over 300 personnel after its first tour in Afghanistan. A major reason for high turnover of military advisors is that the positions are not considered career enhancing.

- 7. Advisors are best prepared when they are selected based on technical expertise, are trained and vetted for their ability to advise, and when they receive predeployment training focused on the partner nation's military structures, processes, culture, and equipment.**

Military and civilian advisors frequently emphasized that they were not selected based on professional background, did not receive adequate training and exposure to Afghan military systems and equipment, and did not receive adequate training on how to be an effective advisor. Without this knowledge, advisors spent the first several weeks and months learning how the ANDSF fights and governs. This limited advisors' ability to have an immediate impact. A point raised repeatedly during after-action reviews is that advisors were selected based on their specialized expertise, but did not have the personality or skills needed to transfer this knowledge to their counterparts. Expertise in U.S. systems might not translate to the partner nation, and even advisors with considerable expertise may lack the personality and skills needed to transfer this knowledge to their counterparts.

- 8. Filling advisor requirements strains the U.S. military and civilian agencies, as advisors are typically in high demand, yet there are very few trained and readily available. Special hiring authority allows the United States to recruit and retain civilian specialists and fill advisor requirements.**

Advisors in Afghanistan were typically senior officers, noncommissioned officers, and civilians with experience governing military and security forces. In 2010 and 2011, the U.S. Army suffered from a shortage of majors and lieutenant colonels within the service at the same time the need for advisors at these ranks increased. For civilian experts, Congress authorized Schedule A hiring authority that allowed MODA to temporarily hire civilians with skills needed by DOD. However, Schedule A was rescinded in FY 2014, forcing the program to rely on volunteers from DOD agencies. DSCA told SIGAR that because the program is suffering without its hiring authority, MODA is "currently exploring the use of temporary

billets to source hard-to-fill MODA requirements.” In 2018, MODA was unable to fully staff its positions without special hiring authority.

- 9. Equipping partner forces requires determining the capabilities the United States will train and advise on for the long term, versus those capabilities the United States will assist with in the short term to help the host nation reduce or remove a particular threat. Failure to determine this will result in equipping a partner nation with capabilities it may not need or be able to sustain.**

Starting around 2005, DOD recognized capability gaps in the newly developed ANDSF, and began considering ways to upgrade the ANA’s armored, mobility, and firepower capabilities. This expansion in capabilities included plans for a future Afghan air capability and special operations forces. However, these decisions provided the ANDSF with systems the Afghans government could not afford to maintain. An alternative to this approach would be to conduct an analysis of the capabilities the ANDSF will be required to sustain for the long term, versus capabilities the United States will provide to counter the threat in the short term.

- 10. Failure to establish lead organizations with unified command over SSA from the ministerial to tactical levels results in an inability to identify needs, fragmented command and control, and limited accountability and oversight.**

Since 2003, the United States has implemented various command-and-control structures intended to synchronize the advisory mission. At times, the U.S. military command responsible for the train, advise, assist, and equip mission (CSTC-A) established internal command organizations responsible for overseeing the advisory mission assigned to the support the Afghan military or police. From 2003 to 2009, these organizations had command and control over advisors from the ministerial level to the tactical embedded teams, and therefore had oversight over all train, advise, assist, and equip efforts. In 2009, the U.S. military shifted its field advising mission to operational command. As a result, command and control of the ministerial and field advising missions was split.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are drawn from the U.S. experience in Afghanistan and are designed to improve coordination and synchronization of security sector assistance programs. While each chapter provides a list of recommendations related to each core function of the U.S. security sector assistance mission, these recommendations aim to improve coordination and synchronization of SSA efforts.

- 1. OSD-Policy, in coordination with the U.S. Central Command, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, DSCA, State, and the National Security Council, should lead an interagency review to determine the long-term SSA posture for Afghanistan based on current and long-term programming. This review should determine if the United States will continue to engage in SSA activities as part of a NATO-led coalition, or if it will transition to a more conventional model led by the U.S. Embassy.**

OSD-Policy, as one of the lead DOD organizations responsible for oversight and management of security cooperation programs, should lead the interagency review. As the United States determines its long-term military presence in Afghanistan, the U.S. military should draft a transition plan detailing how the United States will move from its current footprint to a long-term steady state posture. The plan will need to factor in future decisions on whether the United States will continue to train, advise, and assist the ANDSF as part of a larger international coalition, as it is today, or if the United States will transition to a more traditional security assistance approach under the U.S. Embassy. Because international and interagency coordination challenges can occur under both scenarios, the plan should include interagency coordination strategies that clearly define the roles and responsibilities of agencies, based on assessments of core competencies and capabilities. The final plan should identify when and under what conditions such a plan would begin, and should identify clear stages for the plan to progress.

- 2. USFOR-A, in coordination with NATO, should conduct a review to determine which SSA activities are dependent on the current size of U.S. forces in Afghanistan and which activities can continue to be carried out with fewer U.S. security personnel.**

USFOR-A should take lead for this action as the primary U.S. military command in Afghanistan. Some of the United States' SSA activities depend on the U.S. military's presence in Afghanistan. Reducing the number of U.S. troops may put these U.S.-funded programs at risks. For example, as of this report's writing, the UH-60 Black Hawk aviation program relies on a U.S. or international security force presence at

Kandahar Air Field for follow-on training for Afghan pilots. At all major airfields in Afghanistan, air readiness relies heavily on contractor logistic support and a security presence for those contractors. Since the U.S. Army SFABs were designed to be fully dependent on the TAACs for logistical sustainment, airlift, and combat enablers, any reduction in capabilities at the TAACs will have a direct impact on the SFAB's level of support to ANA units.

- 3. OSD-Policy, in partnership with DSCA, Resolute Support Mission, and the NATO Joint Force Command, should conduct an assessment to determine where U.S. and other international advisors are currently located, how missions are organized, and the requirements to keep advisor positions filled. Based on the results of this assessment, Resolute Support should create a common advisory picture outlining U.S. and NATO efforts with the aim of standardizing the mission among all of the military services and NATO coalition countries. This will lower the risk of advisors working at cross purposes.**

The U.S. advisory mission has not been standardized. Each military commander has the authority to independently modify the U.S. advisory posture within his or her area of operations. Moreover, there is no standard method for determining how their deployed personnel are tasked to advise the ANDSF. Methods not only vary by country, but also by military service. For example, one U.S. Army unit organized its police advisors to resemble a police department, with an investigations team and administrative team, while a different U.S. Army unit in another part of Afghanistan organized its police advisory mission along the lines of a military command. In western Afghanistan, the Italian Carabinieri train the ANP to do community policing, while U.S. military personnel train the ANP elsewhere to conduct counterinsurgency operations. Some advisors embed and partner with ANDSF units on operations; others advise from the confines of international bases. Implementing various and at times contradictory advisory models hinders unity of effort.

- 4. The Resolute Support Mission should create a command-and-control relationship among all elements of the advisory mission. This includes aligning the Train, Advise, and Assist Commands, regional task forces, and SFABs under the Deputy Chief of Staff for Security Assistance.**

Despite the prioritization of the security assistance mission in 2015, command-and-control relationships at the tactical and operational level continue to report through military operational channels (Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations) and not through security assistance leadership (the dual-hatted Deputy Chief of Staff for Security Assistance and commander of CSTC-A). While embedded advisors are responsible for guiding ANDSF leaders in executing their operational plan, advisors' primary mission remains developing ANDSF capabilities—a core tenant of security assistance. Restructuring the TAACs, regional task forces, and SFABs under the security assistance umbrella will improve coordination and synchronization between advisors at the ministerial and operational level.

- 5. OSD-Policy should organize a group of U.S. military and civilian force management experts to partner with the Afghan government and NATO to develop an ANDSF force design plan based on expected long-term military, police, and ministerial capabilities. Based on this plan, the United States should validate advisor requirements and ensure the pipeline for equipment matches the current and future needs of the force.**

Over the past 15 years, the force design for the ANDSF has dramatically changed. In 2018 alone, the Afghan National Civil Order Police and Afghan Border Police were moved from the MOI to the MOD. Additionally, the Afghan government has expressed an intent to double the size of its Special Forces and air force at the risk of ANA and ANP development. Ownership of the agreed-upon force design should be maintained at the Pentagon and at the Afghan MOD. In-country commands, like CSTC-A, should be responsible only for the implementation of the plan, and should not be empowered to create and modify plans, based on past practices of ad hoc equipping decisions. Constant changes to the size, composition, or mission of ANDSF elements and ministerial offices makes it harder for the United States to properly align security sector assistance activities with mission requirements. As part of this review, the ANDSF's current tashkil should be validated and modified accordingly. Such a review could take place during the biannual Afghanistan Program Management Review.

- 6. The Joint Staff should create a DOD-led and Pentagon-based Security Cooperation Coordination Cell for Afghanistan with the mission of improving coordination of all SSA activities. The staff assigned to this organization should be required to serve at least a three-year tour with regular deployments into Afghanistan.**

In 2009, the Joint Staff created the Pakistan-Afghanistan Coordination Cell to help the U.S. commander in Afghanistan coordinate and optimize military operations and build relationships between the Pentagon and forward elements. As an effective tool for coordination, an element similar in focus and staff would benefit the security cooperation mission. The Security Cooperation Coordination Cell should have responsibility for four mission essential tasks: (1) maintaining a common advising picture of who is doing what, where, and why; (2) coordinating the U.S. advisory effort for the ANDSF fighting force, Afghan security institutions, and force equipment; (3) evaluating U.S. progress in meeting security cooperation goals; and (4) providing continuity to the mission by offering lessons learned to the forward command element. The Security Cooperation Coordination Cell should be staffed with members of each military service, OSD, DSCA, the combatant command, liaison officers from State and the U.S. Department of Justice, and national representatives from NATO allies. Staff should be assigned at minimum to serve a three-year tour with regular deployments into Afghanistan.

- 7. Resolute Support should host a quarterly SSA conference in Kabul for all civilian and military stakeholders with the intent of resolving conflicts that have a direct or indirect impact on the ANA, ANP, MOD, or MOI.**

Since the Resolute Support Mission does not have a mandate to coordinate with embassies, nongovernmental organizations, or international governmental organizations, regular conferences will allow all stakeholders in ANDSF development to meet regularly to improve coordination. Information gathered from these conferences would be used by Resolute Support to maintain its common advisory picture, recommended above.

- 8. Predeployment training should expose attendees to all U.S. and international advisory efforts in Afghanistan and should be tailored to the Afghan context.**

Currently, predeployment training is focused solely on individual tasks the identified advisor will face in Afghanistan, with limited or no training on how that individual's advisory effort affects the larger security sector assistance mission. This creates a knowledge gap that can prevent advisors from understanding all the options at their disposal in the larger advisory system. Issues can arise from advisors operating at cross purposes, and an uninformed advisor will face extra challenges when attempting to help an ANDSF partner resolve problems.





The background of the top half of the page features a large, faded watermark of the Inspector General Seal. The seal is circular and contains an eagle with wings spread, perched on a shield with vertical stripes. Above the eagle is a banner with the Latin motto "ALERE FLAMMAM". The seal is surrounded by text in both English and Pashto. The English text includes "SPECIAL AGENT IN CHARGE" on the left and "INSPECTOR GENERAL" on the right. The Pashto text includes "اداره سر مفتش ویره پیاوړی بازسازی افغانستان" at the top and "د افغانستان د پیاوړتیا مرکز" at the bottom.

## CHAPTER 8

# APPENDICES AND ENDNOTES

SIGAR Seal

## APPENDIX A: METHODOLOGY

SIGAR conducts its lessons learned program under the authority of Public Law 110-181 and the Inspector General Act of 1978, as amended. This report was completed in accordance with the Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency’s *Quality Standards for Federal Offices of Inspector General* (commonly referred to as “the Silver Book”). These standards require that we carry out our work with integrity, objectivity, and independence, and provide information that is factually accurate and reliable. SIGAR’s lessons learned reports are broad in scope and based on a wide range of source material. To achieve the goal of high quality and to help ensure our reports are factually accurate and reliable, the reports are subject to extensive review by subject matter experts and relevant U.S. government agencies.

The *Divided Responsibility* research team drew upon a wide array of sources. Much of the team’s documentary research focused on publicly available material, including reports by DOD, State, GAO, NATO, ISAF, the Congressional Research Service, and coalition partner nations, as well as congressional testimony from government officials and experts. The team also consulted declassified material from an archive

maintained by former Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld. These official sources were complemented by hundreds of nongovernmental sources, including books, think tank reports, journal articles, press reports, academic studies, international conference agreements, field research, and analytical reports by international and advocacy organizations.

The research team also benefited from SIGAR's access to material that is not publicly available, including thousands of documents provided by U.S. government agencies. State provided cables, internal memos and briefings, opinion analysis reports, and planning and programmatic documents. DOD provided documents on how advisors are selected, trained, and organized. NATO provided access to the NATO archives that allowed our researchers to view reports concerning NATO's plans and assessments of ANDSF development. Team researchers also reviewed documents obtained from the U.S. Army Center of Military History. Finally, the team also drew from SIGAR's own work, embodied in its quarterly reports to Congress and its investigations, audits, inspections, special projects, and prior lessons learned reports.

While the documentary evidence tells a story, it cannot substitute for the experience, knowledge, and wisdom of people who participated in the Afghanistan reconstruction effort. Therefore, the research team interviewed or held informal discussions with more than 100 individuals with direct and indirect knowledge of U.S. security sector assistance programs. Interviews and informal roundtable discussions were conducted with U.S., Afghan, and other international experts from universities, think tanks, nongovernmental organizations, and government entities; current and former U.S. civilian and military officials deployed to Afghanistan; and personnel from the Departments of Defense, State, and Justice. The team also drew upon dozens of interviews conducted by other government organizations.

Interviews provided valuable insights into the rationale behind decisions, the debates within and between agencies, and the frustrations that span years but often remained formally unacknowledged. Due in part to the politically sensitive nature of SSA efforts, a majority of interviewees wished to remain anonymous. For those still working in the government, confidentiality was particularly important. Therefore, to preserve anonymity, our interview citations often cite a "senior U.S. official" or "U.S. military advisor." We conducted our interviews during research trips to military installations in the United States and in Afghanistan, and in visits to U.S. government departments and agencies in Washington, DC.

The research team conducted multiple site visits to DOD and NATO installations. These include the Combined Security Transition Command – Afghanistan, the Military Advisor Training Academy, the Joint Readiness Training Center, and NATO Centers of Excellence. The research team also relied on notes from previous site visits conducted during the research phase of the first security-related lessons learned report, *Reconstructing the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces: Lessons from the U.S. Experience in Afghanistan*.

*Divided Responsibility* reflects a careful, thorough consideration of a wide range of sources, but it is not an exhaustive review of the topic. Given the timeline and scale of U.S. engagement in Afghanistan and the divided responsibility of security sector assistance among the coalition and military services, the report does not aim to fully address how tens of thousands of U.S. civilian and military personnel dealt with the SSA mission on a daily basis since 2002. Rather, the report focuses on reoccurring and corroborated reporting of how the United States deployed personnel and organized the train, advise, assist, and equip mission in Afghanistan. From these, the research team derived lessons and recommendations to inform current and future contingency operations.

The report underwent a peer review process. We sought and received feedback on the draft report from 13 subject matter experts. These experts included Americans and Europeans, each of whom had significant experience working on or in Afghanistan. These reviewers provided thoughtful, detailed comments on the report, which we incorporated, where appropriate.

Over the course of this study, the team routinely engaged with many officials at DOD and military services. We focused our engagements on socializing preliminary findings, lessons, and recommendations and soliciting formal and informal feedback to improve our understanding of the key issues, as viewed by each organization. DOD, State, and Justice were also given an opportunity to formally review and comment on the final draft of the report. In addition, we met with departmental representatives to receive their feedback on the report firsthand. Although we incorporated agencies' comments where appropriate, the analysis, conclusions, and recommendations of this report remain SIGAR's own.

## APPENDIX B: ACRONYMS

ACRONYM	DEFINITION
AAA	Air Advisor Academy
AABC-A	Air Advisor Basic Course - Afghanistan
AAF	Afghan Air Force
AAFMM	Afghan Air Force Modernization program
ACT	Allied Command Transformation
AECA	Arms Export Control Act
AETC	Air Education and Training Command
AETF	Air Expeditionary Task Force
AEW	Air Expeditionary Wing
AFPAK Hands	Afghanistan/Pakistan Hands program
ALP	Aviation Leadership Program
ANA	Afghan National Army
ANAAC	Afghan National Army Air Corps
ANDSF	Afghan National Defense and Security Forces
ANET	Afghan Advisor Network
ANP	Afghan National Police
APOR	Afghan Plan of Record
AQC	Aircraft Qualification Course
AROC	Afghan Resource Oversight Council
ASFF	Afghanistan Security Forces Fund
ATC	Advisor Training Cell
ATG	Advisor Training Group
BCT	Brigade combat team
BPC	Building Partner Capacity
BSRP	Bureau Strategic Resource Plans
CENTCOM	U.S. Central Command
CEW	Civilian Expeditionary Workforce
CJSOR	Combined Joint Statement of Requirements
CLS	Contractor Logistics Support
COE	Center of Excellence
COIN	Counterinsurgency
COMISAF	Commander of ISAF
CRS	U.S. Congressional Research Service
CSTC-A	Combined Security Transition Command - Afghanistan
DCG	Deputy Commanding General
DCOM	Deputy Commander
DCOS-Ops	Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations
DCOS-SA	Deputy Chief of Staff for Security Assistance
DIB	Defense institution building

*Continued on the next page*



<b>ACRONYM</b>	<b>DEFINITION</b>
DIRI	Defense Institution Reform Initiative
DISAM	Defense Institute of Security Assistance Management
DISCS	Defense Institute of Security Cooperation Studies
DLA	Defense Logistics Agency
DLIELC	Defense Language Institute English Language Center
DOD	U.S. Department of Defense
DOD OIG	U.S. Department of Defense, Office of Inspector General
DOD-EC	DOD Expeditionary Civilians
DS	Disposition Services
DSCA	Defense Security Cooperation Agency
EAP	Expeditionary Advisory Packages
EAPC	Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council
EDA	Excess defense articles
EF-5	Essential Function 5
E-IMET	Expanded IMET
ETT	Embedded Training Team
EUPOL	European Union Police Mission in Afghanistan
FAA	Foreign Assistance Act
FAO	Foreign Area Officers
FAP	Financial Activity Plan
FMF	Foreign Military Financing
FMS	Foreign Military Sales
FMTR	Foreign Military Training Report
FY	Fiscal Year
GAO	U.S. Government Accountability Office
HMMWV	High mobility multipurpose wheeled vehicles
IA	Implementing agency
IJC	ISAF Joint Command
IMET	International Military Education and Training
INL	Bureau for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (State)
ISAF	International Security Assistance Force
ISR	Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance
JCISFA	Joint Center for International Security Force Assistance
JRTC	Joint Readiness Training Center
LOA	Letter of Offer and Acceptance
LOJ	Letter of Justification
LOR	Letter of Request
LTV	Light Transport Vehicle
MAG-D	Ministry Advisor Group – Defense
MAG-I	Ministry Advisor Group – Interior
MASF	Military Assistance Service Fund
MDP	Ministerial Development Plan
MEF	Marine Expeditionary Force
MOD	Ministry of Defense
MODA	Ministry of Defense Advisors program
MOI	Ministry of Interior

*Continued on the next page*

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**SPECIAL INSPECTOR GENERAL FOR AFGHANISTAN RECONSTRUCTION**

<b>ACRONYM</b>	<b>DEFINITION</b>
MOR	Memorandum of Request
MRAP	Mine-resistant ambush protected vehicles
MSFV	Mobile Strike Force Vehicle
MTV	Medium Tactical Vehicle
NAC-A	NATO Air Command - Afghanistan
NATC-A	NATO Air Training Command - Afghanistan
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NCO	Noncommissioned officer
NDAA	National Defense Authorization Act
NTM-A	NATO Training Mission - Afghanistan
OEF	Operation Enduring Freedom
OMC-A	Office of Military Cooperation - Afghanistan
OMLT	Operational Mentoring and Liaison Team
OSC-A	Office of Security Cooperation - Afghanistan
OSD-Policy	Office of the Secretary of Defense for Policy
PAP-DIB	Partnership Action Plan on Defense Institution Building
PMT	Police Mentoring Team
POAM	Plan of action and milestones
PRT	Provincial Reconstruction Team
SACEUR	NATO Supreme Allied Commander Europe
SAO	Security Assistance Office
SCO	Security cooperation organization
SC-TMS	Security Cooperation Training Management System
SFA	Security force assistance
SFA Center	Security Force Assistance Center
SFAAT	Security Force Assistance Advisor Team
SFAB	Security Force Assistance Brigade
SFAC	Security Force Assistance Command
SFAT	Security Force Assistance Team
SIGAR	Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction
SLAT	Senior Leader Advisor Training
SSA	Security sector assistance
TAAC	Train Advise Assist Command
TPA	Total package approach
TSAT	Theater-Specific Advisor Training
UA	Up-Armored
UNAMA	United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan
USASAC	U.S. Army Security Assistance Command
USFOR-A	U.S. Forces - Afghanistan
USIP	U.S. Institute of Peace





اداره بسر مفتش ویژه برای یازسازی افغانستان

د افغانستان د بیار غاړونې لپاره د ځانګړي ستر مفتش اداره

MINISTRY OF CONSTRUCTION

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## **Research Team**

James Cunningham, Supervisory Research Analyst/Project Lead  
Brittany Gates, Research Analyst  
Samantha Hay, Research Analyst  
Zachary Martin, Senior Research Analyst  
Ashley Schortz, Research Analyst  
Brian Tarpley, Student Trainee

## **Lessons Learned Program Team**

Nikolai Condee-Padunov, Program Manager  
Tracy Content, Editor  
Vong Lim, Senior Visual Information Specialist  
Joseph Windrem, Director of Lessons Learned Program



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- leadership and coordination of, and recommendations on, policies designed to promote economy, efficiency, and effectiveness in the administration of the programs and operations, and to prevent and detect waste, fraud, and abuse in such programs and operations.
- means of keeping the Secretary of State and the Secretary of Defense fully and currently informed about problems and deficiencies relating to the administration of such programs and operation and the necessity for and progress on corrective action.

Afghanistan reconstruction includes any major contract, grant, agreement, or other funding mechanism entered into by any department or agency of the U.S. government that involves the use of amounts appropriated or otherwise made available for the reconstruction of Afghanistan.

Source: P.L. 110-181, "National Defense Authorization Act for FY 2008," 1/28/2008.





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Toll-free: 866-329-8893  
DSN: 312-664-0378  
All voicemail is in English and answered during business hours.

By fax: 703-601-4065  
By email: [sigar.hotline@mail.mil](mailto:sigar.hotline@mail.mil)  
By web submission: [www.sigar.mil/investigations/hotline/report-fraud.aspx](http://www.sigar.mil/investigations/hotline/report-fraud.aspx)

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SIGAR  
SPECIAL INSPECTOR GENERAL  
FOR AFGHANISTAN RECONSTRUCTION

2530 Crystal Drive  
Arlington, VA 22202

[www.sigar.mil](http://www.sigar.mil)