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TITLE:

A JOINT APPROACH TO SECURITY FORCE ASSISTANCE

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Title: A Joint Approach to Security Force Assistance

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Thesis: A Joint SFA Command design is required for the US military to fully institutionalize SFA and leverage a whole of government approach to generate enduring strategic options for the Nation.

Discussion: For over 100 years the US has conducted Security Force Assistance (SFA) operations in order to develop the capacity and capability of Foreign Security Forces to effectively establish defense institutions. The US Marine Corps can trace its history of SFA operations back to 1805, when Lieutenant Presley O'Bannon led a small band of local fighters to success in Derne, Tripoli. During the Global War on Terror, the US launched another massive SFA effort, with thousands of advisors deployed to both Iraq and Afghanistan. These efforts repeated many of same challenges of past SFA missions. These operations highlighted the ad-hoc nature of SFA support, lack of doctrinal publications to aid advisors, and limited preparation advisors received prior to deployment. This resulted in a significant waste of resources, time, and decreased the development of Iraqi and Afghan forces. It also highlighted the limitations of US military forces to effectively conduct Defense Institution Building (DIB). Effective DIB requires technical expertise resident in other governmental agencies. The future operating environment will demand a continued SFA capability. The US military must act now to institutionalize SFA across the joint force in a whole of government approach that is able to conduct tactical as well as ministerial level advising.

Conclusion: The future environment calls for increased SFA support operations. A Joint Security Force Assistance Command design will effectively institutionalize the capability across the DoD and facilitate a whole of government approach to effectively conduct SFA from the tactical to ministerial level.

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PREFACE

The origin of this thesis began after a deployment to Afghanistan where I served with II Marine Expeditionary Force (Forward). During this tour I had the pleasure of working with many Security Force Assistance Advisor Teams and supported the development of the 215th Corps of the Afghan National Army. I had a front row seat to the challenges associated with developing a Foreign Security Force and developed a strong understanding of the importance of the advisor mission and the need to retain this capability in the Marine Corps. This monograph develops those thoughts to capture the critical mission and retain it across the military.

I would like to acknowledge the assistance provided by Professor Michael Lewis. His patience and guidance were critical in developing my thesis and his mentorship kept me on track during challenging research periods. In addition I would like to thank my family for their patience and understanding during lengthy periods conducting research and time spent away developing my thesis. Lastly, I would like to thank the faculty and staff throughout Marine Corps Command and Staff College for sharing knowledge and developing my critical thinking and writing skills that greatly enhanced my ability to complete this study.

INTRODUCTION

A historic and vital component of Security Cooperation (SC) has been Security Force Assistance (SFA), an important tool of national security and foreign policy. The frequency and importance of SFA actions throughout US history demonstrate the requirements are not anomalies. SFA will continue to be a mission the US military must be prepared to execute and at times perform as part of a larger coalition effort. At risk nations will continue to seek foreign military advice and assistance to modernize their force or counter enemy threats. Countries will continue to provide support to other nations in order to further their own security objectives or political agendas. The experience gained during the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan provides the US military a unique opportunity to posture the Joint Force to better execute future SFA operations. Reflecting on the successes, challenges, and opportunities of these conflicts the Joint Force must build upon current initiatives, refine doctrine, and establish lasting structures. A Joint SFA Command design is required for the US military to fully institutionalize SFA and leverage a whole of government approach to generate enduring strategic options for the Nation.

SFA falls underneath the umbrella of security cooperation along with Foreign Internal Defense (FID) and other military actions. *Joint Publication 3-22* describes SFA as the “Department of Defense (DoD) contribution to a unified effort to support and augment the development of the capacity and capability of Foreign Security Forces (FSF) and their supporting institutions to facilitate the achievement of specific objectives shared by the USG.”¹ SFA encompasses DoD activities to organize, train, equip, rebuild, and advise (OTERA) FSF in support of host nation or regional security forces and their supporting institutions. This includes activities from the ministry level to tactical units, and the national security sector.

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“FID is the participation by civilian and military agencies of a government in any of the action programs taken by another government or other designated organization, to free and protect its society from subversion, lawlessness, insurgency, terrorism, and other threats to their security.”² While there are many similarities, SFA differs from FID in that it prepares FSF to defend against external threats and to perform as part of an international coalition. FID efforts focus on a HN’s internal defense and development.

Another concept important to SFA and advancing the ideas presented in this study is Defense Institution Building (DIB). The Defense Security Cooperation Agency (DSCA) website describes DIB as efforts aimed “to establish responsible defense governance in order to help partner-nations build effective, transparent, and accountable defense institutions.”³ DIB advances democracy and the rule of law, as well as key US strategic interests and security cooperation initiatives.

Army Field Manual 3-22 divides advice and assist activities into three levels: Tactical-level, Institutional-level, and Government-level. “Institutional-level advising is aimed at providing mentorship, guidance, and counsel to foreign security force establishments at the departmental level, the service headquarters level, the training and doctrine development level, and the proponent or branch level...institutional advisors aim to develop institutional capability.”⁴

A shared lexicon is key to understanding issues and communicating in a joint environment. Numerous variances exist in security cooperation terminology among service publications with some terms lacking a joint definition all together. For example, DIB lacks a standardized definition, joint understanding, and overarching guidance; which impedes joint planning and execution. The previous definitions will be used to understand the security cooperation activities addressed in this monograph.

HISTORY OF ADVISING

The US military has a long history of SFA operations and is well acquainted with advising FSF. Some of the first experiences occurred during the Revolutionary War when foreign advisors such as Major General Marquis de la Fayette from France and Major General Friedrich Wilhelm von Steuben from Germany provided technical advice to the Continental Army in areas such as engineering, administration, and training. The US Army can trace its advising efforts to the 1899 Philippine War, with the establishment and training of the Filipino constabulary police.⁵ The Marine Corps experience began as early as 1805 when Lieutenant Presley Neville O'Bannon led a small group of native fighters to seize the fortress of Derne, Tripoli, which contributed to the American success during the Barbary Coast War.⁶ Marines advised FSF throughout Central America in the early 1900s and deployed to China, the Philippines, Indonesia, and Thailand after World War II. The latest conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan resulted in thousands of advisors deployed to increase the capacity and capabilities of the country's FSF. In 2008, there were over 6,000 advisors operating in the Iraqi theater.⁷ These conflicts resulted in a tremendous scale of advisory support comparable to that experienced during the Vietnam War. It was best summed up in congressional testimony when Brigadier General Daniel O'Donohue stated, "the mission of SFA is in our DNA."⁸



Figure 1. Major General Sayed Malouk, Commander 215th Corps, Afghan National Army

Lessons from Korea, Vietnam, and El Salvador:

Historical analysis showed advising FSF has been a prominent part of US operations for over a century and highlights many recurring challenges common throughout the history of US advising efforts. Frequently cited issues included poor selection of advisors, inadequate pre-deployment training, and language/culture barriers.

Robert Ramsey's historical study of US advisors in Korea, Vietnam, and El Salvador provides invaluable insight into the advising mission and highlights issues relevant for today and future SFA efforts. Before the war began in Korea, advisor duty with the Military Advisory Group to the Republic of Korea (KMAG) was not a desirable assignment. Any officer with the appropriate Military Occupational Specialty (MOS) and rank who needed an overseas tour would be assigned as an advisor to KMAG. Advisors were consistently of poor quality, lacked appropriate pre-deployment training, and frequently were assigned to advise counterparts who outranked them by two to three grades. During the war, this situation did not improve; priority of personnel resources were allocated to US units while the advisor mission took a back seat. T.R. Fehrenback summed it up, "Traditionally, a nation instructing another should send its best men abroad, traditionally, from Athens to the America of 1950, nations do not. There was little prestige, promotion, or hope of glory with serving with KMAG. The United States Army tended to forget these men. Most officers who could avoid KMAG duty did so, preferring to serve among their own troops, where food, companionship, and the chances of recognition were all considerably improved."⁹

In Vietnam, culture and linguistic differences made it difficult for the advisor and his counterpart to understand each other. "What one viewed as a reasonable approach to a problem was often viewed as insane by the other. Other than making a sincere effort to understand one

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another's views, little could be done to close this cultural gap.”¹⁰ Despite some familiarization training with the language, few advisors were considered proficient in Vietnamese. Training was too short and the language too difficult. Advisors declared that language skills were the single most important prerequisite for success and there could be no more advisors than there were people able to communicate, be that advisor or interpreter.¹¹

Mr. Cavagnol who was part of the first Combined Action Program (CAP) in Phu Bai and served a second advisor tour to Vietnamese Marines elaborated on the Vietnam advisor experience in a Marine Corps Gazette article. He described his experience “as part of the first CAP in Phu Bai during 1965, I observed that while the CAP personnel were handpicked and interviewed for the job, they were given very little cultural or language training. Much of what they learned was on-the-job training.”¹²

The advising effort of the El Salvador Armed Forces (ESAF) lasted nearly 12 years and has been viewed as a successful small-scale model. The US mission consisted of a 55 man US Military Group (MILGROUP) that developed the ESAF from a poorly equipped force of 11,000 to a more capable force of 56,000. Unlike Korea and Vietnam, MILGROUP advisors were selected for their language skills and regional experience, as well as rank and MOS. However, MILGROUP advisors received no special pre-deployment training and were given poor orientation briefings after arrival in theater. Compounding the problem, no doctrine was available to help the advisor understand his duties. Ambassador Thomas Pickering provided the following observation, “we discovered a combination of not knowing the lessons we should have learned from past experience on one hand and having to adapt ourselves to somewhat different and new situations on the other. It was a tragedy that there was no respectable body of doctrine to be

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drawn on, that we were thrown back onto pragmatism. We had no respectable organizational approach to deal with this.”¹³

The lessons of Korea, Vietnam, and El Salvador expose the ad hoc nature of the advising effort during this period and its secondary status. Advisors faced many challenges; from poor pre-deployment training, language and culture hurdles, frequent turnovers due to short tours, and hostile environments due to indifferent counterparts. This resulted in varying levels of success in the different areas and raises concerns regarding forgotten experience and limited doctrine development to prepare future advisors.

Lessons from Iraq and Afghanistan:

The advising efforts conducted in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan experienced many of the same historical challenges. Between January and April of 2013, RAND corporation researchers interviewed 67 advisors at the tactical and operational level in Afghanistan. They developed the following results as recommendations to support future SFA efforts at the individual, as well as institutional, level:¹⁴

- Modernize Army advising and combat-related narratives to generate capable and confident SFA advisors.
- Aggressively leverage the experiences and institutional knowledge gained by Special Forces conducting Foreign Internal Defense (FID).
- Continue to seek out the best advisor candidates.
- Recognize that good training takes time.
- Ensure that attention to the mission’s end state overrides attention to advisors’ personal end states.
- Remain focused on team operations and security during the advising mission.

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- Maintain mental and cerebral fortitude while advising.

Advising efforts in Afghanistan have been highly effective at the tactical level with the Afghan Army and to a lesser degree with Afghan police forces. “They have produced forces that can work well at low levels where such characteristics as literacy, technological sophistication, and reliability are either not critical or can be easily bolstered by

ISAF forces, but they tend to fail at the higher levels of organization where systems for planning, personnel, logistics, and other critical functions must operate.”¹⁵ Testimony provided to the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, Armed Services Committee in July 2012 highlighted the limited capacity of the ministries supporting the Afghan National Security Forces

(ANSF). Capability assessments of both the Ministry of Defense (MoD) and Ministry of Interior (MoI) revealed both departments required some coalition assistance and significant assis-

tance respectively; an assessment that remained unchanged for years. Additionally, “DoD reported that the ministries face a variety of challenges, including, among others, MoD’s lack of human capital in areas requiring technical expertise and MoI’s continuing problems with corruption.”¹⁶

Iraq and Afghanistan also highlight the fact that not every service member is suited to perform SFA functions; even those considered the most competent and experienced in their fields have failed as an advisor. “Because advisors operate in a very subjective environment, it is difficult to establish objective criteria by which to assess potential advisors. However, research and experience indicate that several personality traits greatly enhance the advisor’s ability to



Figure 2. Civilian Advisor to 215th Corps (60mm Mortar Instruction)

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adapt and thrive in a foreign culture.”¹⁷ *Field Manual 3-07* identifies many of the various traits common to successful advisors: tolerance for ambiguity, empathy, and tolerance for differences to name a few. The dynamic character, small team approach, and independent nature of advising efforts demand strong leadership. A research study conducted by Major Hetherington (USA) concluded that deficient leadership and poor advisor attributes result in reduced team cohesion and limited performance of the unit.¹⁸ His recommendation was based on a Special Forces model of centralized screening, selection, and qualification to assign personnel to advisor missions.

The US military must inculcate the lessons of historical and current experiences to apply a modern training methodology that capitalizes on technology and an integrated force structure to better prepare the joint force for future SFA missions. Historical lessons have repeatedly highlighted the need for improved language training, better cultural understanding, and selection of the right personnel. Advisors throughout history have provided countless insights from their varied experience. Table 1 below provides a snapshot of recurring challenges encountered during some historical SFA advisory effort efforts.

	Poor Quality Local Recruits	Inadequate Advisor Screening / Selection	Inadequate Pre-deployment Training	Language and Cultural Barriers	C2 / Support Issues
Banana Wars	X		X	X	X
Vietnam (VNMC)			X	X	
Vietnam (CAP)		X	X	X	
Iraq		X	X	X	X
Afghanistan	X	X	X	X	X

DEMANDS OF THE FUTURE OPERATING ENVIRONMENT

Current strategic and defense guidance anticipates a growing demand for security cooperation and SFA operations. As we look to the future, the 2015 National Military Strategy

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(NMS) states we will protect and promote shared interests with partners, preserve alliances, and expand partnerships. The US military has derived National Security Interest (NSIs) from enduring national interests that prioritize missions and guide force employment. “To secure these interests, the NMS provides an integrated approach composed of three National Military Objectives: to deter, deny, and defeat state adversaries; to disrupt, and defeat violent extremists organizations (VEOs); and to strengthen our global network of allies and partners.”²⁰ Security cooperation and effective employment of SFA activities is a vital tool at the military’s disposal to pursue all three identified military objectives.

Threats from Failing States:

VEOs pose an immediate threat to trans-regional security, especially in Africa and the Middle East. These groups radicalize populations, spread violence, and leverage terror to impose their vision of societal organization. They are strongest where governments are weakest and exploit fragile and failed states. VEOs typically operate with transnational criminal organizations; where they conduct illegal trade and spread corruption, further undermining security and stability. Defeating VEOs requires economic and security support to at-risk states. Effective SFA is critical to building partner capacity and capability of at-risk states to produce credible regional partners able to counter VEOs. Joint SFA activities conducted in a whole of government approach that includes international partners will be most effective in supporting at-risk states.²¹

Dr. Richard Shultz argues that weak and failing states will play a central role in future conflicts. More importantly, the ungoverned spaces within weak and failing states provide the opportunity for VEOs to grow and expand their influence. Failing states represent a security threat to local, regional, and international security.²² He argues that there are a large number of weak and failing states that are likely to remain at-risk for some time. A pattern of irregular con-

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flicts that have originated from failed or at-risk states has become increasingly more common. Early engagement in the form of SFA is an effective preventive measure and counters the escalation of violence in these at-risk states.

The Fragile State Index (former Failed State Index) is an effective tool to evaluate stability across the globe, monitor state trends, and identify areas of concern. The Fragile States Index is an annual ranking of nations based on their level of stability and challenges they face. The 2015 report assessed 178 nations comprising data collected in the calendar year 2014 with twelve categories ranging from “Very Sustainable to Very High Alert”. The 2015 report categorized 38 states (over 21 percent of nations surveyed) as Alert, High Alert, or Very High Alert. “Weak and failing states pose a challenge to the international community. In an interconnected world, with a globalized economy, information systems and interlaced security, pressures on one fragile state can have serious repercussions not only for that state and its people, but also for its neighbors and other states halfway across the globe.”²³ Since the end of the Cold War, a number of states have experienced mass violence stemming from internal conflict. Though the dynamics may differ in each case, the majority of these conflicts stem from social, economic, and political pressures that have not been managed by professional, legitimate, and representative state institutions. This highlights the demand for professional, competent, and capable defense institutions at the ministerial level, which was identified as a shortfall during Afghanistan advising efforts. The complexity and technical skills required to conduct effective DIB goes beyond the advising capability of typical advisors. A joint, whole of government approach is the answer to this shortfall.

Marine Corps Guidance for Future Operations:

A look at current Marine Corps guidance provides numerous examples of the elevated importance of security cooperation and SFA operations in the future. The 2015 Marine Corps

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Security Environment Forecast (MCSEF) predicts the demand for assistance and military intervention to continue unabated through 2030-2045. Violence in failing states fueled by non-state



Figure 3. Advisor Training Group (CASEVAC scenario)

actors, terrorists, transnational criminal organizations and traffickers, threatens regional security, particularly in the Middle East and across Africa. As part of a hyper-connected flat world, these threats increase the importance of developing a joint, whole of government network combined with international partners. Estimates predict that the US will devote significant mili-

tary resources to counter-terrorism and security force assistance operations well into 2030s.²⁴

The Marine Corps Service Campaign Plan (MCSCP) for 2012-2020 has the goal to increase security cooperation capabilities within existing total force structure and funding parameters with an intermediate goal to “institutionalize and maintain the capability to train teams for Train-Advise-Assist missions.”²⁵ Maintaining the ability to conduct advisor missions is the foundation to future success; however, this is just one of many requirements.

The Marine Corps’ capstone concept *Expeditionary Force 21* (EF-21), the roadmap for future plans and concepts, presents various examples of the increased attention given to security cooperation and SFA operations. Geographic Combatant Commanders (GCCs) have increased demand for personnel to conduct theater security cooperation activities with a wider number of partner nations. These Phase 0 activities include SFA and combined training exercises. These activities facilitate access prior to the start of contingencies and contribute directly to the reduction of ungoverned spaces in at-risk states.²⁶ One of the five focus areas highlighted in Expeditionary Force 21 (EF-21) is conducting security cooperation “to build capacity of partner na-

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tions' security forces; build/establish relationships; and facilitate or provide access."²⁷ Security cooperation and SFA provide a means to prevent or mitigate conflict at a reasonable cost and results in more competent and capable FSF that are able to resolve internal security issues before they become threats to US interests.

WHY NOW?

Now is the time. Countless lessons have been learned during recent SFA operations in Iraq and Afghanistan; with many repeated from past advisor efforts. Personnel with advisor experience still remain high throughout the services. However, service reductions combined with normal personnel departures have resulted in a rapidly diminishing pool of advisors. Some of the key infrastructure and support facilities remain intact; however, they constantly compete for limited funds and shifting mission priorities. Valuable resources and time were squandered as the US relearned lessons of the past, which limited development of Iraqi and Afghan FSF. Senior leaders must demand change now to posture the joint force to effectively meet the next SFA challenge before recent experience fades from memory or are overcome by new challenges.

In 2011 General Caldwell, the commanding general of NATO Training Mission-Afghanistan (NTM-A) penned "it is imperative we recognize security force assistance as a core function of military operations. It is time to evaluate the shift from combat operations to security force assistance and work together to consider the implications for the size, shape, scope, and doctrine of future forces."²⁸ Lieutenant Colonel Gregory Joseph in his article *Reshaping for Marine Advisors* argues for increased synchronization from higher headquarters (DoD, Services, and GCCs) with a top down approach. "The process has to be systematic; we can no longer afford to push resources based solely on geographic location or for that matter, where the main ef-

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fort currently resides. Rather a holistic approach must be taken since the world is ever connected and theater security cooperation crosses boundaries.”²⁹ Both arguments support a joint effort that involves a whole of government approach to exercising SFA operations.

SFA remains relevant to current tensions in the Asia Pacific region and anticipated security challenges. As China continues to assert its interest and territorial claims in the South China Sea, it becomes increasingly vital for the US to maintain freedom of navigation (FON) in the region. Strong habitual relationships with regional partners through SFA activities will facilitate access and forward basing, produce stronger regional partners, and have potential offsets to anti-access area-denial (A2/AD) environments.

The rebalance to the Pacific presents an opportunity to reevaluate force posture and resource priorities to continue SFA operations in the Asia Pacific region and leverage a whole of government approach. Long-standing alliances with regional partners need to be reinforced to bolster US influence throughout the region. “With treaty ally Thailand, the United States holds its longest-standing and largest annual military exercise in the Asia Pacific region, the Cobra Gold series. In 2012, this exercise involved over 10,000 servicemen from the United States, Thailand, Korea, Japan, Singapore, Indonesia, and Malaysia, as well as observers from 20 other nations.”³⁰ Additionally, the US has increased defense cooperation activities with the Republic of the Philippines that began with a Joint Special Operations Task Force established in Mindanao to provide training and assistance for counter-terrorism missions and the annual bilateral Balikatan (“shoulder to shoulder”) exercise.³¹ These activities provide the foundation to capitalize upon to increase influence, ensure access, and strengthen relationships throughout the Asia Pacific.

Marine Corps Security Force Assistance Progress:

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The Marine Corps has taken meaningful strides to sustain the ability to conduct SFA operation. In August 2013, the 1st Marine Expeditionary Force (I MEF) asked the Center for Naval Analysis (CNA) to analyze and identify the capabilities, organization, and training required for advisory missions in the post-Afghanistan era. CNA recommended the following actions for Marine Corps leadership to examine if they considered making advising a core competency for the Marine Corps.

- Make advising a core mission essential task (MET)
- Create a free MOS for advising
- Retain structure for advisor training and education³²

History has proven that not embracing SFA, and continuing in an ad hoc manner, will result in repeating the same challenges encountered during previous conflicts. That being said; to make advising a core mission in the Marine Corps would require significant resources. Faced with a shrinking total force and reductions in defense spending a joint approach is more prudent in the current environment.

In line with recommendations from CNA, the Marine Corps published Marine Administrative message 472/14 in September 2014 to announce the approval of the FSF advisor free MOS (FMOS) and process for experience track designation. This was a significant step forward in improving the ability to track personnel with advisor experience by granting FMOS 0570/0571. “As future boards identify more FSF advisors, commanders will be able to capitalize on the training education, and experience of these professionally agile Marines rather than having to select Marines ad hoc for advising duties.”³³ To further capitalize on this pool of experienced personnel, the Marine Corps must provide continuing education opportunities and incentivize SFA assignments. Providing incentives in the form of awards and special consideration

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during promotion boards would significantly boost personnel interest in seeking SFA related assignments.

During the height of operations in Afghanistan, the Marine Corps had two dedicated institutions to conduct advisor training and education: the Advisor Training Group (ATG) and the

Marine Corps Security Cooperation Group (MCSCG). ATG was designed to develop individual and collective core competencies for



Figure 4. Advisor Training Group (KLE scenario)

advisors and personnel designated to train FSF in Afghanistan. ATG conducted Block IV pre-deployment training and assessment to include a fully immersive mission readiness exercise (MRX) that consisted of common advisor situations supported by a robust pool of host-nation role players. ATG trained nearly 8,000 Marines during nearly eight years of operation before being inactivated in June 2014. While ATG no longer provides training for the SFA mission, the Marine Corps has incorporated a second recommendation of the CNA report by maintaining MCSCG. The mission of MCSCG is to execute and enable SC programs, training, planning, and activities in order to ensure unity of effort in support of USMC and Regional Marine Component Command (MARFOR) objectives and in coordination with the operating forces.³⁴ MCSCG provides numerous SC training courses, advisor training, SC certifications, FSF capability assessments, and other SC activities. “MCSCG serves as the USMC’s primary SC organization for non-policy issues.”³⁵ Joint integration would capitalize and further develop these initiatives to ensure a lasting and effective SFA capability.

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Further institutional advances in Marine Corps SFA capability include the development of the Center for Advanced Operational Culture Learning (CAOCL) and the Marine Corps Center for Lessons Learned (MCCLL). Both centers have provided invaluable training and increased institutional capability to execute SFA operations. CAOCL serves as the central agency for operational culture and language familiarization training. MCCLL provides the means to collect, analyze and publish lessons learned. Both capabilities were identified as shortfalls during previous SFA efforts. While significant progress has been made to incorporate SFA lessons, a joint approach is superior to the capabilities current resident in the Marine Corps.

WHY JOINT?

Given its long history conducting security cooperation and SFA operations, the US should have expertise, authorities, and organizational solutions at the ready to address future demands. DoD must act now to avoid repeating past challenges encountered during SFA operations and ensure hard-won lessons are integrated in joint doctrine and standardize practice throughout the services. Additionally, the US must be better prepared to tackle the demands of DIB; creating enduring FSF institutions requires this approach.

Colonel Dyekman in his work on Security Cooperation argues that the US “must completely reexamine the Foreign Assistance Act and conduct broad reform of the framework with which we provide security assistance. It is imperative that COCOMs have flexible resource authorities to meet current challenges. Second, the US must be able to measure the effectiveness of our security cooperation efforts to ensure we are prioritizing programs and properly applying resources to achieve the desired strategic outcomes.”³⁶

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Between fiscal years 2002 and 2013, the US allocated nearly \$100 billion toward efforts in Afghanistan. These efforts focused in areas such as building capacity of Afghan ministries to govern and deliver services, developing infrastructure and economy, and developing ANSF. The Government Accounting Office (GAO) conducted multiple reviews of these efforts and identified numerous shortcomings. Corrective actions recommended by GAO included oversight and accountability of US development projects and estimating future costs of sustaining Afghanistan's security forces which the US have pledged to support. A joint approach to SFA supports both GAO recommendations.

The progress of the Afghan campaign in 2014 and the success of tactical level advising led to a shift in advising efforts to improve institutional processes. "No longer were advisor teams to focus on small unit tactical movements, but rather develop and improve processes from the tactical to ministerial level that would support long-term stability."³⁷ This shift in effort was termed "Functionally Based SFA" which marked yet another transformation in the SFA role. Advising efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan have evolved into many different models and assumed many different titles. Some of the most recent designs have been called: Combat Advising; Embedded Training Teams (ETTs); Train, Advice, and Assist (TAA); Functionally Based SFA (FBSFA); and Expeditionary Advising Packages (EAPs). The lessons that influenced the shift in operational approaches throughout the campaigns need to be developed in joint doctrine and refined to support future SFA efforts.

As the SFA mission continued to evolve in Afghanistan, the transition to a FBSFA revealed a potential gap in the Marine Corps' ability to effectively advise across all operational levels. The Marine Corps' force structure limited the capability to conduct SFA operations at the

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ministerial level. The transition to a FBSFA required bridging tactical units to the ministry level; a level the Marine Corps had limited training and capability to support.³⁸

A joint approach addresses the challenges of maintaining an effective and enduring SFA capability. Combining forces from all services economizes resources, produces synergy, and capitalizes on unique skillsets. An adequately sourced joint unit will provide a scalable and deployable SFA effort designed to execute DIB operations with language and cultural skills required to advise at the ministerial level. A joint unit would be responsible for doctrine development and establishing assessment tools to measure SFA efforts. The unit will prioritize SFA efforts across DoD, provide recommendations to COCOMs, and ensure stewardship of US tax dollars.

RECOMMENDATIONS GOING FORWARD

Some authors have argued different approaches to prepare for future SFA operations. The Gazette article *Institutionalizing Security Force Assistance in the USMC* by Smith, Myler, and McLaurin calls for the creation of Marine Advisor Units (MAUs) within the Marine Expeditionary Force (MEF). “The MAU would provide the MEF with regional and scalable advisor capabilities. They would improve standardization, planning, and execution of SFA missions.”³⁹ The article provides valuable insight and recommendations to address previous challenges and shortfalls to the SFA mission. However, I do not support the concept of MAUs at this time. The Marine Corps’ multi-year personnel drawdown severely limits the ability to fully support the MAU concept with all skillsets required to execute SFA from the tactical to ministry level. The US would produce a greater SFA capability through a joint effort combining personnel across all services, to include civilians with skillsets to address DIB demands.

Defense Institution Building:

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DSCA's Ministry of Defense Advisor program (MoDA) "partners DoD civilian experts with foreign counterparts to build ministerial core competencies such as personnel and readiness, logistics, strategy and policy, and financial management."⁴⁰ MoDA began July 2010 in Afghanistan and was expanded in 2012. DSCA currently has approximately 58 advisors operating in Afghanistan. The program was created to address challenges relating to ministerial advisor efforts such as the ad hoc nature of support and utilizing personnel with skills not suited to the socio-cultural working environment.⁴¹ In late 2014 DoD began a process to prioritize resources to support DIB activities globally.

The MoDA program would be a key element to incorporate into a joint concept to support ministerial level advising and expand on a whole of government approach. The joint unit should incorporate this program or develop a similar capability utilizing civilian personnel to establish an effective DIB capability. The ability to conduct effective DIB and ministerial level advising is a focal point for an effective joint concept.

Joint Organization:

Developing a joint approach to SFA should capitalize on personnel and resources currently available in order to establish a Joint SFA Command. A course of action for the development of a Joint SFA Command lies in the capabilities resident in the Joint Center for International SFA (JCISFA). JCISFA is a CJCS-controlled activity whose mission is to "support the integration of SFA capabilities into the current and future Joint Force in order to advance warfighting capability."⁴² JCISFA is well established in the education and operations of SFA operations and produces useful SFA documents. Building upon the JCISFA structure with members from all DoD services, Department of State (DoS) personnel, and other relevant government agencies is required for a whole of government approach. To be successful, JCISFA would be required to

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merge with one or more organizations with leadership appropriate to integrate the command across the joint force, coordinate with other governmental agencies, and support GCCs as required. Merging with standing organizations and capabilities such as MCSCG and MoDA would provide an immediate capability to develop doctrine, conduct training, and support DIB operations. A Joint SFA Command should be commanded by a two or three star flag officer with a civilian deputy of rank and experience equivalent to a one star flag officer. This rank structure will provide the appropriate experience and authority across both military and civilian organizations to effectively implement a Joint SFA Command.

A Joint SFA Command would prioritize efforts, develop joint doctrine, conduct institutional level advising/training, coordinate with other governmental agencies, and other tasks. Currently, US Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) is the lead for joint SFA doctrine development, training, and education.⁴³ “In its SFA role, USSOCOM advises the joint staff and policymakers on whom the United States should engage with in SFA, priorities among these efforts, and what combinations of US forces should be used.”⁴⁴ Although well versed and qualified in SFA operations, USSOCOM has limitations in the ability to act as the Joint SFA Command.

A primary driver for establishing a Joint SFA Command is to increase the capacity and capability to address institutional and ministerial level advising. “Much of what SF provides to indigenous military and paramilitary forces can be characterized as small unit training to counter insurgents, guerrillas, and other irregular forces.”⁴⁵ Also, the demands for SFA operations in Iraq and Afghanistan quickly overwhelmed the capabilities of USSOCOM. Anticipating an increased demand for SFA and DIB actions in future security cooperation efforts, there will be an increase in general purpose forces. The Joint SFA Command would focus development efforts at the ministerial level to support DIB while SF continues to provide tactical level advising. Instances re-

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quiring increased support from general purpose forces will be coordinated by the Joint SFA Command who will supervise training, organization across the joint force, and perform evaluation activities.

Joint Doctrine:

Looking to the future, a key question for senior leaders in DoD to consider is how to incorporate past lessons and best posture the joint force to conduct efficient and effective SFA operations to meet future national security objectives. Correcting joint doctrine deficiencies is a needed first step. A dedicated and focused effort to update policy and joint doctrine to clarify relationships between security cooperation, security force assistance, defense institution building and other security cooperation activities is a must. Terminology supports understanding the problem, reduces uncertainty, and streamlines joint operations.

Despite the importance of SFA, there is no dedicated joint SFA publication. *Joint Doctrine Note 1-13* (Security Force Assistance) is the only document in the joint library relating to SFA. This doctrinal note is a starting point to be developed, validated, and codified as a dedicated publication to present fundamental guidance to the joint force in the conduct of SFA operations.⁴⁶ Doctrine should establish coherent authorities and a common operating picture for SFA activities and organization across DoD. Additionally, *DoD Instruction 5000.68 Security Force Assistance* must be updated. This instruction directs the commander of US Joint Forces Command (a disestablished unit) to perform important SFA related tasks for DoD.

Inconsistency between various SFA publications reduces SFA effectiveness and can lead to the erosion of future SFA capabilities across the joint force. *DoD Instruction 5000.68* identifies SFA as a subset of security cooperation and FID. It describes SFA as unique in that it is both

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a subset of Security Cooperation and FID. The portion of SFA oriented towards supporting FSF efforts to counter threats from subversion, lawlessness, and insurgency, is a subset of FID. However, *Joint Publication 3-22* identifies SFA and FID as subsets of security cooperation but neither FID nor SFA are subsets of each other. Definitions, lexicon, and function of security cooperation, including DIB need reconciliation. A Joint SFA Command as highlighted above will possess the capacity and insight required to eliminate inconsistencies, clarify missions, strategies, and establish performance measures. Without a common lexicon there will remain confusion in understanding all principles of security cooperation that will reduce effective discussion and limit effective change across the joint force.

CONCLUSIONS

The US military has a long and varied history of SFA activities that resulted in volumes of invaluable lessons that have proven timeless. Unfortunately, these periods of intense SFA activities have never been fully institutionalized in the joint force as a core mission. Many of the same lessons have been relearned from one major operation to the next resulting in inefficient and costly SFA operations that produced less than optimal results. History has proven the demand for SFA operations will continue into the foreseeable future. Strategic guidance demands a robust SFA capability ready to development partner capabilities from the tactical to ministerial level and support at risk states.

As we prepare for the future, the US, its allies and partners will continue to protect and promote shared interests as directed by the NMS. A Joint SFA Command will support US efforts to preserve alliances, expand partnerships, and conduct training, exercises, security cooperation activities, and military-to-military engagements. Such activities increase the capabilities and ca-

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capacity of partners, thereby enhancing the capacity and capability of at-risk states to secure borders, deter aggression and defeat extremists.⁴⁷

DoD must act, now is the time to institutionalize past experiences and build upon the successes to ensure the joint force is well prepared to meet future SFA demands. Establishing a joint SFA Command will ensure a balanced approach to advisory efforts with integrated processes to ensure efficient and effective SFA efforts that reach full potential. To ensure all levels of advisory capability are maintained, a whole of government approach is required that is more integrated with civilian expertise. This process must have an eye on improved processes with the intent to leverage regional and global partners in security cooperation activities.

A Joint SFA Command effectively economizes forces across DoD to provide an increased capacity to advise from the tactical to ministerial level. It provides the capability of a scalable, deployable unit with cultural and language training prepared to execute DIB operations. Capitalizing on the inherent capabilities of JCISFA, MoDA, MCSCG, and other governmental agencies will provide a robust capability not resident in one DoD service. A Joint SFA Command design efficiently and effectively institutionalizes SFA across the joint force and increases the capability to execute security cooperation activities to meet future demands. A Joint SFA Command needs to be developed now, before the importance of SFA is overshadowed by the next crisis and valuable lessons and capabilities are once again lost.

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