

Security Force Assistance Logistics: The Key to Self-Reliance?

**A Monograph
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Security Force Assistance Logistics: The Key to Self-Reliance?

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Abstract

SECURITY FORCE ASSISTANCE LOGISTICS: THE KEY TO SELF-RELIANCE? by Major Lowell E. Howard, Jr., U.S. Army, 53 pages.

When are a nation's security forces deemed self-reliant? Security force assistance (SFA) is one process of building or rebuilding a nation's security forces. If the ultimate goal of SFA is producing a self-reliant force capable of responding to a nation's security requirements, then accurately assessing that force's ability to sustain itself should be of great interest to assisting and assisted nations alike. A self-reliant security force with an autonomous sustainment system gives the assisted nation a measure of independence and self-determination. In turn, the assisting nation benefits from the regional (perhaps even global) stability generated in addition to relief from having to provide trainers, materiel, and funding.

This monograph proposes that fully integrating efforts to build logistics capability, capacity, and infrastructure into the overall SFA effort will produce enduring, self-reliant foreign security forces able to sustain themselves across the spectrum of the logistics functions. However, achieving self-reliance not only requires the integration of efforts. It also means providing honest assessment and appraisal of the foreign security force (FSF) by the assisting nation's advisors and senior leaders. Not fully integrating logistics development into our SFA programs or not providing candid assessments of SFA logistics efforts in Iraq, Afghanistan, and future venues risks the formation of unsustainable security force structures that will ultimately collapse after assistance ends.

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Introduction

When are a nation's security forces deemed self-reliant? One process of building or rebuilding a nation's security forces – particularly after a devastating war – is called security force assistance, or SFA. If the ultimate goal of SFA is producing a self-reliant force capable of responding to a nation's security requirements, then accurately assessing that force's ability to sustain itself should be of great interest to assisting and assisted nations alike. A self-reliant security force with an autonomous sustainment system gives the assisted nation a measure of independence and self-determination. In turn, the assisting nation benefits from the regional (perhaps even global) stability generated in addition to relief from having to provide trainers, materiel, and funding.

Army doctrine defines SFA as the unified action to generate, employ, and sustain local, host-nation, or regional security forces in support of a legitimate authority.¹ Within the assisted nation, this authority derives its legitimacy in part from the perception that its security forces are competent, capable, and sustainable. So if SFA is an endeavor that is predicated upon the shared interests of all parties involved to produce an independent, autonomous force that can stand on its own without external assistance, then one might conclude that for such a force to be self-reliant it must be able to sustain itself across the spectrum of logistics functions: equipping, supplying, manning, arming, fixing, and moving.²

¹ U.S. Department of Defense, Army Field Manual 3-07, *Stability Operations* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2008), 6-14.

² U.S. Department of Defense, Army Field Manual 4-0, *Sustainment* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2009), 1-4. The most recent version of the Army's keystone sustainment doctrine broadly defines logistics as "the planning and executing the movement and support of forces" and lists the following logistics functions: supply, field services, maintenance, transportation, distribution, operational contract support, and general engineering support. I deliberately chose this set of tactically-focused logistics functions because I found them to be more relevant to the topic of security force assistance and more straightforward in meaning.

Achieving self-reliance is a fundamental goal of foreign internal defense – the umbrella term that SFA falls under – and directly linked to assisting the foreign security force (FSF) “with the procurement, fielding, and sustainment of equipment.”³ However, even though U.S. Army doctrine advises that the FSF should be employed *after* it is organized, trained, equipped, and rebuilt, the U.S. has proceeded in a different manner during its campaigns in Iraq and Afghanistan. While senior commanders have acknowledged that logistics infrastructure and capacity take a long time to build, they have also admitted that addressing the issue of long-term self-reliance through building sustainability within the FSF has taken a backseat to other concerns like security and nation-building. These concerns, however immediate and justifiable, have contributed to a mindset in which partnership and national assistance have bred dependence, corruption, and indifference.

Nowhere is this indifference more profound than in the assessments that American advisors have made of their Iraqi and Afghan counterparts. While combat units have routinely received the highest marks on proficiency, little thought is given to these units’ long-term sustainability. Or if some thought is given to the security force’s overall ability to fix, arm, supply, fuel, man, or move itself, there is a tendency to view mediocrity as overwhelming success. In the aggregate, these assessments may provide a false impression of the security force’s true level of self-reliance, which may evoke parallels to the collapse of South Vietnam after U.S. forces departed.

Recent observations and lessons learned from the ongoing campaigns in Iraq and Afghanistan suggest that building logistics capability, capacity, and infrastructure within foreign security forces is not fully integrated with other U.S. Government efforts to train and advise these forces. As an example, a 2009 logistics assessment conducted jointly by Army Materiel

³ U.S. Department of Defense, Army Field Manual 3-07.1, *Security Force Assistance* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2009), 2-7.

Command and Army Central Command reveals that Afghan National Army combat units are being rated at the highest levels but remain unable to sustain their units without coalition support.⁴ This apparent failure to fully integrate FSF logistics development into SFA efforts and make candid assessments about its development is the focus of this monograph.

This monograph proposes that fully integrating efforts to build logistics capability, capacity, and infrastructure into the overall SFA effort will produce enduring, self-reliant foreign security forces able to sustain themselves across the spectrum of the logistics functions. However, achieving self-reliance requires not only requires the integration of efforts. It also means providing honest assessment and appraisal of the FSF by the assisting nation's advisors and senior leaders. Not fully integrating logistics development into our SFA programs or providing candid assessments of SFA logistics efforts in Iraq, Afghanistan, and future venues risks the formation of unsustainable security force structures that will ultimately collapse after assistance ends.

Methodology

A cursory evaluation of military history, theory, and doctrine on the related topics of security force assistance, security assistance, foreign internal defense, and counterinsurgency written in the past century seems to indicate that many of the lessons the U.S. Army has “learned” in the last five or six years were codified generations ago. While this observation may be great a topic for another paper, in the context of this monograph the literature available specifically on SFA logistics is somewhat thin. Accordingly, recent after action reports, SFA literature, interviews (or e-mails) with current / recent security force assistance advisors, and data from the field provide enough empirical evidence in terms of time, money, capacity, and readiness from

⁴ Unclassified Draft AMC/ARCENT Report, “Afghan National Security Forces Logistics Assessment,” 7 September 2009, Afghan National Army Logistics Assistance Visit, 21-22.

current and past SFA efforts to provide a baseline with which to compare and contrast foreign security force logistics systems.

Comparisons between U.S. SFA efforts and those implemented by the United Kingdom, France, and the former Soviet Union during the past century will provide additional perspective to the establishment of this baseline. In particular, the United Kingdom's actions during the Malayan Emergency, a successful counterinsurgency, will be held out as example of an SFA effort that succeeded. Further comparisons will be developed using both internal assessments and external assessments from governmental and non-governmental agencies (for example, the RAND Corporation). With the data from these assessments, this monograph will attempt to show a link between SFA efforts aimed at FSF logistics capability and the effectiveness of the greater SFA program.

By necessity this monograph will cross over into the realm of counterinsurgency, since much of the available contemporary literature featuring SFA centers on this topic. Counterinsurgency operations can and often are successfully prosecuted without any form of SFA (and by extension, SFA logistics). The same could be said for SFA, which is not inextricably tied to counterinsurgency. However, the most useful case studies identified and pursued by this author highlight the former and almost always feature the latter by no small coincidence. In other words, counterinsurgency literature is replete with SFA data (even if the term is not used) making their association necessary and incomparably convenient for the purpose of this paper.

While SFA is one of "several operations, programs, and activities that may be interdependent with" counterinsurgency,⁵ it is also a form of military advising. Evolving over the last two hundred years from "ill-organized mercenary units to professional, government-

⁵ U.S. Department of Defense. Joint Publication 3-24, *Counterinsurgency*. (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2009), xi. Other operations, activities, or programs include nation assistance, foreign internal defense, security cooperation, unconventional warfare, combating terrorism, peace operations, and psychological operations (PSYOP).

sponsored teams,” military advising is also a tool of modernization, nation building, economic purposes (or penetration), and ideology.⁶ To some extent or another logistics figures prominently under the umbrella of military advising, so there is understandably a certain degree of overlap between SFA logistics and military advising literature. Where the interaction between military advising and SFA logistics becomes relevant to this paper is through the actions, observations, and assessments of individual advisors and the organizations in which they work. So by this logic it is necessary to examine and compare not only the SFA logistics functions but also the interpretations made by military advisors and the systems they operate within.

Approaching Security Force Assistance Logistics

Security force assistance is nothing new. As observed in FM 3-07.1, *Security Force Assistance*, Baron Friedrich Wilhelm von Steuben was probably the first military advisor to America’s fledgling Army, marking possibly the first and last time this country was the recipient of SFA. Baron von Steuben “instilled discipline and professionalism into an army that previously lacked formalized training” in much the same way that contemporary U.S. forces train and advise foreign security forces today.⁷ What is unfortunate about most accounts of von Steuben’s efforts is the emphasis placed on drill and bayonet training. Commonly ignored are von Steuben’s missives on logistics.

In Baron von Steuben’s 1794 Revolutionary War drill manual, an updated version of his 1779 Congressionally-approved regulations, he addresses the movement and placement of baggage wagons, camp kitchens, latrines, and supply tents; water resupply; the preservation of

⁶ Donald Stoker, “The history and evolution of foreign military advising and assistance, 1815-2007,” in *Military Advising and Assistance: From Mercenaries to Privatization, 1815-2007*, ed. Donald Stoker (New York: Routledge, 2008), 2.

⁷ FM 3-07.1, v.

arms and ammunition; and field sanitation. With respect to field sanitation, von Steuben provides specific instructions to the commanders of regiments:

The preservation of the soldiers' health should be his first and greatest care; and as that depends in a great measure on their cleanliness and manner of living, he must have a watchful eye over the officers of companies, that they pay the necessary attention to their men in those respects.⁸

In no way does this suggest that von Steuben's guidance on logistics was pivotal to the success of the American Army at a time when so many other factors played a role in the ultimate defeat of the British. However, it does seem to indicate that the SFA effort imposed upon our nascent military would be incomplete without taking into account the role logistics had in producing an enduring, self-reliant force. But to highlight the fact that contemporary SFA emphasis is still fixated on modern-day equivalents of drill and bayonet training, one should refer to chapter six of FM 3-07.1, which predominately is concerned with the "endurance of SFA forces" and not the development of the FSF.⁹

While reviewing the doctrine presented in FM 3-07.1 and other sources is an important step in approaching the topic of SFA logistics, such a review would be incomplete without first exploring the history of U.S. SFA – especially since this section began with the observation that American forces were the fortunate recipients of this type of assistance beginning with von Steuben. While American ventures into SFA could easily fill several volumes (and probably do), the next section will attempt to highlight some of the more significant SFA undertakings in this nation's history. This historical overview is followed by a synopsis of current U.S. SFA logistics doctrine and then a summary of some contemporary approaches to SFA.

⁸ Baron Friedrich Wilhelm Ludolf Gerhard Augustin von Steuben, *Baron von Steuben's Revolutionary War Drill Manual: A Facsimile Reprint of the 1974 Edition* (New York: Dover Publications, 1985), 125.

⁹ FM 3-07.1, 6-1.

This monograph is not intended to be a panacea for all the challenges the U.S. Army may face when conducting SFA logistics or even propose to present a solution to the problems inherent with assisting a FSF with procuring, fielding, and sustaining. There may indeed be a simple, yet elegant way to solve the riddle of security force assistance logistics, but it is doubtful that a reductionist approach will be found that mirrors W. French's tidy solution to the issue of logistics in Vietnam:

If we are going to operate in distant countries, we should do it with an elite force. The reason is simple logistics. If it costs us \$2500 a year in pay for a soldier plus \$50,000 a year to support him in Vietnam, we gain by hiring an expert at, say \$40,000 a year with a support figure of \$75,000 a year if he can accomplish as much as three soldiers.¹⁰

Security Force Assistance Logistics History

This subsection addresses the history of U.S. efforts to conduct SFA logistics over that last 110 years. It is not intended to be a comprehensive guide to American SFA logistics or even serve as a springboard from which to draw lessons about the case studies discussed later in this monograph. Instead, this section is an attempt to highlight U.S. actions to support a legitimate authority in the generation, employment, and sustainment of its security forces from a logistics perspective. Accordingly, the topics of counterinsurgency and irregular warfare figure prominently due to the circumstances that tend to spawn a need for assistance. However, other relevant cases can be found where SFA takes place after the conclusion of “regular” warfare.

During the Philippine Insurrection (1899–1902), the U.S. Army recruited indigenous peoples to aid in the struggle against the First Philippine Republic – a rebel government formed after the control of the islands was ceded to the United States from Spain. Recruited predominantly from the Macabebe clan, these scouts did not present a significant logistics challenge since they were largely “unconcerned about uniforms, pay, and accrued benefits” but

¹⁰ W. French, *Pattern for Victory* (Jericho, NY: Exposition Press, 1970), 47.

were instead motivated by the “prestige of working for the Americans [and] a desire to kill Tagalogs.”¹¹ Gerald Early noted that by September 1899 “American effectiveness against the guerrillas improved with the increasing use” of the Macabebe Scouts, the “forerunners of the later Philippine Scouts.”¹² Trained by a cadre of American soldiers, the scouts were “issued Krag-Jorgenson carbines with ammunition” but did not wear uniforms or receive rations.¹³

According to Brian McAllister Linn, it was the Americans who “relied on Filipinos for help, first with logistics (employing over 100,000 Filipinos in 1899 alone), then as scouts and police, and finally, as armed units.”¹⁴ By July 1901, the United States transferred military control to Filipino civil authority, which established the paramilitary Philippine Constabulary to deal with the problem of roving bandits. The constabulary, which was trained, equipped, and armed by the U.S. Army, found success that “contributed to the improved state of law and order” and helped to bring the Filipino people closer the American administration.¹⁵

Nearly three decades later, the United States assisted Nicaragua with the establishment of its Guardia Nacional in a 1927 agreement, which was signed in accordance with the 1923 Treaty of General Peace and Amity and the Tipitapa Treaty.¹⁶ Led by U.S. Marine officers like then-Captain Lewis B. Puller, Guardia detachments used aggressive patrolling techniques supplied with mules instead of horses, which had a greater logistics requirement, to pursue rebels led by Augusto César Sandino. After a string of successes, the “State Department and Marine Corps

¹¹ Allan D. Marple, “The Philippine Scouts: A Case Study in the use of Indigenous Soldiers, Northern Luzon, The Philippine Islands, 1899” (MMAS thesis, Fort Leavenworth, KS: U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, 1983), 106-107.

¹² Gerald H. Early, “The United States Army in the Philippine Insurrection: 1899-1902” (MMAS thesis, Fort Leavenworth, KS: U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, 1975), 96.

¹³ Marple, 72.

¹⁴ Brian McAllister Linn, “The Philippines: Nationbuilding and Pacification,” *Military Review*, Mar-Apr2005, Vol. 85 Issue 2, 53.

¹⁵ Early, 96.

¹⁶ Richard J Macak, Jr., “Lessons from Yesterday's Operations Short of War: Nicaragua and the *Small Wars Manual*,” *Marine Corps Gazette*, 1 November 1996, 58.

recognized the value and need for Guardia units” like those commanded by Puller, but “severe budget cuts forced by the worldwide depression prevented” attempts to expand the Guardia Nacional.¹⁷

The logistics systems of the United States and South Korean armies were combined during the Korean War (1951–53), while Republic of Korea and United Nations forces received materiel bought with funds from the regular Department of Defense budget. This combining of systems continued after the cease-fire of July 1953, though the United States “continued to share its military equipment with the Koreans without initiation of a formal military assistance program.”¹⁸ By 1955, the Republic of Korea was given responsibility for the management of its own logistics system, but U.S. defense officials later “admitted in 1960 that the ROK was not prepared” to establish “an effective logistic system, nor did they pursue the task aggressively.”¹⁹

Problems with South Korea’s logistics systems were only compounded by the country’s relative backwardness in terms of technology and economic capacity. Post-war conditions bred competitiveness between the needs of the South Korean military and civilians, who understood that clothing, food, and tools available within the military supply system were generally better than what was available within the civilian system. The resulting losses of military supplies to pilferage and the Korean black market created additional requirements and a supply accountability dilemma. Concerns about “the possibility of renewed communist aggression in Korea made it impossible to withhold assistance until the supply system could be straightened out,” so supply and associated maintenance problems persisted while “shipments in excess of

¹⁷ Macak, 59.

¹⁸ Harold A. Hovey, *United States Military Assistance: A Study of Policies and Practices*, (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1966), 24.

¹⁹ Ibid.

needs” continued until logistics training helped address problems with supply management and other logistics difficulties.²⁰

Amid concerns of communist aggression in Europe, West German rearmament began in 1955 with American aid making up most of the materiel. The United States “provided \$950 million worth of equipment for four infantry and two armored divisions through a grant-aid program, and by 1963 Germany had purchased additional American military materiel and services at a value of \$2.5 billion” under the Mutual Defense Assistance Program (MDAP), which “included more than 1,100 medium-gun M47 and M48 Patton tanks, 152 light-gun tanks, close to 300 105-mm and 155-mm howitzers, and great numbers of mortars, machine guns, rocket launchers, small firearms, and other items.”²¹

The U.S. Army Europe (USAREUR) oversaw the training of German soldiers until mid-1957 with training teams assigned to instruct German combat soldiers and technical service troops.²² Historian Ingo Tauschweizer observed that commonly held accounts of USAREUR’s efforts to train the Bundeswehr fail to explain the influence of German military theorists on the Cold War U.S. Army, which was essentially “defined by its experience in Germany.”²³ In return for training German soldiers on how to operate and maintain equipment like the M113 armored personnel carrier, the Germans provided the model from which architects like General William DePuy, the first commander of the United States Army Training and Doctrine Command, redesigned the U.S. Army. Under AirLand Battle logistics doctrine, the idea of “static supply points behind a protected and slowly changing front” was modified incorporating the idea of the

²⁰ Ibid., 25.

²¹ Ingo Wolfgang Tauschweizer, “Learning with an Ally: The U.S. Army and the Bundeswehr in the Cold War,” *Journal of Military History*, Apr 2008, Vol. 72 Issue 2, 480.

²² Tauschweizer, 481.

²³ Tauschweizer, 508. The author contrasts his views with the impact given to reforms made following the Vietnam War, which provided significant lessons about the “doctrine of overwhelming force.” His point is that the German influence is often understated when accounts of the U.S. Army’s resurgence up until Operation Desert Storm are presented.

corps and its corps support command (COSCOM) as the central distribution point for forces “extended to all areas of the nonlinear battlefield, including the deep battle area.”²⁴

While logistics training during the Vietnam War (1963–75) is addressed within the case study section of this monograph, some general observations about the selection of personnel for advisor duty in Vietnam are worth noting. Despite efforts to provide incentives to prospective advisors, advisor duty was generally viewed as less than desirable. In a monograph by Major Brennan Cook, he writes:

Essentially, if an advisor was qualified in his branch at his current rank, the Army assumed him qualified to be an advisor, generally without consideration of temperament, cultural adaptability, or language skill. Even after the Army incentivized various advisor programs with special pay, consideration for advanced civil schooling, guaranteed early consideration for promotion for officers in the rank of major, and command tour credit for captains, few officers volunteered for advisor duty.²⁵

The RAND Corporation studied the advisory effort in South Vietnam, conducting in excess of 300 interviews with Vietnam advisors while observing the advisors’ interaction with their host nation counterparts to establish best practices.²⁶ The resulting recommendations introduced new “selection criteria for advisors, training programs, and changes to administrative procedures to improve the overall program” emphasizing advisors “should first be volunteers, when possible, and then should be selected based on professionalism, adaptability to foreign cultures.”²⁷

²⁴ Douglas W. Skinner, *Airland Battle Doctrine* (Alexandria, VA: Center for Naval Analyses, 1988), 15.

²⁵ Brennan Cook, “Improving Security Force Assistance Capability in the Army’s Advise and Assist Brigade” (SAMS monograph, Fort Leavenworth, KS: U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, 2010), 15.

²⁶ Gerald Hickey and W.P. Davison, *The American Military Advisor and His Foreign Counterpart: The Case of Vietnam* (Santa Monica, CA: Rand Corporation, 1965), xi.

²⁷ Cook, 15.

Security Force Assistance Logistics Doctrine

In the foreword to FM 3-07.1, *Security Force Assistance*, General Martin E. Dempsey explains that the manual “addresses common characteristics and considerations for conducting security force assistance and clarifies what units and individual advisors must understand to work ‘by, with, and through’ their counterparts.”²⁸ The foreword further explains that the key to the successful conduct of SFA is the development of “well-informed, culturally astute leaders” using a common doctrine to achieve this goal.²⁹ The common doctrine for SFA logistics is within chapter 6.

Chapter 6, “Sustainment,” of FM 3-07.1 starts out with a reminder that one of the principles “of SFA is to ensure long-term sustainment.”³⁰ This “principle” in effect says that everything that is done to field and train the foreign security force must be sustainable “once U.S. forces have completed assistance” and is “accomplished by developing the...capability and capacity for asset production, management, performance, and maintenance.” While it seems reasonable to expect SFA to help their FSF counterparts manage, operate, and maintain military assets, one has to wonder if production is really within the scope of the SFA mission. Whether or not developing production capability and capacity is a realistic task for security force assistance advisors is not specifically addressed in the remainder of the chapter.

The remainder of chapter 6 is divided into five sections: Sustainment in Foreign Security Forces Capacity, Asset Management and Performance, Operational Contract Support, External Agencies Support Management, and Facilitating the Redeployment Process. Most of the guidance contained within these sections is inwardly focused, in other words, descriptions of how U.S.

²⁸ FM 3-07.1, Foreword.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ FM 3-07.1, 6-1. Actually, there are no principles of security force assistance mentioned in chapter 2. However, there are six imperatives. “Sustain the effort” is one of them.

Army units support themselves and leverage external resources from other governmental agencies, multinational partners, and (ironically) the host nation itself. Additionally, the language in many of the paragraphs appears to be either direct copies or paraphrasing from other doctrinal sources, which is not usual or even discouraged within the Army doctrine community.³¹ However, what this seems to indicate is a lack of doctrinal guidance for those interested in the fundamentals of SFA logistics.

What appears to be original guidance on planning for SFA logistics operations can be found in the first section under the sub-heading of “Critical Considerations in Building Host-Nation Sustainment Capacity” and then within the section called “Asset Management and Performance.”³² These so-called critical considerations comprise broad planning guidance telling logistics planners to “have a holistic perspective,” “address the causes, not the symptoms,” “understand the desired end state,” and “understand the level of [foreign security force] senior leader support.”³³ Most notable and perhaps relevant to this monograph is the admonition that “without an improvement in sustainment capacity, [the foreign security force] cannot significantly improve regardless of how much effort is devoted to advising and training.”³⁴

The section that follows, “Asset Management and Performance,” advises security force assistance commanders and planners to conduct an “evaluation of foreign infrastructure and industrial capacity” by analyzing “current asset performance, costs, benefits, and improvements.”³⁵ The result of this evaluation and analysis is an “asset management plan,” which is essentially a tool for the host nation government to figure out what their future requirements

³¹ FM 3-07.1, 6-6. Paragraph 6-34, “External Contract Support,” for example, is almost word-for-word the same as paragraph 4-46 (also called “External Contract Support”) in FM 4-0, *Sustainment*.

³² FM 3-07.1, 6-4.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid.

will be.³⁶ If there is a section in FM 3-07.1 that has anything to do with production, perhaps this is it.

The Center for Army Lessons Learned *Handbook No. 10-08, Partnership: Development of Logistics Capabilities* argues that the “guidance in FM 3-24 [*Counterinsurgency*] provides an outline yet very little substantive information on how a multinational force can truly develop a nation’s sustainment base for all the security forces.”³⁷ In this respect, the handbook is correct. Chapter 8 of FM 3-24 provides a tactically focused look at logistics within a counterinsurgency environment addressing considerations for operating bases, protection of logistics assets, convoys, unit equipment, and aerial distribution. So in a strategic sense, the utility of this guidance is minimal at best.

However, within FM 3-24 there is a sub-section in the chapter called “Host Nation Security Force Logistics” that prudently advises logisticians “to be aware of several special challenges” like “dysfunctional military cultures [in which] corruption and graft...can cripple attempts to develop effective support services.”³⁸ Another observation, perhaps the most cogent and relevant observation bearing on the issue achieving self-reliance is simply that FSFs “may take a long time to operate independently of U.S. or multinational logistic support.”³⁹

Thomas E. Miller defends doctrine in his 2003 SAMS monograph, “Counterinsurgency and Operational Art: Is the Joint Campaign Planning Model Adequate?” He writes:

American COIN doctrine, correctly or not, is largely identified with its failure in Vietnam. This is not entirely accurate. The U.S. Army had extensive COIN experiences prior to World War I, notably in Cuba and in the Philippines, and during the Indian campaigns. The U.S. Marine Corps had extensive experience between the wars in the Caribbean, leading to the formal publication of the Small

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Center for Army Lessons Learned, *Handbook No. 10-08, Partnership: Development of Logistics Capabilities* (Combined Arms Center (CAC): Ft. Leavenworth, KS, 2009), 9.

³⁸ U.S. Department of Defense, Field Manual 3-24, *Counterinsurgency* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2006), 8-10.

³⁹ Ibid.

Wars Manual in 1940. Smaller COIN efforts were conducted primarily by the Army in the Philippines and Greece after World War II. Thus, the failure in Vietnam is surprising based on the previous U.S. COIN experiences.⁴⁰

Miller's monograph preceded both FM 3-07.1 and FM 3-24, of course. But the reality for U.S. forces by 1969, according to FM 3-24, is that there was immense political pressure to turn the war over to the host nation. Consequently, South Vietnam and its security forces were not self-reliant and not prepared economically or culturally to sustain the modern equipment provided for them "despite the training of several thousand South Vietnamese in American supply and maintenance practices."⁴¹ The South Vietnamese military personnel left in charge of running these American-styled sustainment systems had little confidence in them. Not long after U.S. support ended, "the logistic shortcomings of the supposedly modern South Vietnamese military contributed to its rapid disintegration when the North Vietnamese advanced in 1975."⁴²

Contemporary Approaches to Security Force Assistance Logistics

This subsection discusses current approaches to SFA logistics in terms of the logistics functions mentioned in the introduction: equipping, supplying, manning, arming, fixing, and moving. Two additional terms are added, training and partnership. The former is simply fundamental to SFA operations in general, while the latter is one of common techniques employed by SFA forces. Although current doctrine figures prominently in this discussion, doctrine is not exclusively used to describe what is being practiced in the field due the shifting nature of the operational environment. All of these terms are relevant to SFA logistics efforts, because they are either integral or related to the process of achieving self-reliance.

⁴⁰ Thomas E. Miller, "Counterinsurgency and Operational Art: Is the Joint Campaign Planning Model Adequate?" (SAMS monograph, Fort Leavenworth, KS: U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, 2003), 21.

⁴¹ FM 3-24, 8-10.

⁴² Ibid.

Training is an SFA task in which assistance is provided to the foreign security force “by developing programs and institutions to train and educate.”⁴³ For FSF logisticians, this means understanding how their security forces are supplied, armed, maintained, and transported. While understanding these tactical logistics tasks is important, more critical is understanding the linkages among the levels of support built into the foreign security force logistics system. Understanding how, for example, a repair part moves from a national supply depot to a customer unit works to build trust in the logistics system and reduce hoarding and corruption. Tracing how this repair part got to the national supply depot in the first place relates directly to self-reliance.

In the context of Army doctrine, equipping the foreign security force means to furnish it “for service or action by appropriate provisioning.”⁴⁴ In accordance with federal law, the military can only provide incidental support to foreign security forces since the equipping of them with weapons systems and other materiel must be specifically authorized. In other words, “all other weapons, training, equipment, logistic support, supplies, and services provided to foreign forces must be paid for with funds appropriated by Congress” like the Iraq Security Forces Fund and the Afghan Security Forces Fund.⁴⁵ Solving how a FSF will continue to equip itself after SFA ends is another aspect of achieving self-reliance.

Supplying includes the “requisitioning, receipt, storage, issue, distribution, protection, maintenance, retrograde, and redistribution of supplies.”⁴⁶ Advisors working at the unit level in this capacity may work with supply clerks or warehouse workers training them on basic accountability procedures in addition to recordkeeping and storage methods. At higher staff levels, logistics advisors might work with staff officers and commanders to emphasize planning

⁴³ FM 3-07.1, 2-5.

⁴⁴ “Equip,” Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary, (www.merriam-webster.com, 2010), retrieved 16 November 2010.

⁴⁵ FM 3-07.1, B-5.

⁴⁶ FM 4-0, 5-1.

the distribution of supplies across the battlefield to subordinate units. At the national level, advisors assist senior logistics officials considering policy and national-level sources of supply.

Arming, or the management of munitions, is similar to supply. Munitions are a class of supply, but Army sustainment doctrine separates it as a function because of “the complexities of activities associated with its handling.”⁴⁷ Advisors providing assistance and training with munitions support help their FSF counterparts with planning and integrating munitions operations to make sure munitions reach security forces in the correct quantities and types. At higher levels, advisors may work with host nation ammunition managers administering to the accountability and management of munitions stocks, establishing ammunition supply points, coordinating the distribution between storage sites, and directing the issue of ammunition to units.

Fixing encompasses the repair and return to user of weapon systems and other equipment as well as the repair and replacement of components from these systems. Advisors working with FSF unit maintenance personnel assist and train them on techniques from shop safety to battle damage assessment, repair, and recovery. The host nation system is likely to vary considerably from the U.S. Army’s two-level maintenance system, so advisors working in this capacity should understand how the host nation integrated logistics chain works – particularly when it comes to repair parts. At the national level, advisors providing this type of assistance may be influential with analyzing and making recommendations on systemic maintenance management issues.

Moving in the context of this study is generally concerned with transportation operations, which “encompass the wide range of capabilities provided by transportation units” and the transport of “personnel, cargo, and equipment by motor, rail, air, and water with organic or contract assets.”⁴⁸ However, in addition to the usual functions of movement control, terminal

⁴⁷ FM 4-0, 5-1. Although the terms ammunition and munitions are often used interchangeably, the latter term is considered to be broader in scope referring to all manner of explosives, propellants, pyrotechnics, demolitions, and even nuclear, biological, or chemical material.

⁴⁸ FM 4-0, 5-5.

operations, and mode operations, advisors working in this capacity may also provide assistance with distribution planning. Distribution is perhaps even more critical to ensuring that all elements of the host nation logistics system work together successfully.⁴⁹

In Army doctrine, manning the force “involves personnel readiness of the force, maintaining accountability of the force, and management of personnel information.”⁵⁰ In the context of SFA logistics and this study, manning is more consistent with recruiting the types of personnel suited to work within the FSF logistics system. Education and literacy levels vary widely in places like Afghanistan and Iraq, so the importance of finding soldiers who can read labels and fill out forms cannot be understated. For this reason, some of the more encompassing aspects of human resources management (for example, postal operations and casualty reporting) are not examined. When it comes to self-reliance, the capabilities and limitations of a nation’s manpower pool influences the type of logistics system that can realistically be sustained.

Partnering is an approach to SFA logistics that “occurs when coalition forces form a synergistic relationship” with a corresponding host nation logistics unit that evolves “over time due to the efforts of both commanders and their respective leaders.”⁵¹ Harnessing the strengths of U.S. units and their FSF logistics partners, this relationship can take many forms: company to company, battalion to battalion, brigade to brigade, and so on. For partnering to be effective, activities should include “joint planning, training, and joint operations.”⁵² Another aspect of

⁴⁹ FM 4-0, Glossary-9. Distribution is defined as “the operational process of synchronizing all elements of the logistics system to deliver the right things to the right place and right time to support the [commander]. It is a diverse process incorporating distribution management and asset visibility.”

⁵⁰ FM 4-0, 5-12.

⁵¹ Joint Center for International Security Force Assistance, *Commander’s Handbook for Security Force Assistance*, 14 July 2008, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, 16.

⁵² Ibid.

partnering in contemporary operations is “the hand-off between units as one replaces another” due to redeployment or change of mission.⁵³

Partnering with a FSF unit can be “time consuming and may require drastic paradigm shifts that place both parties in unfamiliar and uncomfortable situations.”⁵⁴ This is especially true for sustainment units that must perform their normal support activities along with a security force partnership. Over time, partnered FSF logistics units may increase in “unit cohesion and proficiency [making] the partnering relationship...more coequal” until the unit becomes fully operational.⁵⁵

The Center for Army Lessons Learned *Handbook No. 10-08, Partnership: Development of Logistics Capabilities* cautions that until a partnered unit becomes fully operational, U.S. “commanders must avoid providing direct support to host nation security forces – if a system exists – and instead provide recommendations supporting the development of a host nation sustainment culture...[because] development of sustainment capabilities for local security forces is essential to establishing a viable local security structure.”⁵⁶ The implication is clear: as long as the FSF’s logistics system is dependent on external support, it is unlikely to become self-sustaining.

Recognizing this, in September 2008 the Multi-National Force–Iraq (MNF–I) established the development of a self-sustaining Iraqi Security Forces as a separate line of effort with four operational objectives:

- Doctrine: develop and promulgate plans, policies, and procedures across all sustainment functions.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Joint Center for International Security Force Assistance, *Commander’s Handbook for Security Force Assistance*, 14 July 2008, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, 16.

⁵⁶ *Handbook No. 10-08, Partnership: Development of Logistics Capabilities*, i.

- Organizational structure: develop and field the appropriate personnel and equipment to field capability gaps within their security forces.
- Training, personnel, and leadership: train, man, and provide oversight to allow planning and execution of sustainment missions to support security forces.
- Infrastructure: establish a foundation to build an infrastructure that represents physical locations, equipment, and capabilities that facilitate a given action.⁵⁷

In addition to symmetrical logistics partnerships, there is another type of partnership that uses teams organized and operated like military transition teams or MiTTs to foster self-reliance. While MiTTs partner “with a host-nation unit and teach its leaders how to conduct proper military planning and bring the fight to the enemy,” logistics training and advisory teams (LTATs) provide logistics assistance to FSF logistics units.⁵⁸ Recognizing that building an enduring security force cannot be achieved “without a strong sustainable logistics structure in place for the host-nation military unit,” resourcing an LTAT program formed with ad hoc teams of logisticians provides the sort of “coaching, teaching, and mentoring” that supports “the development of a culture that encourages the growth of logistics experts within [the host nation’s] ranks.”⁵⁹ Additionally, a permanent LTAT formed out of the brigade support battalion or sustainment brigade, “combined with a working knowledge of the host-nation logistics infrastructure and policies, will create buy-in by partnered units” and encourage them “to find their own solutions.”⁶⁰

The techniques employed by LTATs have varied. One LTAT in Iraq at first attempted to train lower enlisted soldiers away from their “officers and senior noncommissioned officers

⁵⁷ *Handbook No. 10-08, Partnership: Development of Logistics Capabilities*, 24.

⁵⁸ Michael F. Hammond, “Logistics Training and Advisory Teams: A Concept in the Making,” *Army Sustainment*, March – April 2010, Volume 42, Issue 2, http://www.almc.army.mil/alog/issues/MarApr10/ltat_concept.html (accessed 1 December 2010).

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

(NCOs)... [but] soon discovered that the more they interacted with the [Iraqi army] soldiers, the more the lower enlisted soldiers came to the LTAT instead of their own leaders for guidance.”⁶¹ So instead, the LTAT focused on “developing strong, confident leaders” by training the leadership first before having them “present the class they had just attended to their soldiers.”⁶² While this technique worked well with the developmental courses and classes, it did not produce desired results with more technical training. Since FSF senior leaders were not able to teach these sorts of courses with confidence, an LTAT trainer assisted each senior leader with his presentation. This technique kept individual leaders in front of their soldiers, building both leader confidence and the confidence of soldiers in their leadership.⁶³

While working directly with host nation soldiers to train, advise, and assist them with logistics is important, it represents just one facet of contemporary approaches to SFA logistics. Before this sort of soldier-to-soldier level engagement takes place, trust and confidence needs to be established with key leaders. Christopher J. Whittaker recognizes that “the challenge in key leader engagements is to build trust first, then consensus—as the Iraqis say, friendship before business.” Establishing rapport with FSF logistics leadership not only increases cooperation, but it creates a sort of moral authority for U.S. advisors trying to overcome highly rigid, bureaucratic host nation logistics systems.

Security Force Assistance Logistics and the Malayan Emergency

The Malayan Emergency (1948–60) was “an internal insurrection by the Communists (the vast majority being of Chinese origin, domiciled in Malaya), launched with the aim of

⁶¹ Julian Price, “Logistics Partnering Lessons,” *Army Sustainment*, March – April 2010, Volume 42, Issue 2, http://www.almc.army.mil/alog/issues/MarApr10/partner_lessons.html (accessed 1 December 2010).

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Ibid. LTATs have also “used practical and written examinations during training,” which host nation students were required to pass “in order to advance to the next training event.” This technique enabled the LTAT to “monitor progress and ensure that they were retaining the material being covered.”

overthrowing the British Colonial Government.”⁶⁴ Unlike the approach the British would later take in Cyprus (1955–59), their decision to take the long view towards fighting the insurgency using a comprehensively trained, multi-ethnic police as their primary counterinsurgency force along with local militia forces demonstrates the “importance for the military and political leadership to focus on the endstate [sic] rather than on the immediate goals.”⁶⁵

Recognizing that “police are the most appropriate force in combating small insurgent bands that receive support from elements of the civilian population,” the British took steps to resource the Malayan police force.⁶⁶ This resourcing effort came on the heels of Lieutenant General Sir Harold Briggs’s June 1950 “plan to divorce the MRLA [Malayan Races Liberation Army] from its ethnic-Chinese support base” by forcibly relocating entire communities to “New Villages,” which were “closely monitored but were also offered land, employment, education, and an opportunity to engage in local politics.”⁶⁷ The so-called Briggs Plan “established a network of federal, state, and district interagency committees to help coordinate the government machinery” creating a system that system “allowed for decentralized and coherent decision-making and a constant flow of intelligence” to the police and other security forces.⁶⁸

After some fits and starts, the British effort in Malaya turned around with the February 1952 arrival of General Sir Gerald Templar, appointed High Commissioner and Director of Operations. Using the security framework established by his predecessor, Templar increased

⁶⁴ E. D. Smith, *Counter-Insurgency Operations: 1 Malaya and Borneo*, (London: Ian Allan Ltd, 1985), 3.

⁶⁵ James S. Corum, *Training Indigenous Forces in Counterinsurgency: A Tale of Two Insurgencies* (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, 2006), 35.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 36.

⁶⁷ David H. Ucko, “The Malayan Emergency: The Legacy and Relevance of a Counter-Insurgency Success Story,” *Defence Studies*, Mar-Jun 2010, Vol. 10 Issue 1/2: 16. Briggs was appointed Director of Operations in April 1950 retired about a year later due to ill health. As a result of forced relocation under the Briggs Plan, the MRLA “found it more difficult to interact with the Chinese population, its source of recruits and materiel.”

⁶⁸ Ucko, 17.

police manning and provided them with “better equipment and communications.”⁶⁹ The police force was ultimately “expanded so that its Commissioner, Col Arthur Young, had responsibility for over a quarter of a million men” who were “given armoured cars, scout cars, and a huge arsenal of guns and weapons” and a 1953 budget of £30,000,000.⁷⁰ Additionally, “hundreds of police officers and enlisted men attended army courses in vehicle maintenance” and “weapons repair.”⁷¹ Templar also insisted that Chinese as well as Malaysians were “recruited, trained, and armed in order to help protect themselves against the Communists.”⁷²

The Malayan Campaign also shows the importance of training and equipping “irregular, part-time security forces” like the “home guards.”⁷³ Over “200,000 villagers eventually were enrolled and organized into home guard units that served primarily to guard” their villages, resourced with “only basic arms and minimal equipment.”⁷⁴ Although these intrinsically self-reliant home guards were “responsible for only the most basic duties,” which usually meant guarding their villages at night, they provided a tremendous benefit at a negligible cost.⁷⁵ By simply “controlling and managing the process,” Templar provided a useful, sustainable outlet for local groups to participate in their own security.⁷⁶

Templar’s greatest contribution, according to John Nagl, was “his ability to coordinate all of the efforts – social, political, economic, police, and military – to move Malaya forward to a

⁶⁹ John Newsinger, *British Counterinsurgency: From Palestine to Northern Ireland* (New York: Palgrave 2002), 53.

⁷⁰ Smith, 23.

⁷¹ Corum, 18.

⁷² Newsinger, 54. Eventually 50,000 Chinese were recruited.

⁷³ Corum, 47.

⁷⁴ Ibid. The home guards “were very useful in freeing up a large number of regular police and military personnel from basic security and guard duties, which enabled the better-trained and equipped forces to concentrate on the complex operational tasks.” In essence, Templar armed and trained “an eclectic mix of loosely-organized local forces” and then quietly provided “centralized control and supervision.”

⁷⁵ Corum, 48.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

position in which it would be ready for independence.”⁷⁷ With district officers mirroring efforts conducted at the state and federal levels, the Malaysians help to create a solution uniquely their own. While this relied on “the ability of local people to run the government,” it also included “fighting against the insurgents,” which Malaysian security forces did for three years after the country gained independence in 1957.⁷⁸ The ability of Malaysian security forces to successfully prosecute this campaign without the British would not have been possible if they had not achieved self-reliance gained through the development of their own, uniquely Malaysian sustainment system.

U.S. Security Force Assistance Logistics Case Studies

The intent of this section is to examine information about SFA logistics efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan juxtaposed against similar data from the Vietnam War, our model of failure, having already presented British SFA logistics efforts during the Malayan Emergency as our model of success. By looking at actions to generate, employ, and sustain FSF using applicable SFA logistics functions (equipping, training, supplying, manning, arming, fixing, and moving) as a framework along with feedback from former advisors, this section will provide data from which the reader can draw some conclusions.

The subsection dedicated to advisor assessments and observations is broader in scope than the more focused data that correspond to the SFA logistics functions. This sequencing is done deliberately to tie-in specific area data with more general advisor feedback while also presenting a quantitative to qualitative transition. Understandably, each logistics function can become more or less important to the actual fielding of an enduring FSF due to a myriad of variables that include potential adversaries, geography, the availability of natural resources, climate, and culture.

⁷⁷ John Nagl, *Learning to Eat Soup with a Knife* (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 2002), 100.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 104.

Some of the data that follows concerning operations in Afghanistan comes from a report delivered to the U.S. Congress by the Department of Defense on 28 April 2010. This report, which was submitted almost five months after President Obama announced the deployment of an additional 30,000 troops, notes that the “continuing decline in stability in Afghanistan...has leveled off [as] polls consistently illustrate that Afghans see security as improved from a year ago [although] violence is sharply above the seasonal average for the previous year – an 87% increase from February 2009 to March 2010.”⁷⁹ Amongst other things this report discusses the equipping, training, and logistics of the Afghanistan National Security Forces (ANSF), which consists of the Afghan National Army (ANA) and Afghan National Police (ANP). The headquarters directly responsible for the security force assistance mission is the NATO Training Mission-Afghanistan (NTM-A) / Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan (CSTC-A).

Within the NTM-A / CSTC-A, the Logistics Directorate and the Logistics Training and Advisory Group provide “policy development, training, mentoring, equipment, and infrastructure to improve logistics capabilities within” both the ANA and the ANP – recognized as weaknesses throughout the ANSF.⁸⁰ However, “despite the work being put into the logistics systems, challenges [like] the conscious decisions to rapidly field the combat forces” before addressing the “capacity of the logistics system” remain with the understanding that the ANSF “will continue to rely on NTM-A / CSTC-A for enablers to support their fielding and sustainment requirements until both the logistics systems and funding are put into place.”⁸¹

Another report to Congress dated June 2010 entitled “Measuring Stability and Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq,” describes “specific performance indicators and measures of

⁷⁹ “Report on Progress Toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan and United States Plan for Sustaining the Afghanistan National Security Forces,” 5.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 109

⁸¹ Ibid., 110.

progress toward political, economic, and security stability in Iraq.”⁸² The report also describes a “strategic logistics task force” created by the U.S. and Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) “to hasten the implementation and integration of a comprehensive strategy [that includes] strategic logistics plans and doctrine supported by a requirements-based acquisition strategy, capable procurement specialists, and logistics managers.”⁸³ The report also notes that the ISF can feed its soldiers and fuel its vehicles and generators, but lacks “an effective mechanism to program sustainment costs for major equipment purchases” at the ministry level.⁸⁴

The Center for Army Lessons Learned published a handbook in 2009 that said “the absence of a senior [logistics] commander at the force level, and an operational sustainment commander partnered only at the operational level” to synchronize efforts are among “the biggest challenges facing the development of host nation logistics in Iraq,” which include “an inability to influence at the ministerial level [and] a lack of general officers with a sustainment background.”⁸⁵ The June 2010 report to Congress on Iraq mentions efforts and initiatives conducted by and with the Iraqi Joint Forces Command’s Deputy Chief of Staff for Logistics (DCoS Log), a three-star general officer, but is mute on the issue of senior level logistics commanders.

⁸² U.S. Department of Defense, “Measuring Stability and Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq,” June 2010, Report to Congress In accordance with the Department of Defense Supplemental Appropriations Act 2008 (Section 9204, Public Law 110-252), iii. This report, which was signed by the Secretary of Defense on 20 August 2010, is the twentieth in a series of quarterly reports.

⁸³ Ibid., 69.

⁸⁴ Ibid. The report goes on to say that this programming function is a capability that is “critical for successful transition to full self-sufficiency.” This may be partly true, but also somewhat shortsighted given myriad of other programming, planning, and budgeting tasks typically performed by a governmental level department.

⁸⁵ Center for Army Lessons Learned, *Handbook No. 10-08, Partnership: Development of Logistics Capabilities* (Combined Arms Center (CAC): Ft. Leavenworth, KS, 2009), 17.

For both Afghanistan and Iraq, “it could be argued that coalition assistance enabled reliance instead of self-reliance,”⁸⁶ whereas the collapse of South Vietnam following the American pullout in 1973 provides some similarities but no clear congruence in terms of SFA logistics. Lieutenant General Joseph M. Heiser, Jr., recognized the need to prepare “our Vietnamese counterparts to manage their logistic support,” recommending what he called “the Buddy project,” a program that “provided for American troops to work alongside [Army of the Republic of Vietnam or ARVN] troops in counterpart missions that we then knew would be taken over by the South Vietnamese when we were sent home.”⁸⁷ Unfortunately a “lack of cooperation within the [Military Assistance Command, Vietnam or MACV] staff” derailed the program in the end, which had been approved by the MACV commander, General Creighton Abrams.⁸⁸ Abrams, who assumed command of MACV in 1968, was ultimately responsible for implementing Vietnamization, a program ushered in with the election of President Richard Nixon that same year.

Vietnamization “included three inseparable and interdependent military elements: the Improvement and Modernization Program (IMP) for [Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces or RVNAF]; pacification; and continuing U.S. combat operations,” but the Secretary of Defense’s direction to MACV was “to shift the war gradually to the South Vietnamese forces.”⁸⁹ Phase I of Vietnamization accelerated the U.S. efforts to “provide air, naval, and logistical support for Vietnamese forces.”⁹⁰ Initially most Vietnamese requirements “were met from existing stocks in Vietnam,” which were later expanded by the “formal Vietnamization Logistics Program begun in

⁸⁶ *Handbook No. 10-08, Partnership: Development of Logistics Capabilities*, 21.

⁸⁷ Joseph M. Heiser, Jr. *A Soldier Supporting Soldiers* (Washington, D.C.: Center of Military History, United States Army, 1991), 161.

⁸⁸ Heiser, 162.

⁸⁹ William Mott, *Military Assistance: An Operational Perspective* (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 1999), 210.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

July 1971.”⁹¹ The South Vietnamese, who “felt that Vietnamization did not signal an end to their need for U.S. military assistance and economic aid,”⁹² eventually fell to the North Vietnamese Army by the April 1975, not a year after Congress cut financial aid by 30 percent.

Equipping

After the French departed and just before President Lyndon Johnson’s resolution in 1963 to enlarge U.S. operations in Vietnam, “a little known program sponsored by the U.S. Department of State called the Michigan State University Vietnam Advisory Group (also as known as the Michigan State University Group or MSUG) provided technical assistance to the government of South Vietnam.”⁹³ Under three different contract periods from 1955 to 1962, the group trained and advised “Vietnamese personnel in public administration, police administration, and economics.”⁹⁴ The MSUG was “deeply involved in equipping the police and security services” providing major items from American stocks (originally provided to the French Expeditionary Corps), which included “revolvers, riot guns, ammunition, tear gas, jeeps and other vehicles, handcuffs, office equipment, traffic lights, and communications equipment.”⁹⁵

The U.S. Army also worked hard to arm the ARVN with modern weapons and equipment, while also trying “to inculcate the ARVN with the American-style technology-driven big-army logistics methods required to sustain such materiel.”⁹⁶ The United States’ security force assistance logistics program in the Republic of South Vietnam involved selling or giving “its ally

⁹¹ Ibid., 212.

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Robert Scigliano and Fox, Guy H., *Technical Assistance in Vietnam: The Michigan State University Experience* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, Inc., 1965), 4-12.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Scigliano, 15-16.

⁹⁶ Marian E. Vlasak, “The Paradox of Logistics in Insurgencies and Counterinsurgencies,” *Military Review* (Jan/Feb2007, Vol. 87 Issue 1), 93.

millions of dollars of materiel” and sending “hundreds of South Vietnamese to school to learn how to maintain it.”⁹⁷ The U.S. effort to modernize the ARVN, “particularly during the last phases of the war” was apparently executed with an “incomplete consideration...to the logistic suitability and the long-term sustainability of such high-tech, logistics-intensive equipment, given the cultural and economic liabilities endemic to South Vietnamese society at the time and the inevitability of a comprehensive American pullout.”⁹⁸ In contrast, the North Vietnamese army’s measured adoption of contemporary logistics methods and equipment “was more enduring because it was accomplished at a pace sustainable by the North Vietnamese themselves and was not overly reliant upon the overwhelming beneficence of any one foreign national benefactor.”⁹⁹

General William Westmoreland, the MACV commander who preceded Abrams and Vietnamization, tended to “kept South Vietnamese requirements at the bottom of his shopping list” despite the Saigon government’s eagerness “to obtain more modern military equipment.”¹⁰⁰ Westmoreland felt that “more sophisticated materiel would only strain” the South Vietnamese military’s “already weak logistical system and stretch the pool of skilled manpower even thinner.”¹⁰¹ One exception was the introduction of the M16 automatic rifle, which was adopted to increase the “firepower of the average South Vietnamese infantryman without presenting any complex training or supply problems.”¹⁰²

The United States has also fielded the M16 to the Afghan National Army (ANA) along with the M-9 pistols, both NATO-standard weapons. With an equipping strategy that is primarily “focused on providing critical ‘move, shoot, and communicate’ assets to meet accelerated unit

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ Jeffrey J. Clark, *Advice and Support: The Final Years, 1965-1973* (Washington, D.C.: Center of Military History United States Army, 1988), 166.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Ibid.

fielding” to some 171,600 personnel by October 2011, the ANA has been able to field units with “almost all of their needed equipment” except for some shortages in communications equipment and crew-served weapons.¹⁰³ In addition, the U.S. has fielded the M1151 and M1152 up-armored high mobility multipurpose wheeled vehicle (HMMWV) variants to the ANA since August 2008. By March 2010, the U.S. has delivered 2,914 of these vehicles with “5,407 scheduled through October 2010.”¹⁰⁴

Impressive as this push to provide the ANA with weapons and equipment may sound, one observer notes that:

The equipping function must come with integrated logistics support as a turnkey service if the U.S. is providing a line of equipment. The Afghans can build a system for themselves after they have experience running one but are clueless about what it takes until the effectiveness is shown, and our fits and starts as folks rotate in and out with each new designer having his own ‘good ideas’ certainly does not sell them on effectiveness.¹⁰⁵

In a similar vein, coalition forces became aware of the Government of Iraq’s desire to invest \$11 billion in new equipment in July 2008 despite lacking the force structure to “sustain all of its security forces.”¹⁰⁶ An anecdote told at a sustainment symposium a couple months later reinforced this assessment. Apparently, an Iraqi lieutenant general traveled to another country to buy 1,000 armored vehicles. Allotted only enough funds to purchase the vehicles and spare parts,

¹⁰³ U.S. Department of Defense. “Report on Progress Toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan and United States Plan for Sustaining the Afghanistan National Security Forces.” (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2010), 109

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Richard Bennett, comment on “Security Force Assistance – Feedback Wanted,” The Sustain Warfighters’ Forum, comment posted 12 August 2010, <https://forums.bcks.army.mil/CommunityBrowser.aspx?id=1138266&lang=en-US> (accessed 12 August 2010). Integrated logistics support or ILS is essentially the management of a particular product (weapon system, vehicle, radio, etc.) throughout its lifecycle – from conception to product retirement. Bennett’s observation about ILS is a subtle reminder that equipment fielding is incomplete with considering the long-term issues of maintenance, spare parts, upgrades, facilities, technical manuals, and training.

¹⁰⁶ *Handbook No. 10-08, Partnership: Development of Logistics Capabilities*, 4.

he was given the option of buying 2,000 vehicles without the parts. When the general returned to Iraq with the 2,000 vehicles, he was praised for his efforts.¹⁰⁷

Training

Under the “Buddy project” initiated by 1st Logistical Command, U.S. troops were assigned to work alongside ARVN ammunition troops in ammunition supply points and depots. The plan was to follow the same pattern with maintenance units and eventually “all other combat service support units,” but little progress was made because “there were those at MACV who felt that 1st Logistical Command was attempting to take over MACV’s responsibilities for the supervision of the advisory program.”¹⁰⁸

Similarly in Afghanistan, unclear “official logistics doctrine, policies, and procedures” have contributed to “produce non-standard training” resulting in SFA logistics trainers who, lacking clear guidance, have instead used “contractor-produced documents” as “teaching guides without [the Ministry of Defense’s] sanction.”¹⁰⁹ One exception is the Joint Materiel Accountability Manual (JMAM), an official document that teaches Soviet-style logistics and conflicts with Afghan Ministry of Defense decrees.¹¹⁰ Policy gaps like this encourage mentors and trainers to default to “their service-related version of logistics [producing] non-standard training in the field.”¹¹¹

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 5.

¹⁰⁸ Heiser, 161.

¹⁰⁹ “Afghan National Security Forces Logistics Assessment,” 127-128.

¹¹⁰ Ibid. One such decree is MoD Decree 4.0, “Supported and Supporting Unit Supply Policy and Support Procedures,” 20 March 2005. Modeled after U.S. Army supply regulations and doctrine, the procedures described in this policy established a paper-based requisitioning system, which has been attributed to difficulties with higher-level logistics headquarters gaining visibility of field units’ on-hand and authorized inventory quantities.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

On 15 March 2005, the Iraqi Ministry of Defense established the Iraqi Army Service and Support Institution (IASSI) to provide “a range of courses to literate [Iraqi Army] service members...and the general command of the ISF.”¹¹² Designed to develop logistics support doctrine and deliver “quality, forward-thinking, and relevant training and knowledge and skills for soldiers, noncommissioned officers, and officers in combat service support disciplines” in the “maintenance, transportation and fuel, ammunition, food service, medical, and personnel” specialties, IASSI fell short of its intended mission.¹¹³ Given the opportunity to receive training from their coalition partners located with them at their home stations, Iraqi commanders often choose to keep their soldiers with their units.¹¹⁴

Supplying

From 1966 – 1968, U.S. forces increasingly shouldered the combat responsibilities against North Vietnam and the Viet Cong, which coincided with a decided shift in advisors’ duties. Duties that originally focused on just training and tactical advice soon evolved to combat support tasks like “developing supply and support programs.”¹¹⁵ During this time U.S. and South Vietnamese logisticians started making reforms such as the centralization of inventory lists, monthly reviews of supply stocks and equipment, the identification and redistribution of excess stocks the establishment of “minimum levels of stockage at each supply level.”¹¹⁶ Despite reforms like this, there were downsides. A significant one was a growing “reliance on U.S.

¹¹² *Handbook No. 10-08, Partnership: Development of Logistics Capabilities*, 7.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.* This was also due in part to peculiarities with the Iraqi budgeting system. Commanders received monies to feed and maintain their units based on head counts. When a soldier left for a school like IASSI, the commander received less money. Since some of this money went to buy fuel for generators and other collective expenses, Iraqi commanders had establish manpower thresholds or risk operational culmination.

¹¹⁵ Robert D. Ramsey III, *Advising Indigenous Forces: American Advisors in Korea, Vietnam, and El Salvador* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Combat Studies Institute Press, 2006), 35.

¹¹⁶ Clark, 164.

combat support assets” that worked to “establish the primacy of the advisor during combat operations [with] over-reliance on material assets as substitutes for initiative and prowess.”¹¹⁷

In spite of a directive instructing coalition units to cease support “unless the result of not supporting would result in critical mission failure at the national or operational level,” a similar reliance on the U.S. supply system developed in Iraq with incidents like the following in January 2009 all too commonplace:

A brigade support battalion field grade officer phoned the [Iraqi Security Forces support operations cell] and stated, ‘I have a battalion commander on my FOB [forward operating base], and he has a memo he signed authorizing the KBR [Kellogg, Brown, and Root] fuel point to issue fuel to the National Police...they can’t get fuel through their own channels and he states it would be easier to just issue them fuel from us.’¹¹⁸

The battalion commander in question felt empowered because he was also in charge of the FOB itself. But with “over 400 bases in Iraq and an order from the corps commander directing units to cease this support, it was evident that supply discipline would be a challenge” for Iraqi Security Forces and the SFA advisors who had difficulty resisting relatively easy access to coalition fuel and supplies.¹¹⁹

If the supply situation in Iraq was hindered by readily available coalition stocks and a less than responsive government bureaucracy, the situation in resource-poor Afghanistan had more cause for concern. As observed by one NATO rapporteur (and confirmed by the U.S. Defense Department Inspector General), “the ANSF logistics systems are too small and inefficient to properly supply ANSF personnel” and despite coalition efforts over the last some nine years the

¹¹⁷ Ramsey, 55.

¹¹⁸ *Handbook No. 10-08, Partnership: Development of Logistics Capabilities*, 5-6. The Iraqi Security Forces support operations cell was an element of the Iraqi Assistance Group that merged with the Multi-National Corps–Iraq logistics staff to publish plans, policies, and procedures that met the strategic aims of the coalition forces, the national goals of the government of Iraq, and the joint campaign plan published by Multi-National Force–Iraq.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

ANSF suffers from a “lack of experience in logistics, corruption and illiteracy” work to impede the host nation’s security force supply system.¹²⁰ In response to concerns about the immaturity of the ANSF supply system and a growing dependence on coalition stocks, CSTC-A “established a five-person Internal Controls Unit with the objective to improve, optimize, and establish end-to-end transparency and visibility of the supply chain that provides materiel to the ANSF.”¹²¹

Manning

In 1966, the “shortage of skilled Vietnamese managers and technicians at all levels remained a long-term problem. Depots and smaller supply facilities were overloaded with work, short of personnel, and subject to pilferage and poor accounting.”¹²² By 1967–68, new support units “promised only to complicate the existing system,” but as long as combat units remained stationary the South Vietnamese were satisfied with their “jerry-built system.”¹²³

Similarly, Afghan forces have a lot of foot soldiers but lack the types of technical personnel and units “that make an army self-sufficient: logistics units to transport supplies, artillery units to fire big guns or helicopters for air support.”¹²⁴ As it turns out, Afghan logistics personnel routinely fail to adequately fill out supply request forms or properly process forms for

¹²⁰ Frank Cook, “Afghanistan: Partnering with the Afghan National Security Forces,” NATO Parliamentary Assembly website, <http://www.nato-pa.int/default.asp?SHORTCUT=2084>, retrieved 13 October 2010.

¹²¹ U.S. Department of Defense, “Report on Progress Toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan and United States Plan for Sustaining the Afghanistan National Security Forces,” (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2010), 98.

¹²² Jeffrey J. Clark, 164.

¹²³ Jeffrey J. Clark, 164.

¹²⁴ Campbell Clark, “The Afghan army needs more than foot soldiers,” *The Globe and Mail*, 24 November 2010, <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/world/asia-pacific/the-afghan-army-needs-more-than-foot-soldiers/article1812689/> (accessed 30 November 2010).

incoming supplies because “many supply personnel are illiterate” and “do not understand how to properly fill out and process these forms.”¹²⁵

Another interesting aspect of ANA manning is their practice of “ethnic balancing,” which “has been a large part of the reason the ANA is as highly respected as it is among the people.”¹²⁶

In some cases, ethnic balancing “at the MOD level has become ossified” and certain positions have unofficially been “reserved for specific ethnic groups.”¹²⁷ Such is the case with the Logistics Command:

Thus, the first commander of the Logistics Command was a Tajik. Now, all the commanders must be Tajik. This is likely not how the original designers of the ethnic balancing process intended for it to work, but it is how the process is now being carried out. Personnel otherwise fully qualified for a particular position will still be denied the position because they are not of the “correct” ethnic origin, even when there is no one of the desired type who is capable of filling the position. One example of this is the command of the Central Workshop. The commander position is vacant, and the Deputy Commander is performing the job. He has been “acting commander” for two years, but he has not been put into the command position because of the barrier of ethnic origin.¹²⁸

Arming

Ordnance battalions in Vietnam provided “Technical Assistance Contact Teams” in an effort to ensure munitions support to combat arms units and also “advise and assist on maintenance, storage, and safety in” other areas.¹²⁹ The 184th Ordnance Battalion (Ammo) at Qui Nhon was a leader in this program, and other units of the 1st Logistical Command copied its assistance program. By mid-1969, this technical assistance program was extended to “the South

¹²⁵ Terrence K. Kelly and Ben D. Van Roo, “Afghan National Security Forces Logistics Recommendations,” August 2010, RAND National Defense Research Institute, 1.

¹²⁶ “Afghan National Security Forces Logistics Assessment,” 15.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹ Joseph M. Heiser, Jr., *Logistic Support* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1991) <http://www.history.army.mil/books/Vietnam/logistic/chapter4.htm> (accessed 6 December 2010).

Vietnamese Army and to Republic of Korea Forces Vietnam through the 1st Logistical Command's Project BUDDY.”¹³⁰

In Iraq, insurgent access to ammunition from the former regime was a persistent problem for coalition forces during OIF. Ammunition availability and accountability on the other hand – at least at the national level – was not a significant issue as reports were “a solid 100 percent over 8 months when the Bayji National Ammunition Depot (BNAD) was turned over to the IA as of October 1, 2008” although after the “BNAD was handed over; it became evident to the coalition that partnering was necessary for situational awareness.”¹³¹

Coalition advisors found that Afghan doctrine was “based on what they had learned from the Soviet Union,” and under “Soviet doctrine, staff officers did not prepare staff estimates and mission analyses; they merely executed the commander’s orders.”¹³² Conversely, “when the Afghans fought the Soviets, it was on the move, with supplies hidden in caches that were under the direct control of regional tribal leaders.”¹³³ Accordingly, ANA units were “extremely reluctant to cross-level or even report ammunition stocks to ANA units of differing regional or tribal affiliation.”¹³⁴

According to one CSTC-A logistics official, the “dangers surrounding old ammunition stockpiles and the challenges the NATO training mission faces in getting rid of them” were compounded by the approval required from the Afghan defense ministry and the Afghan

¹³⁰ Ibid.

¹³¹ “Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq,” December 2008, U.S. Department of Defense website, www.defense.gov/pubs/pdfs/9010_Report_to_Congress_Dec_08.pdf (accessed 1 December 2010).

¹³² Jason A. Crowe, “Building an Army for Afghanistan,” *Army Logistician*, March –April 2008, Volume 40, Issue 2, http://www.almc.army.mil/alog/issues/MarApr08/build_afghan_army.html (accessed 2 October 2010).

¹³³ Ibid.

¹³⁴ Ibid.

president despite having “identified 6,325 metric tons of unsafe and surplus ammunition.”¹³⁵

Reports of new ammunition stockpiles, “some nearly 40 years old, continue to come in,” but trying to influence defense ministry officials to destroy the old ammunition goes against the “cultural affinity toward hoarding,” which tends to override these suggestions.¹³⁶

Fixing

A lack of ARVN command interest in “field maintenance and depot accounting increased the strain on the logistical system,” which was also impacted by the “burgeoning size of the South Vietnamese, American, and allied combat forces all of which demanded an ever-growing volume of materiel funneled through a common logistical pipeline from the United States to Saigon.”¹³⁷ Just like it was with supplying function, “a considerable part of the burden fell to the American logistics advisors in the field” who “made less headway in the realm of maintenance” in part because South Vietnamese units in the field “rarely performed preventative maintenance due to a lack of training and command attention.”¹³⁸

A lack of command attention in Afghanistan could be attributed to serious problems at each level of maintenance (unit, support, and national) within the ANA. At the unit and support levels, maintenance is performed primarily by contractors because there are “no policies and procedures developed for performing maintenance, managing maintenance, or managing” motor pool operations.¹³⁹ This is compounded by limited training, availability of parts, and technical manuals in addition to problems with the “availability of electricity or power in shops.”¹⁴⁰

¹³⁵ Ian Graham, “Old Ammunition Poses Problem in Afghanistan,” 1 June 2010, U.S. Department of Defense website, <http://www.defense.gov/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=59410> (accessed 1 October 2010).

¹³⁶ Ibid.

¹³⁷ Clarke, 164-5.

¹³⁸ Clarke, 165.

¹³⁹ “Afghan National Security Forces Logistics Assessment,” 140.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

The Afghanistan national level maintenance facility – called the central workshop – is “plagued by a number of problems, which include lack of parts (including bench and shop stock), proper tools and test equipment to work on the NATO equipment” and a maintenance management system in which the “workshop’s mostly civilian workers are underutilized.”¹⁴¹ While most of these mechanics are experienced with Soviet weapons and equipment, “there is a distinct lack of experience with NATO equipment provided by donor nations” and “lacking the capacity and capability to work on NATO equipment is one reason for the central workshop’s underutilization.”¹⁴² The pervasiveness of commercial vehicles not suitable for depot-level maintenance, a general reluctance to send equipment to the facility over concerns of losing it, and the lack of a centralized management system add to the central workshop’s woes.¹⁴³

Moving

Unlike other elements of the South Vietnamese logistics system, their transportation service “functioned reasonably well,” moving 1,258,707 metric tons of cargo in 1965 and 1,574,083 in 1966.¹⁴⁴ However, this level of proficiency did not extend to operations at the Port of Saigon, which remained a “major physical bottleneck” due to a “lack of dock space, workers, cargo-handling equipment, trucks, barges, and depot storage.”¹⁴⁵

In contrast “the infrastructure and facilities available in Afghanistan are limited at best (Afghanistan has only 7,657 miles of paved roads) and the ANA logistics systems are still in a very early state of their development and not mature enough or in possession of enough resources

¹⁴¹ “Afghan National Security Forces Logistics Assessment,” 144.

¹⁴² Ibid. Workloads for facilities like the central workshop are typically managed by another agency, for example, a materiel management center. Without this type of “reparable management system” in place, “the central workshop will likely be underutilized.”

¹⁴³ Ibid.

¹⁴⁴ Clarke, 164.

¹⁴⁵ Clarke, 165.

to execute a distribution based logistics system.”¹⁴⁶ Additionally, the ANA has “no central movement agency or movement center tasked with the development and oversight of a theater distribution program, so there is little flexibility within the “continuum between supply-based and distribution-based logistics systems.”¹⁴⁷

At one point the Iraqi Army had “a lot of little units pushing supplies” around the country but no specific units “designed to push supplies from the port, to the location commands, to the depot for redistribution.”¹⁴⁸ Accordingly, the Ministry of Defense created the General Transportation Regiment (GTR) “to streamline and improve the efficiency of the supply chain to” the Iraqi Army building facilities for the GTR on Camp Taji, also the location of the Taji National Depot.¹⁴⁹

Assessing

FM 3-07.1, *Security Force Assistance*, lists several functions and requirements expected of military advisor team members. One of these is “assessing partner leaders, staff, and certain shortfalls” to their higher headquarters.¹⁵⁰ But in terms of assessment this is a very limited view. One former logistics advisor noted there are myriad of factors that come into play when making an assessment of FSFs:

1. We try to mold their doctrine from our own doctrine.
2. Logistics is “not cool,” hard to do, and often painful.

¹⁴⁶ “Afghan National Security Forces Logistics Assessment,” 149.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., 148.

¹⁴⁸ Multi-National Corps – Iraq Public Affairs Office, “General Transportation Regiment starts their engines,” 10 October 2008, <http://www.usf-iraq.com/news/press-releases/general-transportation-regiment-starts-their-engines> (accessed 15 September 2010).

¹⁴⁹ Ibid. Taji is the home of Iraq’s national supply (less fuel and ammunition) and maintenance depots.

¹⁵⁰ FM 3-07.1, 3-7.

3. Because of item 2, most non-logistics [personnel] prefer to let someone else do it, and many logisticians do not have the experience to properly teach FSF doctrine.
4. U.S. and coalition units often circumvent host nation systems and processes by providing supplies and support, undermining SFA logistics training.
5. The host nation's solutions may work very well for them, but failing to recognize this can lead to inaccurate assessments of the FSF.¹⁵¹

Another former Iraqi advisor echoed the first and last of these factors, observing that “U.S. Forces often assess the [foreign security force] based on how we assess U.S. units...leading to false positives in [our] assessments.”¹⁵² Further, she noted that there was a great deal of variance in how the military transition teams (belonging to Multi-National Corps – Iraq) were doing their assessments and how the Multi-National Security Transition Command – Iraq conducted theirs.¹⁵³

Another perspective, which could be a corollary to the first factor, is that U.S. advisors and tended to view the Iraqi sustainment system through their own “lens” but not from the prospective of the Iraq’s regional competitors. Instead of comparing Iraqi Security Forces to those of the Syrians or Iranians, coalition advisors often made assessments using Western standards of military readiness instead of from a regional prospective, which “is the critical test when determining long term national security.”¹⁵⁴

¹⁵¹ Marc Jensen, comment on “Security Force Assistance – Follow-up Question on Assessments,” The Sustain Warfighters’ Forum, comment posted 14 December 2010, <https://forums.army.mil/secure/communitybrowser.aspx?id=1242133&lang=en-US> (accessed 15 December 2010).

¹⁵² Bridget Kroger, comment on “Security Force Assistance – Follow-up Question on Assessments,” The Sustain Warfighters’ Forum, comment posted 14 December 2010, <https://forums.army.mil/secure/communitybrowser.aspx?id=1242133&lang=en-US> (accessed 15 December 2010).

¹⁵³ Ibid.

¹⁵⁴ Lawrence Moreland, comment on “Security Force Assistance – Follow-up Question on Assessments,” The Sustain Warfighters’ Forum, comment posted 14 December 2010,

Lieutenant Colonel Keith Gudehus, a former advisor in Afghanistan, felt that “most assessments in 2008–2009 were based solely on a battalion's ability to execute combat tasks” and since “coalition forces were operating the warehouses, determining requirements, and providing the vast majority of logistics (and financial) support,” Afghan National Security Force capabilities were overstated “if one considered sustainment.”¹⁵⁵ Further, Gudehus strongly suggested that “at that time” the tendency “was to disregard sustainability and focus on [the FSF’s] ability to engage and destroy the enemy.”¹⁵⁶

Operation Enduring Freedom veteran, Major Jason Yanda, observed that there was “a natural rhythm” in assessments “based on the advisor rotations.”

A new team will (intentionally or unintentionally) assess low, because they are subconsciously using U.S. standards, so they have room for improvement [and] because they lack complete understanding. By the end of a tour, they will assess high, because they have a better appreciation...to show improvement. They are replaced by a new team, [that] assesses low and the cycle repeats.¹⁵⁷

According to one member of a combined Army Materiel Command and U.S. Army Central team that went to Afghanistan for eight weeks to evaluate Afghan National Security Forces logistics in 2009, the ratings were “definitely inflated despite the readiness data clearly signifying otherwise,” noting that “units with 25% fill of equipment, 75% manned, and a 15% [operational readiness] rate on critical items would be given the highest rating.”¹⁵⁸

<https://forums.army.mil/secure/communitybrowser.aspx?id=1242133&lang=en-US> (accessed 15 December 2010).

¹⁵⁵ Keith Gudehus, comment on “Security Force Assistance – Follow-up Question on Assessments,” The Sustain Warfighters’ Forum, comment posted 14 December 2010, <https://forums.army.mil/secure/communitybrowser.aspx?id=1242133&lang=en-US> (accessed 15 December 2010).

¹⁵⁶ Ibid. ” He added that this if this approach has changed it “would have certainly changed assessment criteria during” his time there.

¹⁵⁷ Jason Yanda, e-mail message to author, 14 December 2010.

¹⁵⁸ Raymond M. Longabaugh, e-mail message to author, 1 November 2010.

Two reasons identified for these skewed ratings, at least in Afghanistan, boiled down to familiarity and performance ratings. The first reason was simply the perception that the advisor had “gone native” and would then begin to inflate the ratings of his Afghani counterparts, equating tiny improvements with tremendous victories that would improve their ratings. Major Ray Longabaugh described a situation that demonstrates this tendency to overinflate ratings based on familiarity:

I remember visiting the Herat Corps Support Depot and the O-4 advisor (Air Force I think, most of them were) telling us how much this ANA commander had improved and how he had done this and called here and there to get some boots or something. All the while we were walking through his warehouse that was completely devoid of any important supplies or equipment. He had plenty of blankets and soap, though. Unbelievable.¹⁵⁹

The second reason, undoubtedly the more prevalent, was the association between the foreign security force’s performance and the advisor’s performance. Essentially, the perception is that advisors are loathe to say that a unit did not improve or got worse during their watch. This especially holds true for senior leadership. Whether this linkage between “ANA performance and advisor performance as a serious conflict of interest and a big problem” holds true for Iraq and its security forces is debatable. But dismissing these observations as isolated incidents spawned only under the conditions and leadership climate of Afghanistan might be wishful thinking or even irresponsible.¹⁶⁰

Lieutenant General (Ret.) Claude V. Christianson equates Longabaugh’s situation above as “symptomatic of the larger issue of how” the U.S. has “framed logistics, and logistics readiness

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

within the country we're trying to help.”¹⁶¹ The cultural issues the U.S. faces amount to the fallout of “not having a logistics framework around which everyone” can rally.

If we had come into either Iraq or Afghanistan with a logistics framework that had at its base the linkage between security requirements, military capabilities and logistics readiness, we would have a common lens against which to assess readiness. Absent that framework, we are left to the skills of the advisors (widely varied at best) and the pressures of the mission.¹⁶²

Another former advisor stresses that once cultural differences, which extend to views “on manual labor [and the] willingness to assign accountability,” are factored in a “vast majority of U.S. centric assessments of sustainability are fundamentally flawed.”¹⁶³ In a similar vein, Colonel Lawrence D. Moreland found a connection between equipment readiness and the Iraqi’s perception of the threat they faced.

What I found was that the U.S. assessment was extremely pessimistic with the Iraqi system. The Iraqis...will not invest in equipment readiness until they see a need to use the equipment [in combat]. Their sense of requirement is driven by perceived threat, [and] at this time they saw no such threat [since] we provided for their security.¹⁶⁴

Captain Jorge Aponte was more sanguine in his overall assessment of the 9th Mechanized Iraqi Army Division after overcoming his first impressions of the unit. After attending the unit’s operational readiness assessment (ORA) briefing, he initially determined that the unit was not nearly ready to attain the highest rating ORA rating as was briefed. After looking

¹⁶¹ Lieutenant General (Ret.) Claude V. Christianson, e-mail message to author, 14 December 2010.

¹⁶² Ibid. The general explained that the performance of the support depot “has to be assessed in some context other than the experienced view of MAJ Longabaugh.... There could be a series of questions posed to help understand the depot and its place in the Afghan Army logistics network...this is a supremely important issue. In fact, I could make a case that within the U.S. – at the strategic level – we’re still struggling with figuring out how to accurately and honestly assess readiness.”

¹⁶³ Tyler Stewart, comment on “Security Force Assistance – Follow-up Question on Assessments,” The Sustain Warfighters’ Forum, comment posted 14 December 2010, <https://forums.army.mil/secure/communitybrowser.aspx?id=1242133&lang=en-US> (accessed 15 December 2010).

¹⁶⁴ Lawrence D. Moreland, e-mail message to author, 14 December 2010.

at the unit's motor pool and other support facilities, Aponte's assessment remained pessimistic until he had come to understand how capable they actually were.

You quickly assess that a significant amount of advising / work had to be done, and [tell] your counterparts...[your] job is to assist...the IA to become self-reliant and capable of conducting independent logistics operations with little or no coalition oversight.... We [later came to realize that] our counterparts are more capable than we think they are.¹⁶⁵

Lieutenant Colonel James Skrabacz pointed out that the “important thing with assessments is not the bubble charts – but the basic narrative that goes with each.”¹⁶⁶ Gudehus agreed explaining that while “familiarity and the need to show improvement definitely skewed assessments” there is a “difference between rating somebody on an absolute scale versus a relative scale.”

The offices I worked with in Afghanistan showed enormous improvement on a relative scale (i.e., where they finished the year versus where they were when I got there). On an absolute scale, however, they would still be fairly abysmal when compared to OUR capability in managing pay, planning, programming, budgeting, and execution. I...was far more likely to view things through the relative scale because I was familiar with their operations.... We learned quickly that although the assessment criteria were absolute, we should set REALISTIC (arguably "low") goals that were achievable within the next year.¹⁶⁷

Gudehus emphasized that while “some of the absolute goals set by advisors prior to me were completely unrealistic in a country where literacy is only at 30% and electricity remains a luxury in most places,” advisors became “very attuned to the impossible task of trying to make the Afghans look like us.”¹⁶⁸ He surmised that one “would find that initial assessments of the Afghans by a new mentor / advisor always tended to be very low” but “magically...seemed to

¹⁶⁵ Jorge Aponte, comment on “Security Force Assistance – Follow-up Question on Assessments,” The Sustain Warfighters’ Forum, comment posted 14 December 2010, <https://forums.army.mil/secure/communitybrowser.aspx?id=1242133&lang=en-US> (accessed 15 December 2010).

¹⁶⁶ James Skrabacz, e-mail message to author, 29 December 2010.

¹⁶⁷ Keith L. Gudehus, e-mail message to author, 14 December 2010.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid.

improve throughout the year” and questioned whether there was true “improvement on the part of the Afghans or if the advisor's evaluation criteria relaxed as he became more familiar with the intricacies of their systems, culture, and environment.”¹⁶⁹

Conclusion

In a lecture to SAMS students and faculty at Fort Leavenworth, Dr. Everett C. Dolman, Professor of Comparative Military Studies at the U.S. Air Force’s School of Advanced Air and Space Studies, observed that we (presumably the entire defense community) tend to be “poor strategists, because we are such great logisticians.”¹⁷⁰ While security force assistance is essentially a tactical function with strong strategic implications, one has to wonder how a force so well equipped and maintained could possibly struggle with duplicating a similar capacity within a foreign security force. How could the U.S. possibly fail to export self-reliance to other, less developed nations given its great materiel advantages?

The forces of South Vietnam were not self-reliant. The security forces of Malaya endured after the British left and Malaysia gained her independence in 1957. Both nations faced existential threats, but there is a key difference in the development of their security forces. As suggested earlier, part of the reason Malaysia succeeded where South Vietnam fell had to do with its ability to sustain its security forces. Despite a steady influx of Chinese and Soviet materiel, the North Vietnamese Army “completed its modernization and logistics transformation” in its own time and manner “and was ready for the final push into Saigon, [while] the ARVN was increasingly forced to sustain new high-tech equipment by itself.”¹⁷¹

¹⁶⁹ Ibid. The author also observed that while “going native” has a negative connotation, “it can be viewed in a positive light as someone who becomes a true student of the culture and the host nation systems.”

¹⁷⁰ Everett C. Dolman, Lecture at the U.S. Army School of Advanced Military Studies, Fort Leavenworth, KS. 22 October 2010.

¹⁷¹ Vlasak, 93-94.

In an unclassified video teleconference with the students and faculty of the U.S. Army's School of Advanced Military Studies, Lieutenant General David M. Rodriguez, Commander, International Security Assistance Force Joint Command & Deputy Commander, United States Forces – Afghanistan, said frankly that “logistics is going to take a long time to build...we are playing catch-up [and] not doing as well as we should.”¹⁷² He explained that this was due in no small part to the recent surge of forces in Afghanistan, which took priority over building a partnership capacity.¹⁷³

Rodriguez's counterpart, Lieutenant General William B Caldwell IV, commanding General of the NATO Training Mission-Afghanistan in Kabul, explained in an article posted to the online journal, *Defence Management*, that an “emphasis on quantity” was necessary until sufficient strength could be built up within the Afghan National Army and Afghan National Police.¹⁷⁴ However, Caldwell continued, the enduring “success of a professional and self-sustaining force lies in the quality of its facilities, leaders, institutions, enablers and systems.”¹⁷⁵ Key enablers like “acquisitions, logistics, ... and maintenance must be created to support the ministries and fielded forces.”¹⁷⁶

According to FM 3-07.1, “once elements of [the foreign security force] are trained, the focus shifts from organizing, training, equipping, and rebuilding to employing the foreign security force.”¹⁷⁷ Of course, this manual was written long after the Vietnam War ended, but the lessons from that conflict and those emerging from Iraq and Afghanistan are clear: whatever

¹⁷² Lieutenant General David M. Rodriguez, video teleconference with the U.S. Army School of Advanced Military Studies, Fort Leavenworth, KS. 15 November 2010.

¹⁷³ Ibid.

¹⁷⁴ Lieutenant General William B Caldwell IV, “Afghanistan: Training for the transition,” *Defence Management*, posted 08 November 2010, http://www.defencemanagement.com/feature_story.asp?id=15229 (accessed 30 November 2010).

¹⁷⁵ Ibid.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷⁷ FM 3-07.1, 2-11.

system is put into place to sustain a nation's security forces must reflect the capabilities of the host nation and not those of assisting nation.

Training FSF sustainment personnel on basic logistics skills and teaching them to work as teams is no less important than the focus placed on imparting more generic military skills like first aid, marksmanship, land navigation, and fire discipline. Just as combat leaders should receive training in tactics, patrolling, urban operations, and legal evidence collection,¹⁷⁸ senior FSF logisticians should be taught about the fundamentals of supply, maintenance, and distribution management – competencies that are equally important if the FSF is expected to be self-reliant.

However, there is a substantial difference between imparting fundamentals and trying to reimage the FSF sustainment system into one like our own. This is where Lieutenant General Christianson's guidance on framing is particularly relevant. Creating a logistics framework designed to foster self-reliance within a particular nation starts with envisioning a foundation that reflects the linkage between the nation's security requirements, its military capabilities, and required level of logistics readiness. Doing this will result in a common lens against which SFA logistics advisors can assess readiness. Such a lens would show how the host nation views its security forces and their sustainment system – not our own.

¹⁷⁸ FM 3-07.1, 2-6.

Appendix: Other Nations and Security Force Assistance Logistics

Donald Stoker, professor of strategy and policy for the U.S. Naval War College's Monterey Program, wrote "nations seeking to develop and improve their military forces have often sought the advice of foreigners."¹⁷⁹ As mentioned earlier, the United States in its infancy sought the advice of individuals like Baron von Steuben and assistance from other nations (France, Spain, and the Dutch Republic) while seeking to develop and improve its fledgling military forces. In this section, British, French, and Soviet (Russian) approaches to SFA logistics are highlighted. While not in any while a comprehensive examination of their efforts to advise and assist other nations with building logistics capability, capacity, and infrastructure, this appendix serves to provide material with which to identify similarities or differences to U.S. efforts past and present.

British Security Force Assistance Logistics

Britain has conducted more "counterinsurgencies and for longer periods of time than" the United States and Russia (both Imperial and Soviet) "primarily due to her preeminence as the imperial power."¹⁸⁰ Colonel Sir Charles Callwell's 1896 work, *Small Wars: Their Principles and Practice*, deals with tactics, techniques and procedures, but also mention the "effect of logistics on the conduct of planning."¹⁸¹ In the cases described below, sometimes efforts to conduct security force assistance logistics for a legitimate authority must be interpreted to mean the colonial authority exercised by the British government. In any event, what is useful here is not the question of legitimacy but rather the techniques used to build capability, capacity, and infrastructure.

¹⁷⁹ Stoker, Foreword.

¹⁸⁰ Miller, 19.

¹⁸¹ Miller, 19.

In the Second Boer War (1899-1902), the British armed native African troops and took them into their ranks. In 1901 Lord Horatio Herbert Kitchener incorporated these “armed native troops” into “scouting missions for his flying columns” and also used them to man “security positions at the blockhouses.”¹⁸² This action, which was not unprecedented in other military campaigns in Africa, was largely ignored by historians until the end of the 20th century due to a belief in some “tacit agreement” that was supposedly made between “Boer and Briton at the beginning of the conflict to confine black South Africans to non-combatant roles in the war and that both sides observed this right to the end.”¹⁸³

Armed Africans, viewed by the British as a “cheap source of manpower that helped defray mounting war costs,” were used on both sides during the war despite the great fears the heavily outnumbered Boers had arming Africans.¹⁸⁴ Over “100,000 black South Africans...were employed by the British as scouts, spies, guards, servants and couriers” while some 10,000-30,000 blacks were “fighting with the British army as armed combatants by the end of the war.”¹⁸⁵

In contrast to the successful conduct of operations in Malaya, the British withdrawal from Aden (1963–67) was an utter failure. At the onset of a wave of pan-Arab nationalism led by rival insurgent groups, the British agreed to “intervene in support of the federal government, but [later] decided to provide and train the military on additional equipment” that consisted of “a squadron of Hawker Hunters (fighter and ground attack aircraft) with extra training aircraft, more 25-

¹⁸² Michael Lackman, “British Boer War and the French Algerian conflict: counterinsurgency for today,” (monograph, Fort Leavenworth, KS: US Army Command and General Staff College, 2006), 57.

¹⁸³ Bruce Vandervort, *Wars of Imperial Conquest in Africa, 1830–1914* (London : UCL Press, 1998), 188.

¹⁸⁴ Lackman, 57.

¹⁸⁵ Vandervort, 188.

pounder guns, armored cars and automatic rifles” with the aid of a military training team.¹⁸⁶

While the British military “failed to fight the insurgency effectively, or to train [host nation security forces] to do so,” in the end both forces were “built and trained to fight conventional forces, not guerillas.”¹⁸⁷

French Security Force Assistance Logistics

Aside their involvement with the American Revolution, later French attempts at conducting security force assistance logistics can be traced to the collapse of the French Empire. Following Napoleon’s fall in 1815, a number of newly self-governing nations initiated efforts to build their military forces. One of these states, Egypt, sought “the institutionalization of military experience gained during the Napoleonic Wars and began hiring French veterans.”¹⁸⁸ Egyptian ruler, Mehmet Ali, wanted to construct a modern military force “along western lines, so the Egyptians sought formal, official advice; the result: a French military mission.”¹⁸⁹ General Pierre Boyer and fourteen French officers arrived in 1824 with the mission to complete the transformation of the Egyptian army (the Nizam) into one “organized, equipped, and drilled *à la française*.”¹⁹⁰ Also contributing to the Nizam’s transformation was a French doctor, Antoine Barthélémy Clot, who helped organize the Egyptian medical and veterinary services along with “Cairo’s famous Qasr al-Aini hospital and Abu Za’bal medical school.”¹⁹¹

¹⁸⁶ Brian S. Olson. “Withdrawal from Empire: Britain’s Decolonization of Egypt, Aden, and Kenya in the Mid-Twentieth Century” (Fort Leavenworth, KS: US Army Command & General Staff College, 2008), 35-36.

¹⁸⁷ Olson, 39.

¹⁸⁸ Stoker, 2.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid.

¹⁹⁰ J.P. Dunn, “Missions or mercenaries?,” in *Military Advising and Assistance*, ed. Donald Stoker, (New York: Routledge, 2008), 16.

¹⁹¹ Dunn, 19.

French assistance later extended across the globe once again in the 1840s to Chile. The Chilean government “purchased its uniforms, Minié rifles, and other weapons, including heavy coastal artillery, from France” along with the services of French artillery experts to “insure that these large, expensive guns functioned properly.”¹⁹² Like the British, though, much of France’s involvement in security force assistance logistics resulted from the management (or mismanagement) of its colonial possessions. Dealing with discontented native peoples gave the French counterinsurgency experience that clearly rivaled the British as well.

More recent French counterinsurgency efforts “primarily in North Africa and Indochina” have credited them “with the formulation and articulation of pacification as a COIN strategy.”¹⁹³ Pacification, the “act of forcibly suppressing or eliminating a population considered to be hostile,” figures later into American policy during the Vietnam War.¹⁹⁴ Attributed to Joseph-Simon Galliéni, “who developed and implemented the *taiche d’huile* (oil stain) method, now referred to as pacification,” served in Tonkin in the early 1890s.¹⁹⁵ By training and arming a mixture of white and native troops, the French ultimately prevailed tactically – but not strategically.

Considered one of the architects of *guerre révolutionnaire*, Colonel Roger Trinquier described his views in *La Guerre Moderne (Modern War)*, published in 1961. At the conceptual level, “*guerre révolutionnaire* was the articulation of the perceived ongoing and continuous death struggle between free society and monolithic communism, [but] its focus was on the ends and not the means, in practice disregarding the rule of law and restricting civil liberties, to include sanctioned torture” ultimately led to its refutation by democratic society in spite of its tactical

¹⁹² W.F. Sater, “The impact of foreign advisors on Chile’s armed forces, 1810-2005,” in *Military Advising and Assistance*, ed. Donald Stoker, (New York: Routledge, 2008), 29.

¹⁹³ Miller, 20.

¹⁹⁴ “Pacification,” Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary, (www.merriam-webster.com, 2010), accessed 16 November 2010.

¹⁹⁵ Miller, 20.

effectiveness.¹⁹⁶ Trinquier's work came out of his experiences in Vietnam and the "long and bloody campaign... France carried out a to suppress a nationalist insurgency in Algeria" from 1954 to 1962, a shining paradigm of "winning the military victory and losing the war."¹⁹⁷

However, from a security force logistics perspective the French training and equipping of the harkis, a native force, during the Algerian War was a great success. The harkis brought "their language skills" and a degree a legitimacy (they were Algerian) to French counterinsurgency efforts although later "problems with desertions in the harki units...often received" bad press.¹⁹⁸

Soviet (Russian) Security Force Assistance Logistics

The former Soviet Union had a long and noteworthy history of counterinsurgency and military assistance. Mikhail Tukhachevsky, "father of Soviet counterinsurgency" was also one of the formulators of Soviet operational and mechanized warfare doctrine with "extensive COIN experience during the Russian civil war and against the Basmachis in Central Asia."¹⁹⁹

Tukhachevsky published an article in *Voina I Revoliustiia* (War and Revolution) called "Borba s Konterrevoliutsionnim Vosstaniam" (Struggle with counterrevolutionary uprisings) in 1926, wherein he "provided a conceptual basis for Soviet COIN doctrine" expressing a mature understanding of political and cultural factors in COIN, as well as the use of the full range of military, political and economic measures in response."²⁰⁰

Decades later, some of these military and economic responses were manifest in the more than \$25 billion worth of weaponry and military equipment shipped by the Soviet Union in the

¹⁹⁶ Miller, 21.

¹⁹⁷ James S. Corum, *Bad Strategies: How Major Powers Fail in Counterinsurgency* (Minneapolis, MN: Zenith Press), 31.

¹⁹⁸ Gregory D. Peterson, "The French Experience in Algeria, 1954-1962: Blueprint for U.S. Operations in Iraq" (Monograph, Fort Leavenworth, KS, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, 2004), 33.

¹⁹⁹ Miller, 23-24.

²⁰⁰ Miller, 23-24.

Middle East, North Africa, South Asia, Sub-Saharan Africa, East Asia, and Latin America – all developing countries outside the communist bloc – from 1956-1978.²⁰¹ In the ten years that followed “Moscow exported weaponry worth some \$147 billion” and also trained an estimated 43,790 military personnel in the Soviet Union.²⁰²

Military training and education in logistics and operations for recipient personnel was conducted at Soviet schools, which “usually preceded the delivery of weapons [with] continued training and advisory operations in the recipient country long after deliveries were completed.”²⁰³ William H. Mott IV describes aspects of Soviet-style security force assistance training and logistics program:

Military personnel assigned to a Soviet military mission attached to the local military organizations provided extensive training, logistic support, and operational guidance for recipient military forces to operate and maintain the weapon systems delivered to them...[supporting] the recipient military forces in four aspects: (1) delivery, assembly, and maintenance of weapons and equipment, (2) technical training of recipient crews, (3) tactical training of recipient commanders, and (4) Soviet support planning and executing operations.²⁰⁴

²⁰¹ William H. Mott IV, *Soviet Military Assistance: An Empirical Perspective* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2001), 52.

²⁰² Ibid.

²⁰³ Mott, 312.

²⁰⁴ Mott, 312.

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