



NATO
SECURITY FORCE ASSISTANCE
CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE



Newsletter Issue No.5 - December 2020

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Dear readers,

With great satisfaction I present to you the closing year newsletter n. 5/2020 of the NATO Security Force Assistance Centre of Excellence, which demonstrates the NATO SFA COE personnel's dedication and commitment.

The COVID-19 pandemic has been a significant challenge for all of us – both here at the NATO SFA COE and at home in our respective nations. Some of our core tasks planned for the 2020 have suffered. This includes our Training offer and the new pilot courses – as we could not conduct educational and training activities with a physical presence. Face-to-face engagements are particularly key in the realm of SFA - due to the unique nature of the work on training, advising and mentoring.

Nevertheless, we have made good progress on many virtual roundtables and we continue to adapt to the challenges posed by the pandemic. A brilliant example was the SFA OPERATOR COURSE conducted last November in a virtual mode after a quick amendment from a presence mode. Despite the difficult circumstances, we were honoured to have participants from the US, Hungary, Spain, Slovenia, the SEEBRIG Brigade, NRDC-ITA and Italian Universities, just to cite a few.

Furthermore, we dedicated a space to the entry into force of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW), within the broader framework of the debate on disarmament and the humanitarian consequences related to the usage of nuclear weapons. The article was edited by the LUISS student Susanna Capretti, Intern at NATO SFA COE who is collaborating on an editorial project aimed at analysing the current legal challenges in the defence and related security capacity-building sector in order to promote the internal stability of fragile states.

My wish is that this newsletter will be capable of engaging the SFA Community of Interest and beyond, thus becoming an inspiration for further external research. External researchers may, in turn, find a platform to share their new ideas or studies in our future newsletters or other projects.



An essential tool for sfa operators:
appropriate training equipment
and facilities for live training



From NATO's perspective, Security Force Assistance (SFA) "includes all NATO activities that develop and improve, or directly support, the development of local forces and their associated institutions in crisis zones" (AJP 3.16). Using military forces to conduct SFA might be considered as a way to build a partner's capacity, enabling it to shape capability and capacity in its own security sector. In this way, its government could guarantee safety and protection without external assistance.

Within this scope, SFA operators (trainers, mentors, advisors) conduct their activities – training, teaching, coaching, mentoring, etc. – to improve the partners' key skills and enhance their expertise in skillfully facing security-related challenges.

SFA Operators are usually organized in teams, deployed in remote locations worldwide to provide specific operational training.

For instance, within Resolute Support Mission, a NATO-led, non-combat mission to train, advise and assist the Afghan National Defence and Security Forces



Figure 1. <https://www.armytimes.com/news/your-army/2019/05/08/the-next-army-sfab-deployments-might-look-a-whole-lot-different-from-recent-ones/>



Figure 2.
<https://www.ladigetto.it/esteri/Afghanistan/21698-passi-avanti-delle-forze-afghane-addestrate-dai-nostri-militari.html>

(ANDSF), “Expeditionary Advisory Packages” have been created and used as advising packages. Resolute Support advisors develop education and training solutions to help the Afghan security forces strengthen their capacity to defend Afghanistan and protect its citizens in a sustainable manner.

In addition to technical skills and personal aptitude (soft skills), SFA operators also need suitable and appropriate tools to organize and conduct training activities for their partners. In most cases they are deployed in remote locations and far from their home base, making it hard to find appropriate training locations (e.g. training centres) and equipment. Therefore, they have to adapt the training programs and instructions with the counterpart’s infrastructures and materials (if any), running the risk of not achieving the desired outcomes.

Live training and simulation solutions, tactical and technological equipment – systems, weapons and ammunition - are subject to operational evolution: they

guarantee an effective and affordable training which is the key to successfully meeting needs and requirements. Several live training solutions exist that could be easily deployed or carried-out: those solutions are absolutely recommended for trainers working in SFA missions. Different packages are ready for various levels of complexity (Basic or Advanced Training) and easily available on the market. Capacity Building activities are part of more complex and well-structured Security Sector Reform programs in support of the Host Nations. Those activities usually result from international cooperation requests in which donor agencies or sponsoring organisations participate; most of these agencies could sponsor projects directly in the host countries and they may have funds budgeted for capacity building activities. Through donors and agencies, the Host Nations could easily supply training materials, equipment and also build training facilities where the related activities would be conducted.

It is important to understand that only support from SFA Operators may not be enough without the right material: the



Figure 3. PEZT Co.® - HDT LOGISTIC & MEDICAL SOLUTIONS PEZT Co.



Figure 4. PEZT Co.® - HDT LOGISTIC & MEDICAL SOLUTIONS PEZT Co.

human capital is fundamental of course, but it must be supported by equipment and facilities. Unfortunately, always more frequently, we are witnessing the supply of only basic materials with the donors' logos, which sometimes are misused or wasted.

We definitively have to focus on the existing and indissoluble nexus between SFA Operators and the related training materials and equipment. From theatre experiences and real-life observations, we have seen that materials and equipment should be tailored for the intended outcomes. Examples of such equipment are training wall systems, training marking ammunition and deployable rapid assembly shelters.

The Training Wall System allows for the creation of a real scale simulacrum of urban structures or houses, always different and wherever needed, This system is composed of pneumatic elements, which are inflated on site and assembled as per training needs. This system solves the problem of the host nation's lack of training infrastructures and allows SFA op-

erators to set up multiple scenarios for their training programs.

Training marking ammunition is designed to reduce health and safety hazards by eliminating exposure to lead and other heavy metals. The bullet disintegrates into powder upon impact with hard surfaces, virtually eliminating splash back and ricochets. Short Range Training Ammunition provides greater training flexibility and ensures limited personal risk (green on blue) for SFA operators working in close cooperation with their partners.

Deployable Rapid Assembly Shelters are a lightweight, man-portable, rugged solution, which permit mobile facilities to be established anywhere, quickly and efficiently. Applied as a stand-alone shelter or easily connectable to other ones, they can be set up within minutes of arriving at a location, without using special tools, using four to six people and can be taken down just as quickly.

In conclusion, live training solutions are crucial for SFA Operators to be able to effectively develop the partner's capacity and to accomplish the Security Force Assistance mission.



Figure 5. PEZT Co.® - HDT LOGISTIC & MEDICAL SOLUTIONS PEZT Co.

“Sometimes overcoming a challenge is as simple as changing the way you think about it.”



The COVID-19 pandemic had a swift and severe impact on our societies. It has probably had an especially significant impact on the fragile institutions and health systems of non-NATO countries, with serious consequences on their political and social stability. As a result, the protection of NATO forces in operation, as well as the preservation of critical national assets and supply chains, require more attention.

For these reasons the Security Force Assistance (SFA) approach has an important role in assisting the Host Nations' Governments and Local Forces in coping with the disease.

This article is designed to highlight the outcomes of an online event that focused on how to find ways to keep SFA activities “alive” and enhancing the host nation’s capability to provide an effective pandemic emergency response.

Despite the lack of a clear picture of what will eventually happen with the COVID-19 pandemic, the 1st virtual roundtable, organized by the NATO SFA COE Lessons Learned branch on the 8th of



July 2020, provided a unique opportunity to start learning, thinking and discussing how to better prepare, not only for current and future disease outbreaks, but also for various threats that may have a global impact. Nations can emerge stronger and more secure if they learn from the COVID-19 experience and that genuine safety and security are not possible without international cooperation and coordination.



Figure 6. Lessons Learned virtual Roundtable organized by NATO SFA COE
<https://www.nsfacoe.org/1st-lessons-learned-virtual-roundtable/>

The activity brought together the NATO SFA LL Community of Interest POCs from different NATO Nations and SFA units, such as: from the US (JICSFA, SFAC, MATA), from the UK (SIG), the Albanian GS, the Portuguese GS, the Dutch Royal Academy, the Italian Army GS, the Italian Joint operations HQ and the Italian SFA Section.

The event stimulated a fruitful open discussion in which the topic of remote SFA emerged as having a primary importance; remote SFA was identified as a game-changer during these harsh times.

Security Force Assistance includes all NATO activities that develop and improve, or directly support, the development of Local Forces and their associated Institutions in crisis zones. It is carried out in a non-linear framework or environment which

involves SFA planning, activities (GOTEAM - Generate, Organize, Train & Educate, Advise, Mentor), assessment and transition in order to make local forces competent, capable, sustainable, committed, confident and accountable. Remote SFA involves the implementation of the assistance by remote, with as light a footprint as possible and running the capacity building process from the home state. This complex concept is characterized by the SFA operator's central

role. The SFA operator is the main driver of the assistance and it encompasses the Training, Mentoring and Advising skills. The operator works through human relationships, interacting with the Local Forces System, using his/her own core competencies and specialist preparation in order to properly implement the GOTEAM activities.

Is this approach a tailored response to carry out Security Force Assistance during the current and future crisis?

The pandemic outbreak impeded almost

the totality of SFA activities due to the containment measures put in place to prevent the spreading of the virus. Also social distancing deeply affects the interaction between the SFA operator and the counterpart, hampering the establishment of proximity in the relationship. Therefore, the Operations are

literally frozen, showing a huge gap in conducting this kind of operations during worldwide health crises.

Remote SFA could be an option for unpredictable situations or an approach to mitigate any physical interruptions of the relationship between the operator and the counterpart. Furthermore, in normal longstanding SFA activities, the relationships are dismantled and rebuilt at every rotation. This constraint forces both the operator and partner to focus the pre-



Figure 7. https://www.army.mil/article/210110/staff_visits_as_a_tool_for_security_force_assistance

ponderance of their energies towards building trust, while developing a relationship that is more transactional in nature. Only through repeated interactions over a longer period can the SFA operator truly establish credibility and demonstrate the shared value.

Theoretically this approach appears a smart and revolutionary turning-point. On the other hand, it presents a challenging implementation and additional considerations.

I.T. Challenges

A technological support cannot be taken for granted, because general technological literacy and working

knowledge of specific platforms will require training for all users. This training focuses on the SFA operator, who should also teach its partner how to use systems at the other end. This could be challenging in less developed countries whose soldiers lack basic education, and in places where the communications infrastructure is inadequate. It is highly likely that an off-the-shelf product with minor revisions, combined with already ubiquitous cell phones, can support the necessary communication between the SFA operator and local forces. These issues could affect the SFA operator's ability to "reach the goal" by reducing activity between the two parties to a mere exchange of information.

KNOWLEDGE VS UNDERSTANDING

One might assume that the objective of



Figure 8. SFA Operators Course organized by NATO SFA COE <https://www.nsfacoe.org/nato-sfa-operators-pilot-course/>

saving resources and minimizing risks could mean that Remote SFA would be the best solution to conduct capacity building. However, we have to take into consideration that the purely theoretical model of an easy to run, “clean” and linear SFA environment, clashes with the complexity of the “terrain”. The counterpart’s understanding of the system is one of the Security Force Assistance principles and cannot be undermined by the distance barrier.

An actual situational awareness supports effective decision-making. Indeed, a proper understanding is the perception and interpretation of a particular situation provided by the context. These aspects should be studied and analysed beforehand, as part of a pre-deployment training package, which must be integrated with the first-hand engagement with the counterpart. Furthermore Subject Matter Experts (anthropologists or cultural specialists) should be integrated into the SFA team’s organization to avoid any cultural misunderstandings

and enabling SFA operators to properly approach the local culture (customs, traditions, beliefs) and Assisted Nation’s structures and internal processes as well.

SFA delivery in terms of training and education

The remote approach poses further barriers between the SFA operators and their counterparts, jeopardizing the quality of the training or teaching. Culture, language, and social diversity have already represented a persistent obstacle in the delivery of knowledge and information, subsequently the distance could remarkably amplify the communication gap.

In addition, the absence of a direct interaction leads the SFA operator to only focus on the assigned task, without putting in perspective the system overview. In practical terms, the trainer misses the complete situational awareness,

remaining uninformed of any kind of event or interaction that involves the target audience.

The SFA activities are not only the flow of information between two parts, but find their foundation in the Human Dimension with all its nuances and various connections. The underestimation of this con-



Figure 9. Virtual SFA Seminar at JFCBS by NATO SFA COE
<https://www.nsfacoe.org/virtual-security-force-assistance-seminar-at-jfcbs/>

cept deeply affects the activities' rate of effectiveness, hampering the achievement of the long-term objectives.

Comprehensive approach limitations

SFA must be planned, executed, and assessed in the context of NATO's contribution to a comprehensive approach (CA). A CA comprises the integrated activities of an appropriate range of civil and military actors to achieve common objectives. CA is enabled by the orchestration, coordination and de-confliction of NATO's military and political instruments, along with the other instruments of power. By performing SFA in a remote manner, it is difficult to enhance the CA through the coordination, engagement and de-confliction of all actors/players present in the HN.

Conclusions

Is remote SFA really the game-changer in the complex environment of assistance or only a purely theoretical exercise to fill a white sheet?

Security Force Assistance in remote posture offers copious talking points and interesting aspects that are worthy of further consideration.

We briefly listed some key points to frame a further analysis and debate. Clearly the preliminary assessment of pros and

cons appears negative due to the significant limitations of the remote approach. But if we amplify this concept by thinking out of the box, it is possible to glimpse some feasible implementations.

Remote SFA might be an effective instrument for the operators familiar with a given Theatre of Operation, who could consolidate and utilize the established relationship from a distance, setting the condition to "hold their ground".

On the other hand, Remote SFA should not be considered the only way to implement a capacity building process. The volume of information exchanges between the SFA operators and the Local Forces is vast and heterogeneous, implying the requirement for a harmonized communication system from both sides and a particular commitment of the counterpart to learn and operate with remote support.

The successful delivery of SFA requires trust between all parties involved and any interruption of relations may affect the success of the entire operation. All actors involved in SFA activities must behave in a credible, reliable, genuine manner and work to develop and maintain mutual trust. SFA Operators need to build the relationship with their local counterpart; for that, verbal, paraverbal and above all non-verbal communication is necessary. Non-verbal communication retains a paramount role in many cultures, which characterize the SFA operational environment.

In conclusion, pondering the big picture of the balance between limitations and benefits, the idea of remote SFA should be considered a support but not a replacement for traditional SFA.

THE TREATY ON THE PROHIBITION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS (TPNW): A MILESTONE FOR IHL



The NATO SFA COE is committed to develop projects aimed at analysing the current legal challenges in the defence and related security capacity-building sector, in order to promote the internal stability of fragile states¹.



Figure 10. Legal roundtable organized by NATO SFA COE. <https://www.nsfacoe.org/>

In this context, the coming into force of the *Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons* (TPNW or Treaty) on January 22, 2021 following the ratification of the 50th state, Honduras, on October 24, 2020² is a significant development. On this occasion, the UN Secretary General António Guterres praised the states that ratified the Treaty, defining it as a “*strong demonstration of support for multilateral approaches to nuclear disarmament*”³.

The TPNW was adopted on July 7, 2017, within the framework of a UN conference to negotiate a legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons, and eventually lead to their elimination based on *International Humanitarian Law* (IHL), as provided by the General Assembly resolution 71/258.

The idea came from the need to create a legally binding instrument, and the interest to promote awareness on the destructive consequences of the testing and use of nuclear weapons. Hence, prior to this, the final document of the 2010 *Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons* (NPT) renewed the intervention for all states to commit to the reduction of nuclear dangers, among others, reducing

1 On October 23, 2019, NATO SFA COE organised a legal roundtable on “Rule of Law for SFA activities in Crisis Zones”. See : <https://www.nsfacoe.org/nato-sfa-coe-legal-roundtable-on-rule-of-law-for-sfa-activities-in-crisis-zones/>

2 Article 15 (1) TPNW: “the Treaty shall enter into force 90 days after the fiftieth instrument of ratification, acceptance, approval or accession has been deposited”. https://treaties.un.org/doc/Treaties/2017/07/20170707%2003-42%20PM/Ch_XXVI_9.pdf

3 “Guterres hails entry into force of treaty banning nuclear weapons”, UN News, last modified January 22, 2021, <https://news.un.org/en/story/2021/01/1082702>

the relevance of nuclear weapons in national military and security concepts. In the following years, a series of three international conferences were arranged in Norway, Mexico and Austria, with the aim to broaden awareness on the harmful impact of nuclear activities on civilian populations⁴.

The importance of the TPNW resides in the combination of both mechanisms of prevention and abolition of nuclear proliferation, and its solid contribution to IHL. Hence, even though it has always been the main pillar of the debate on disarmament, the *Non-Proliferation Treaty* (NPT) includes some gaps that eventually reduced its overall effectiveness. In the first place, the right to withdraw in the event of “*extraordinary circumstances*” which affect the interests of the concerned state allowed North Korea to withdraw from the NPT in 2003. Secondly, the Treaty does not contain any detail on the combustion cycle, which makes it difficult to verify the civilian or military purpose of the uranium enrichment programmes. Thirdly, the NPT does not mention the potential acquisition or development of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) on the part of non-state actors, together with the potential contribution to the illicit traffic of those materials.

In contrast to the preventive nature of the NPT, the TPNW aims at the complete elimination of nuclear weapons, declaring them illegal. Hence, the Treaty forbids the engagement in nuclear weapons activi-

ties of any sort, including the testing, production, acquisition or threat to use them. In addition, states that are parties to the Treaty are required to assist individuals affected by the consequences of the use of nuclear weapons and to take any environmental action to compensate for contamination problems in territories under their jurisdiction.

Within this context, the joint efforts of both international organisations and civil society were of pivotal importance. The UN Security Council Resolution 1540 of 2004 represented a major achievement. Indeed, the international community eventually recognised the threat to non-proliferation represented by non-state actors. Among others, the Resolution prohibits the provision of any support to non-state actors in the production, possession, transfer or usage of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons and their means of delivery, especially for terrorist purposes⁵. The Resolution also obliges states to adopt national legislation to prevent the proliferation of WMD, and to set up internal control mechanisms to hinder their traffic. To do so, the 1540 Committee is entitled to enhance cooperation among international and regional organisations to share lessons learned on this matter together with civil society organisations and members of the private sector⁶.

The contribution of civil society was also fundamental for the entry into force of the TPNW itself. The International Campaign

⁴ “Treaty on the prohibition of nuclear weapons”, United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs, accessed February 4, 2021, <https://www.un.org/disarmament/wmd/nuclear/tpnw/>

⁵ UNSC Resolution 1540 (2004), adopted by the Security Council at its 4956th meeting, on 28 April 2004, [https://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/1540%20\(2004\)](https://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/1540%20(2004))

⁶ “UN Security Council Resolution 1540 (2004)”, UN Office for Disarmament Affairs, accessed February 4, 2021, <https://www.un.org/disarmament/wmd/sc1540/>



Figure 11. TPNW reaches 50 ratifications. ICAN | Aude Catimel. <https://www.icanw.org/>



Figure 12. Nobel Peace Prize Ceremony. ICAN | J o Straube. <https://www.icanw.org/>

to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) was the main coalition of civil society organisations involved in the promotion of the Treaty. Hence, ICAN contributed to bringing the gaps in the current non-proliferation regime to the attention of the international community, and it helped to reshape the debate on disarmament, giving it a humanitarian focus. In light of such a praiseworthy commitment, in 2017 ICAN was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for its work *“to draw attention to the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons”* and its *“ground-breaking efforts to achieve a treaty-based prohibition of such weapons”*⁷.

Moreover, the preamble to the Treaty acknowledges the efforts of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in raising awareness on the harms suffered by civilian populations resulting from nuclear weapons. During the 72nd Session of the UN General Assembly, First Committee, the President of the ICRC Peter Maurer

emphasized the importance of risk reduction efforts as a focal point to favour the dialogue between the member states of the TPNW and those states that are yet to join⁸. Those efforts are part of a broader action plan aimed at the elimination of nuclear weapons as a humanitarian imperative. For instance, the 2017-2021 *Movement Action Plan on the Non-use, Prohibition and Elimination of Nuclear Weapons* commits its members to promote the implementation of the principles contained in the TPNW⁹.

The entry into force of the TPNW has the potential to foster the development of the law against nuclear weapons, including states that have not yet joined the Treaty. Hence, more than 1300 elected officials in countries that are not party to the TPNW have committed to lobbying their governments to join the Treaty, while various cities around the world have requested to become part of the TPNW, including the capitals of leading nuclear countries such as Paris

7 “The campaign”, ICAN, accessed February 5, 2021, https://www.icanw.org/the_campaign

8 “Weapons: Statement of the ICRC to the United Nations, 2017”, ICRC, last modified October 10, 2017, <https://www.icrc.org/en/document/weapons-statement-icrc-United-nations-unag-2017>

9 “A victory for humanity”, ICRC, last modified January 21, 2021, <https://blogs.icrc.org/law-and-policy/2021/01/21/victory-humanity/>

and Washington¹⁰. At this stage, it is extremely important that countries open debates on this new piece of legislation, and the way their governments can comply with it and further the cause. The efforts of states that are already parties to encourage other countries to join the Treaty¹¹ will hopefully contribute to incorporate it in a growing number of national legislative structures, thus increasing the understanding of the damaging effects of nuclear weapons and reinforcing the concept that they should be considered illegitimate. As a matter of fact, potential investments by states that are parties in infrastructures to implement the norms of the Treaty could encourage non-party states to cooperate in assisting victims of nuclear weapons or contaminated environments¹².

While some of these changes will be immediate, others are most likely to become long-term objectives.

Unfortunately, the major nuclear powers such as the US, Russia, China, the UK and France have not signed the Treaty yet, nor have almost all the remaining G20 states¹³, North Korea or the Middle Eastern countries. Moreover, even though the TPNW relies on Article VI of the NPT¹⁴, some critics still deny the mutually reinforcing nature of the two treaties. The main point of such criticisms stands in the potential opt-out from the NPT of non-nuclear states joining

the TPNW, thus giving them a pretext to escape the verification mechanisms of the NPT. While this scenario is realistic, the TPNW is far from being the sole reason behind it. The question of the effectiveness and legitimacy of the TPNW is part of a more general debate about how to achieve nuclear disarmament. On the one hand, the NPT highlighted the prioritisation of non-proliferation over disarmament in the long-term, legitimising the nuclear monopoly of the five powers that had nuclear weapons before its entry into force. On the other, the TPNW claims the necessity to delegitimise the possession of nuclear weapons by all countries, thus challenging the existing nuclear arms-control regime. Hence, as their principles are consistent with one another, the NPT and the TPNW are not legally incompatible.

Notwithstanding the many challenges, the TPNW is considered a starting point for a long-term comprehensive disarmament. Even within States not yet party to the Treaty, the ban is increasingly attracting public interest and support. Through the implementation of the TPNW obligations, the Treaty aims at having an impact on the behaviour of both states that are already parties and states that have not yet joined it. Therefore, it should contribute to the erosion of the legitimacy of nuclear weapons.

10 "Parliamentarians", ICAN, accessed February 5, 2021, <https://pledge.icanw.org/> and "#ICANSave My City", ICAN, accessed February 5, 2021, <https://cities.icanw.org/>

11 Article 12 TPNW, principle of Universality. <https://www.un.org/disarmament/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/tpnw-info-kit-v2.pdf>

12 Alicia Sanders-Zakre, "Nuclear Weapons Ban Treaty to Enter Into Force: What's Next?", Arms Control Association, last modified November 2020, <https://www.armscontrol.org/act/2020-11/features/nuclear-weapons-ban-treaty-enter-into-force-whats-next>

13 Brazil is the only G20 member that signed the TPNW but has not yet ratified it, while no one signed it among both the Gulf countries and the Middle East. See : https://www.icanw.org/signature_and_ratification_status

14 Article VI NPT: "Each of the Parties to the Treaty undertakes to pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date and to nuclear disarmament, and on a treaty on general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control". <https://www.un.org/en/conf/npt/2005/npttreaty.html>

15 Tytti Erästö, « The NPT and the TPNW: Compatible or conflicting nuclear weapons treaties? », SIPRI, last modified March 6, 2019, <https://www.sipri.org/commentary/blog/2019/npt-and-tpnw-compatible-or-conflicting-nuclear-weapons-treaties>

2020 MAIN VISITS

ALBANIAN AMBASSADOR H.E. ANILA BITRI LANI



Col. M. Di Pietro was the moderator of an in-depth session on Lessons Learned regarding the current pandemic crisis, which saw the involvement of Lt. Col. D. Haxhija, Head of the Lessons Learned Department of the NATO SFA COE and Col. E. Reso, Albanian medical director, course attendant at the Institute for Advanced Defence Studies (IASD).

Lt. Col. D. Haxhija illustrated the process of populating the NATO platform of the Lessons Learned on Covid-19, the impact of the pandemic in operations abroad and, in general, the related effects of political and social instability; Col. E. Reso presented a case study on ways to contain the pandemic and military support activities for the Albanian Healthcare System.

Col. C. Zanotto, from the Italian General Directorate of Military Medical Services (IGESAN), also attended the event. He emphasized the fruitful and continuous exchange of information and collaboration with the Albanian military medical authorities during the crisis.

SLOVENIAN AMBASSADOR H.E. TOMAŽ KUNSTELJ



The Slovenian Ambassador had the opportunity to participate in an in-depth session organized by Major R. Mlakar (SLO-A) and the Navy Captain P. Papler (SLO-N), researcher and tutor at the NATO Defence College (NDC), on NATO policy related to Projecting Stability and the NATO Capacity Building on the eastern flank.

The first illustrated the aspects of the Defence Capacity Building and the contribution of the NATO SFA COE to the development of these NATO projects; the second presented two examples of Capacity Building in Ukraine and Kosovo.

The Ambassador, H.E. T. Kunstelj, stressed that the collaboration between the Sponsoring Nation and the Centre plays an important role not only in the development of Slovenian military capabilities in Security Force Assistance, but it is also of interest to Slovenian universities and research institutes that study international cooperation.



The Women in International Security Association (WISS) Italy is conducting a series of events focusing on the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on “Women, Peace and Security” (WPS). The WPS Agenda is meant to guide and encourage the protection of women and girls from the violence of conflict, including sexual violence, and to advance the participation of

women in efforts to build peace and security, as well as to meet the needs of women and girls in conflict-affected areas.

During the meeting, the Director illustrated the NATO initiatives aimed at supporting gender equality/WPS in fragile States, through the:

- Integration of adequately trained full-time Gender Advisers and SFA Specialists within NATO HQs and units deployed in operations.
- Inclusiveness of women in Local Forces and the inclusion of specific elements focused on gender and WPS.
- Promotion of Integrity of NATO and SFA personnel in order to prevent and respond to sexual violence in all operations.

VICE PRESIDENT OF THE INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE OF HUMAN RIGHTS LAW LTG (retd.)

GIORGIO BATTISTI



During the visit, the Director emphasized that SFA activities need to be linked to Cross Cutting Topics (CCTs) if they are to be effective in creating security and stability. CCTs are a range of different topics falling outside of the primary military’s area of responsibility, but they are relevant for the success of NATO missions and operations.

In this context, the constructive debate was aimed towards the challenges in the current application of International Humanitarian Law and the fight against corruption in crisis zones. Breaches of IHL and a failure to properly manage corruption and the aforementioned CCTs will contribute to undermine the security and the long-term stability of an Assisted Nation.

Finally, NATO SFA COE courses, research and upcoming editorial projects were identified as possible future areas of cooperation between the two organizations. They will offer an opportunity to encourage exchanges between Subject Matter Experts and mutual participations in dedicated Round Tables.



The delegation represented the Department of Peace Operations (DPO) in the Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) Section of the Office of Rule of Law and Security Institutions (OROLSI). The DDR Section is the only civilian section in the UN Secretariat designing and implementing programmes for members of armed groups/forces in conflict and post-conflict settings. The goal of the meeting was to foster the relationship and explore future collaborations with UN institutions through the integration of DDR topics into both NATO SFA COE Courses and the related legal issues in operations. This exchange of knowledge and expertise will further enable SFA personnel to support Host Nations in achieving stability and security, also through the reintegration of former combatants into society.

DEFENCE ATTACHÉ OF THE NETHERLANDS - AIR COMMODORE RUDOLF SCHOONDERWOERD



The purpose of the visit was to present the Centre to the Air Commodore, particularly the main study projects, the training offer and the current and future activities that the NATO SFA COE is developing, whilst at the same time increasing the use of virtual tools to mitigate the limitations imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Military Attaché had the opportunity to participate in the webinar entitled "Innovation performance in NATO, COEs and MODs", organized by the Innovation Hub of the NATO Command Transformation (ACT) and the Dutch Ministry of Defence. The research of ACT's Innovation Hub, with which the Centre collaborated through its Concept Doctrine & Development department, experiments the military application of the theories of "transactional memory", namely the dynamics of knowledge transfer within complex organizations through group memory and the ability to learn from one's own or others' mistakes.

At the end of the event, the Military Attaché noted how the Centre promotes the development of innovative processes in the conduct of SFA activities and in the advanced training of the Alliance's personnel, highlighting the important role that the COE plays in the development of military and civilian capabilities to support stabilization in crisis areas.



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