



Newsletter

1st SECURITY FORCE ASSISTANCE
LESSONS LEARNED WORKSHOP
ESTABLISH THE NATO SFA LL COMMU-
NITIES OF INTEREST:
SUPPORT NATO'S HUMAN CAPITAL
EFFORTS IN THE FIELD OF SFA
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Report

Drafted by NATO SFA COE Lessons
Learned Branch

NATO SECURITY FORCE ASSISTANCE CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Preface

The 1st NATO SFA COE Lessons Learned Workshop took place on the 24th and 25th of September in Cesano di Roma, Italian Army Infantry School compound. It brought together key stakeholder experts from the Lessons Learned field to create and develop the NATO SFA LL Community of Interest, identify the needs of NATO Nations/Partners and International Organizations, regarding the implementation of SFA activities in operations.

The activity developed through different phases; starting from general overview on Security Force Assistance doctrine, presenting SFA crosscutting projects running by Departments in order to browse the venue for future collaborations, contextualizing the SFA implementation by case studies illustration and capitalizing the effort in the syndicates work.

This format had been met with many positive remarks and perceived as a fruitful and dynamic way to bring worthwhile suggestions to support a common design of SFA Operator Profile and enhancing NATO's Human Capital efforts in the SFA domain.

Case Studies

“The purpose of a Lessons Learned procedure is to learn efficiently from experience and to provide validated justifications for amending the existing way of doing things, in order to improve performance, both during the course of an operation and for subsequent operations. This requires lessons to be meaningful and for them to be brought to the attention of the appropriate authority able and responsible for dealing with them. It also requires the chain of command to have a clear understanding of how to prioritize lessons and how to staff them.” – AJP-3(B) Allied Joint Doctrine for the Conduct of Operations

In accordance with this principle, the presentation of the case studies contextualizes the implementation of SFA in the operational environment, setting the condition for productive open discussion and for the syndicates work as well. Each lecture focuses on different missions carried out by diverse organizations, pointing out gaps and challenges faced by Commanders and SFA operators.

The selected speakers underline the noteworthy aspects of European Training Mission Somalia, Operation Inherent Resolve – Iraq - and Resolute Support Mission – Afghanistan -, providing a comprehensive excursus on the SFA operations effort.

Somalia



EUTM Somalia Force Commander (2017-2018), provided his prospective on the SFA mission, in such a complicated environment.

“Somali case-study” triggered interesting questions and valuable insights, it brought out the following key points:

- The Somali Theatre of Operation is characterized by the presence of several actors committed to the Somali Defence Forces capacity building process. It deeply affects the implementation of strategic advising at the Institutional level, hampering the coordination between EUTM and its counterpart.
- Somali Defence Forces resistance to accept civilian oversight. Military leadership considers legal only the dependence from the President of the Republic, due to the assigned status during the Siad Barre Regime.
- The lack of retirement system causes a huge number of old officers in comparison with the junior officers. This generates a hard resistance to changes, so that the key positions covered by the old establishment are characterized by nepotism corruption. On the other hand, the emerging young officer class has a western education and is oriented to build up a new military organization.
- In accordance with its mandate, EUTM Somalia cannot equip Somali armed forces, and it undermines the credibility of the EU commitment considering the multiple presence of other donors in the Area. Subsequently the capability of the other international players to provide infrastructures, vehicles and military equipment jeopardizes the effectiveness of the Mission.

- The personnel preparation is heterogeneous due to the combined nature of the mission. It would be useful to improve the coordination between EU and NATO, in order to relay on NATO tailored pre-deployment training for the Advisors, as the Joint Training Centre Developed for RSM.

- The mission approach should be customized to the counterpart's culture and tradition. Trainers and Advisors should work following the Somali "rules" in order to achieve the shared goals. For this reason, the Somali Defence Forces capacity building project should take in consideration different factors and conditions. Firstly, the planning phases should be conditions based instead of time based, because the Somali mind-set is focused on "today" instead of "tomorrow". Consequently, the long-run plan may be misunderstood by the local security forces and probably ineffective. Furthermore, we cannot apply western methodologies to the counterpart, because the imposition of a "foreign" methodology might not succeed in a long-term campaign. On the contrary, the key point would be the creation of a shared doctrine, made up by merging the western and Somali systems.

- EUTM Somalia identified drafting infantry procedure publications as a best practice. Specifically, the Training Team adapted western\NATO doctrine to the Somali system, characterized by a former Warsaw Party setting and shortage of equipment and materials, in order to provide a valuable tool tailored to Somali Infantry Units requirements.

Iraq



Deputy Commander for Training (2017-2018), focused the attention on training Iraqi Defence Forces conceptualizing the main aspects concerning SFA implementation in such a complex environment. The General's experience highlighted multiple items, helpful in understanding the granularity of OIR in order to point out challenges and best practises sharable for other SFA operations.

Capacity building is not only a military effort but part of a wider approach which encompasses other agencies and ministerial bodies. Security Force Assistance provides a military contribution to Security Sector Reform and Stability & Reconstruction operations. For this reason, it must save its capability to interact with non-military entities in order to be effective.

The training delivery follows different lines of effort, engaging the local security forces at multiple levels through Institutional Training, Formal Training and Continuous Training. The first one seeks the preparation of the leadership and it focuses on the Academies, military schools and study centres, provided by military teachers and professors. Institutional Training aims to prepare the future military establishment, so it is a crucial activity with strategic effects. Formal training is the specialized preparation carried out by military instructors inside Centralized Training Facilities, its goal is to prepare the personnel employed in different Defence Forces branches. Continuous Training, enables local troops to conduct all range of operations, setting the conditions to maintain a tailored operational posture.

In addition, Mobile Training Teams (MTT) and Expeditionary Training Team (ETT) are the means used by the Coalition to pursue the lines of effort, namely the first deliver routinely training within the Joint Operational Area (JOA) and the second is employed on demand accordingly with the counterpart's requirement.

Training activity cannot be considered a stand-alone effort in the SFA domain. The preparation of Iraqi forces in terms of Training and Education delivery must be nested in a Defence Capacity Building concept. It is necessary to engage all defence structures in order to have effective training, establishing a liaison with all the offices/branches inside and outside the educational process. Practically the training must be supported by the advising activity in order to influence all the defence bodies, setting the conditions for a sustainable harmonization, between training authority and command authority.

Planning and conducting training activities must be on track with the operational and logistical tempo. The Joint Operation Centre Iraq (JOC-I) plays the remarkable role as a coordination tool, in assisting Iraqi forces to facilitate the training delivery made up by the OIR Mobile Training Team and Expeditionary Training Team. It enables Iraqi armed forces to receive appropriate training support, which meets the operational requirements, overtaking the Iraqi organizational system barriers.

The multinational nature of the operation (seventy-four countries) implies challenges and opportunities. The difficulty of coordination, due to multiple national caveats and regulations, affects the unique effort in supporting Iraqi Forces.

On the other hand, this kind of structure increases the training bid.

Each country can offer its expertise on a given topic, providing instructors supported by their organizations. The follow-on identifies an improvement of the national commitment, in support of the educational process for the single Iraqi student, who is, in many cases, rewarded by attending courses abroad.

The inter-ministerial approach is a key-factor to succeed in the capacity building process. The effective implementation of the Security Force Assistance passes through the involvement of associated ministries. The persistent issue of obtaining Visas from Host Nation, points out a serious coordination gap between the Iraqi Government and OIR. It affects the Coalition capacity to provide the requested training on time, the long and complex process often delays the arrival of the incoming personnel, so that the Expeditionary Training Team cannot be deployed and meet the local security forces requirements. The topic of "Protection of Civilians" and "Law of Armed Conflict" is crucial in Security Force Assistance operations. Training Iraqi Forces must clearly underline the importance of International law related items, in order to build up a credible and accountable "Military Tool". The Program of Instruction foresees lessons concerning the Protection of Civilian and Law of Armed Conflict, in order to create an organisational mind-set, oriented to the willing acceptance of international law. The Iraqi Armed Forces leadership plays a paramount role in this "game", the sensibilization of the commanders at all levels is indeed a priority. In accordance with this concern, vetting procedures are in place, especially for the Senior Officers, in order to assure an appropriate legal background for the military establishment.

The creation of Armed Forces legally accountable and aligned with international law is surely a long run process but must be completely integrated in the capacity building development.

RSM



The complex environment requires highly trained and skilled operators, who perform daily crucial tasks. It is possible to summarize the main duties related to the Advisor's responsibility:

- TAA ANDSF
- observe, evaluate and report on the performance of their assigned functional area;
- communicate within their chain of command, functional Subject Matter Experts, and ANDSF counterparts to resolve problems and gain confidence;
- create a professional relationship based on capability and trust that inspires and influences the counterparts to effective action;
- understand the processes and systems associated with their functional area as well as their location in the Advisor network.

Among the tasks of trainers and advisors there will also be the need to build a strong network of relationships with the Afghan counterpart in order to render collaborations more profitable and to better interact regarding the planning of joint activities.

Networking surely is one of the Adviser's mandatory task, because it represents the unique channel, to provide an effective assistance. The mission approach needs to be adaptive, starting from the planning of activities and the pursuit of achievable objectives (which may not even be in line with the initial objectives), coordinating the conduct training and advising operations with your own command line even in light of the changes that may occur.

The trainers and advisers employed will also have to possess strong social skills, relational and negotiation, having to be able to interface with an ethereal and varied spectrum of situations and staff belonging to the HN.

Conclusion

NATO SFA COE LL workshop was the opportunity to bring together all the personnel involved in the Security Force Assistance domain and the Lessons Learned process, addressing the crucial topic of the implementation of SFA in operations. It was the suitable venue to establish the NATO SFA LL network and originate the process for sharing Observations (OBs), Best Practices (BPs), Lessons Identified (LI) and Lessons Learned (LL) in SFA domain.

The attendees analysed the experiences shared in the case-study section, understanding the operational context from different prospective and in diverse Theatre of Operations. It shaped the conditions for the work in syndicates, that was the chance to actively interact and point out the initial considerations concerning training, education and selection of the SFA Operator.

Analysing the operational context and the paramount importance of the human dimension, it is possible catalyse the NATO and NATO partner effort on the preparation of the proper woman/man assigned to operate alongside Local Security Forces. It is a crucial concept, focused on quality instead of quantity, which identifies the human relation as a “manoeuvre pivot” to succeed in SFA operations.

“Quality for quantity” might be considered the decisive condition to face the complexity of this operational environment, which must be supported by selected and trained personnel.

The creation of a tailored selection and recruitment process, based on mind frame, behavioural traits and professional background, would be strongly recommended. NATO Combined Joint State of Requirement (CJSOR) refers to national responsibility,

for the selection of the personnel but should retain the possibility to select the job description for SFA operator-position.

Red flag procedures and fixed standards certainly encourage the force provider to align with adequate personnel standards in order to meet the operational requirements. We might also point out some rewarding outcomes, which could work as key milestones in a common roadmap to design the ideal SFA operators’ profile:

- set common standards and procedures in the recruitment, selection and training of all the SFA operators;
 - the importance of a comprehensive approach based on the area, where the SFA operator is deployed;
 - share operational experiences, in order to create a common background;
 - the importance of the cultural awareness, social aspect, political situations of the area where the advisors/mentors/trainers are going to perform his activities;
- SFA activities are of a different nature in different Area of Operations, but a lot of common grounds can be found and would remain tightly intertwined. SFA is becoming a fundamental part of modern conflict prevention campaigns, leading sometimes to mutual benefits and support.

In this context the NATO SFA COE could play a prominent role, by capitalizing the NATO double nature defining the “universal” SFA operator profile and preparation.



Group photo



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