

# Security Force Assistance Quarterly



## A Critical Call for SFA Planning and Execution Foresight

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*Cover Photo Credit:*

*British Army Lance Cpl. Daniel Shell, assigned to the United Kingdom Training Team Taji, assists Iraqi soldiers from the 9th Division set up a charge during the Combat Engineer Platoon Course Demolition Day at Taji Military Complex, Iraq, Feb. 26, 2019.  
(U.S. Army photo by Spc. Madelyn Sanchez).*

## Joint Center for International Security Force Assistance (JCISFA)

### Mission:

JCISFA supports the integration of Security Force Assistance (SFA) activities into the current and future Joint Force to support Globally Integrated Operations. JCISFA enables the development of SFA doctrine, training, and education of the Joint Force to conduct partner nation capacity-building. JCISFA supports SFA-related strategy formulation, policy and guidance development and support to joint exercises.

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The purpose of this quarterly newsletter is to inform the SFA Community of Interest (Col), highlight the greater Col efforts, and foster Col interoperability. Sharing JCISFA's efforts will help inform the Col of the many ways JCISFA can be leveraged.

In addition to Chairman's Joint Lessons Learned Information System (JLLIS), this newsletter serves as a forum for the Col to submit Observations and Recommendations or other articles of interest regarding their respective SFA efforts. As a service to the Joint Force, this newsletter promotes dialogue among the SFA Col that is dispersed across various countries, Interagency, Joint and Service organizations.

The opinions, conclusions, and recommendations expressed or implied within are those of the contributors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Department of Defense or any other Federal Government agency.

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Again, this SFA newsletter encourages dialogue. It is part of an ongoing effort to more effectively "Communicate, Cooperate, and Coordinate" across the Joint Force with all SFA stakeholders. Please let us know if you would like to submit an article or if there are any topics of interest for future editions.

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# From the Director's Desk

It's my pleasure to introduce the 25th edition of JCISFA's Quarterly SFA Newsletter.

This edition reflects our outreach efforts and partnerships across the SFA Community of Interest. For the first time in the six-year history of the newsletter, it includes collaborative publications led by international SFA practitioners and planners.

The opening article comes from a member of the British Army's Outreach Group, 77th Brigade. The author outlines mechanisms and factors of success in SFA by examining SFA through the lens of principal-agent theory. Understanding the sociocultural and psychological aspects of past SFA programs, both successful and non-successful, better enables SFA planners and practitioners to plan, execute and assess future SFA programs to achieve successful outcomes.

Lessons learned teammates from JCISFA and the Canadian Joint Operations Command Headquarters coauthored an article highlighting the importance of SFA assessments and prudent SFA planning to promote meaningful long-term effects. SFA planning efforts, to include planning for SFA assessments, are key SFA components that drive results, and enable future operations across the continuum encompassing competition, crisis, and conflict.

A former member of the U.S. Air Force's 81st Fighter Squadron shares perspectives on creative problem-solving concerning aviation records management after an exchange between the U.S. and Brazilian Air Forces this August. The author highlights the importance of user-level administrative processes that ensure operational readiness and how a partner-nation's simple, but readily available, solutions can build capacity faster than complex high-tech systems.

As always, we welcome your feedback and invite you to join us virtually in December to discuss these articles and more during our quarterly SFA Forum. We also welcome your thoughts, ideas, and article submissions for future editions of the SFA Quarterly Newsletter.

JOSEPH E. (Ed) WILLIAMS  
Colonel, U.S. Army  
Director



A British Ranger advises Ghana Special Forces Soldiers while patrolling during Exercise Flintlock, Feb. 26, 2022. Flintlock is a multi-national exercise consisting of 11 nations training in Côte d'Ivoire. Flintlock helps strengthen the ability of allies and partners to counter violent extremism and provide security for their people. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Kacie Benak)

# What Does and Doesn't Work in Security Force Assistance? Aligning Tactical Activity with Strategic Context: A View from the United Kingdom

by Maj Alex Neads PhD, 77th Brigade Security Capacity Building Cell

**A** recurring challenge in the provision of Security Force Assistance (SFA) lies in the management of unintended second and third order effects. As numerous examples attest, it is all too easy for well-intentioned and competently delivered assistance activities to result in unforeseen and undesired negative outcomes. In 2012, for example, the democratically elected government of Mali was overthrown in a military coup led by Amadou Sanogo, who had been trained in part by the US military.<sup>1</sup> A subsequent coup in 2020 was also led by a US-trained officer – this time one who had also benefitted from training provided by France and Germany.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, the problem is far from unique to Mali. The so-called 'German coup' in Guinea in 2008, for instance, was led by Moussa Dadis Camara, a German-trained Guinean officer still proudly wearing his German paratrooper beret. His German-trained troops subsequently opened fire on peaceful demonstrations, causing consternation in Germany.<sup>3</sup>

Evidently, managing this relationship between tactical provision and strategic outcome is critical to the long-term success of SFA programmes. However, as the above examples attest, maintaining the desired alignment between the aims of SFA and recipients' subsequent behaviour is often easier said than done. As General Carter Ham, Commander AFRICOM during the 2012 Mali coup concluded, 'We were focusing our training almost exclusively on tactical or technical matters...We didn't spend probably the requisite time focusing on values, ethics and a military ethos'.<sup>4</sup> Importantly, this issue is a concern not just for top-level planning staffs, but also for tactical operators delivering programmes on the ground – not least because the cross-national nature of SFA can imbue even the most low-level of tactical activity with profound political ramifications. This article examines ways SFA activities bring change to partner armed forces and how the planning and delivery of assistance programs can help achieve better strategic outcomes.



## Why does SFA (sometimes) work? Understanding causal pathways to recipient military change.

In NATO doctrine, SFA activities are expressed using the acronym 'GOTEAM'.<sup>5</sup> However, the provision of GOTEAM activities such as training, advice, or mentoring does not itself guarantee an impact on the attitudes, preferences, and behaviours of partner individuals or organisations. In some cases, training can lead to appreciable improvements in trainees' capabilities and effectiveness, but this is not uniformly the case. Moreover, the relationship between the competence of the delivery and the outcomes evinced by recipients is not always linear; skill in the delivery of SFA appears a necessary but not sufficient condition for success. So why does SFA work at all? What are the mechanisms that account for successful outcomes? And how do these processes affect the relationship between strategic context and tactical delivery?

Existing research identifies two causal pathways through which SFA activities result in recipient military change. The first of these is known as socialisation, and refers to the transfer of those professional values, norms, and ideals that support particular forms of military behaviour – and by extension, tactical performance.<sup>6</sup> The importance of professional military norms to generating high levels of military effectiveness is evident from conduct of basic training courses in NATO armed forces, where training activities typically focus on inculcating values like discipline and cohesion as much as technical skills.<sup>7</sup> To be an effective sentry, for example, a soldier must not only understand how to perform the duties expected of a sentry, but internalise the values that underpin that behaviour; the soldier must recognise and accept his professional responsibility not to fall asleep on guard every bit as much as his responsibility to know how to conduct an effective vehicle search.

Practically, socialisation occurs through close and prolonged interpersonal contact between trainers and trainees, such that the underlying norms and values that animate particular forms of military



EUCOM Control Center – Ukraine / International Donor Coordination Centre staff members from the United Kingdom and United States attend to their work at Patch Barracks, Germany, June 3, 2022. The ECCU / IDCC have coordinated and synchronized the timely delivery of more than 40 Allied and partner contributions of security force assistance. (Photo by Capt. Christina Judd)

behaviour flow from one to the other alongside tactical or technical skills as if by osmosis. This is typically supported by high levels of control over outside influences or rival sources of professional values. In Western nations' own initial training, for example, course regimes have sometimes been described as creating a 'total institution' that exerts control over all aspects of new soldiers' day-to-day routine.<sup>8</sup> In the SFA case, the doctrinal emphasis placed on developing close interpersonal relationships with partners during programme delivery, and on integrating mentors with their partners under the same local conditions, directly supports low-level socialisation processes. At higher organisational levels, socialisation also explains significant and lasting shifts in recipient institutional behaviour, including the gradual professional reorientation of a number of Eastern European armed forces following the collapse of the Soviet Union.<sup>9</sup>

Unfortunately, the ideal conditions for socialisation can be difficult to establish during SFA, especially at higher organisational levels. Socialisation generally requires prolonged exposure over a considerable period of time to produce any lasting normative change, something impossible for short-term training teams to realise. Equally, SFA providers rarely possess extensive, much less exclusive, control of the training

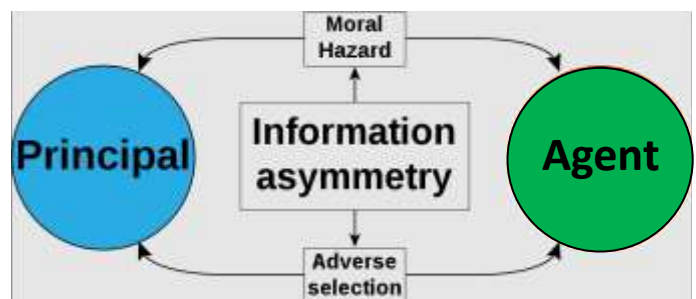


U.S. Marine Corps Staff Sgt. Sarah R. Hickory demonstrates how to properly conduct a burpee during a physical training session for Marine Security Guard (MSG) watchstanders and the Special Program for Embassy Augmentation and Response (SPEAR) team, outside of the Marine House at the U.S. Embassy, Bamako, Mali, Aug. 29, 2016. (U.S. Marine Corps photo by Gunnery Sgt. Jesse Wagner)

environments they must operate in abroad. Deep exposure during controlled environments while on courses in Europe or North America does seem to produce a degree of socialisation among foreign officers, but this rarely translates into lasting institutional change once trainees return home.<sup>10</sup> For example, Beninese officers trained in Belgium reported high levels of frustration and alienation on their return to Benin. They internalised Western professional military values only to find their attempts at reform stymied by the established culture and vested interests of their own military establishment.<sup>11</sup> Moreover, recipient receptivity to foreign professional military values can vary significantly, such that high levels of pre-existing “cultural difference” between recipient and provider can significantly lower the appeal of SFA, creating a pernicious barrier to change.<sup>12</sup> In some extreme cases, socialisation even appears to inadvertently result in the transfer of ideas and values the SFA provider actively views as counter-productive.<sup>13</sup>

These challenges suggest that socialisation during SFA is often determined by the degree to which the interests and goals of the recipient match those of the provider. Here, *principal-agent* (or PA) theory can provide planners with a useful handrail to understand the prospects for success. In a PA relationship, the principal engages an agent to conduct a specified activity on their behalf, that the principal either can not or does not

wish to do themselves. In return, the principal promises the agent some form of reward, creating a shared goal. While both sides thus rely on each other to achieve the outcome they desire, neither has perfect knowledge of the intentions or activity of the other, encouraging each party to maximise their own benefit at the expense of the other.<sup>14</sup> Anyone who has contracted a builder to extend their house will have experienced this dilemma. The homeowner wants their extension built to the highest possible standard, as quickly as possible, for the lowest cost achievable, while the builder wants to maximise profit and is incentivised to drag out the work or lower standards in order to secure it. This ‘shirking’ is the product of both interest asymmetry (the fact that both parties have somewhat divergent interests despite sharing the same goal of building the extension) and information asymmetry (the homeowner can’t be sure of exactly what the builder is doing all the time, and the builder can’t be sure that the homeowner will pay in full and on time).



This analogy can be directly applied to SFA activities. In SFA, the principal provides assistance (at their own cost) to the agent, typically to facilitate the suppression of some shared threat such as a local insurgency or terrorist group. The extent to which the recipient makes use of that assistance in the manner intended by the donor depends on the degree to which the two parties’ interests align. In past examples of SFA, limited outcomes or undesired negative consequences have frequently been attributed to fundamental asymmetries of interest and information between the provider and recipient. For instance, extensive US support to Latin American armed forces under the School of the Americas programme failed to produce profound institutional transformations

primarily because the professionalisation programmes advocated by US officers were considered to undermine the domestic position of the recipient officers.<sup>15</sup> Similarly, in Afghanistan, some ANA officers have been described as using foreign assistance as a form of largesse to shore up their own position vis-à-vis internal rivals, rather than as a vehicle to defeat the Taliban, extracting ever more equipment and training while avoiding accompanying institutional reforms that were perceived as unpalatable.<sup>16</sup>

As a result, some analysts argue for greater conditionality in the provision of SFA programmes, as a way to prevent misappropriation of resources and ensure tight alignment between the interests of the provider and their local partner. During the Korean War, for example, continued provision of US training and equipment to the South Korean military was made conditional on observed improvements in battlefield performance, immediately reducing the shirking of much-needed institutional reforms in the

Republic of Korea army.<sup>17</sup> However, it is rare for recipients of SFA to be so completely dependent on their foreign patrons. In fact, in the increasingly competitive contemporary operating environment, SFA recipients can often choose between multiple rival providers – thereby limiting the utility of conditionality. During the war in Iraq, for example, the introduction of conditionality into the provision of US assistance to the Iraqi military only produced modest results, in part because of the availability of alternate Iranian assistance with very different conditions attached.<sup>18</sup> In some instances, this dynamic may even encourage recipients to play rival SFA providers off against each other, in order to extract ever more assistance while bypassing the conditions each attaches to their aid through recourse to the other.<sup>19</sup>

Ultimately, PA considerations and socialisation processes are not mutually exclusive, and both may operate simultaneously. In practice, however, the influence of norms and interests tend to cluster at somewhat different institutional levels, making the impact of one on the other difficult to assess across the tactical-operational-strategic spectrum. Moreover, different SFA practitioners (and, indeed, recipients) also tend to favour either socialisation or interest maximisation as the primary lens through which to view SFA interactions, depending on their particular view of the situation and human nature.<sup>20</sup> How then can the insights provided by these two mechanisms best be incorporated into the planning and conduct of SFA?

## Context as the Core of SFA Planning and Conduct

Understanding the mechanisms through which SFA can sometimes produce behavioural change – and why it sometimes doesn't – provides a series of insights that can directly inform the way SFA activities are planned and conducted. The following synthesises key observations into three prominent points.

1) Firstly, the centrality of interest asymmetry to the management of PA relationships reinforces the importance of understanding the strategic and political context of SFA even at the lowest tactical



Republic of Korea (ROK) soldiers with a North Korean prisoner, 1950. There was not a lot of British or American respect for the ROK as fighting soldiers, even though there is ample evidence that they often fought with great courage. The language and culture barrier prevented close comradeship and many British and American soldiers were suspicious, as they could not distinguish a North Korean enemy from a South Korean friend. (From an album of 126 photographs with newspaper cuttings, 1st Bn Middlesex Regiment, Korea-UK Army Museum)



levels of planning. Before any viable SFA programme can be developed, planners must attempt to accurately identify both the outcome desired by their own chain of command, and that desired by the recipient. Importantly, as PA theory highlights, recipients' stated intentions may not actually reflect the real benefits sought, just as the proximate outcome pursued in a SFA mission statement may bear little resemblance to the overarching aims motivating the top-level provision of assistance. Understanding these differences is critical to ensuring planned activity properly supports overarching goals – as well as to identifying the likely limits to impact. Only then can planners establish appropriate methods of delivery and measures of effect. During the British intervention in Sierra Leone, for example, British advisors recognised a fundamental divergence in interests with their local partners over enacting improvements to leadership and reducing corruption in the Sierra Leonean officer corps. Instead, immediate if modest outcomes were achieved through an alternate focus on low-level cohesion and unit resupply practices, producing comparable short-term improvements in tactical performance.<sup>21</sup>

2) Secondly, SFA planners should endeavour to understand the totality of other assistance activity ongoing in country (military and civil), as well as the aims and objectives of other providers. Importantly, planners must also seek to understand how parallel programmes run by both friendly and hostile providers may affect the conduct and outcomes of their own activity. Such an understanding can provide a window onto the relative fungibility of planned activity relative to alternate offerings, and the extent to which investments can therefore be expected to reap rewards. Here, understanding the relative prioritisation of planned activity in relation to other existing programmes will help to identify the scope for mutual support – or, indeed, leveraging influence from one strand of activity into another. Of equal importance, however, is the need to develop an understanding of the relative significance of these activities from the perspective of the recipient. Indeed, gaining recipient buy-in to planned activity, and formal acceptance of the responsibilities of each party, can provide a powerful tool to ensure continued goal alignment and co-operation

throughout the lifetime of a programme – but only where the views and perspectives of the recipient are genuinely incorporated from the very beginning.

3) Finally, deep subject matter expertise on the recipient institution must be leveraged from the start of the planning process. All too often, SFA planners confronted with short notice taskings are forced to plan activity with limited knowledge of the structure, social composition, internal operation, or political demographics of the recipient force. Such information is often available within the wider machinery of government, or else from open-source information produced by subject matter experts in academia or non-governmental organizations, but is difficult to locate and access within compressed timelines. However, greater awareness of the political economy of recipient institutions would not only reduce the burden on deployed operators who find themselves forced to realign ill-prepared plans to local realities 'on the hoof', but would also reduce the temptation to deploy templated familiar solutions in lieu of properly tailored activity.



A Polish Army instructor provides feedback to Ukrainian soldiers of the 1st Battalion, 28th Mechanized Infantry Brigade on how to properly load a DShK heavy machine gun during a live-fire exercise at the Yavoriv Combat Training Center on the International Peacekeeping and Security Center, near Yavoriv, Ukraine. The live-fire exercise is part of a block of instruction taught by Ukrainian combat training center staff, who are mentored by members of the Joint Multinational Training Group-Ukraine. JMTG-U is a coalition made up of servicemembers from the Canada, Denmark, Lithuania, Poland, the United Kingdom, the United States and Ukraine who are dedicated to developing the combat training center and building professionalism in the Ukrainian military. (Photo by Sgt. Anthony Jones, 45th Infantry Brigade Combat Team)



While these observations are unlikely to fundamentally alter the prospects for success in any given SFA programme, they might allow planners to accurately identify those prospects and tailor programmes and expectations accordingly. Likewise, they facilitate the provision of better contingency planning to teams on the ground, thereby supporting in-programme decision-making. Here, greater awareness of the strategic context, the relationship between different programmes ongoing in country, and the local imperatives shaping recipient behaviour, might collectively provide SFA practitioners with a handrail to identify when tactical activity no longer supports strategic intent – and what to do about it.

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## Article Approved for Release by Commanding Officer, Outreach Group, 77th Brigade, British Army

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**The views expressed in this article reflect those of the author, and do not represent the official views of the British Army.**



The 25th Military Police Training Centre (25 MPTC) holds a demonstration for Canadian Armed Forces members deployed to Operation UNIFIER on December 17, 2020, at the Military Police Academy in Lviv, Ukraine. (Canadian Armed Forces photo by Aviator Melissa Gloude, Imagery Technician)

## A Critical Call for SFA Planning and Execution Foresight A Multi-National Perspective to Immediately Apply Towards the Future

by Jeffrey S. King, JCISFA Military Analyst and Richard Hart, Lessons Learned Analyst,  
Canadian Joint Operations Command Headquarters

### **F**oresight is Often Critical - Yet Easier to Talk About Than Achieve

Much has and is being talked about and written on Security Force Assistance (SFA) operations to develop key elements of Ukrainian Armed Forces (UAF) capability and capacity over the past few months. The past months also highlighted many ‘training and equipping’ (T&E) activities imperative to rapidly meet immediate UAF needs while in or preparing for imminent conflict. This article does not suggest that all these T&E activities must be (or even can be) planned and executed with foresight to future needs. However, with many eyes on the conflict in Ukraine, it behooves the SFA enterprise to conduct a sort of ‘in progress after action review (AAR)’. This review should ‘wind the clock back’ to determine how greater SFA foresight could have *and in some cases did* place friendly forces, and more importantly the UAF, in a much more

advantageous and sustainable position today.

This article attempts to progress beyond merely ‘talking about what should or could be’. It calls upon the Canadian (CAN) armed forces for some positive examples of multi-national (MN) foresight regarding SFA with the UAF and mixes them with some insights drawn from the US, the United Kingdom (UK) and others. Beyond positive examples, the article will also point out residual challenges that are still difficult to overcome. Insights are a ‘not all-inclusive snapshot’. They revolve around using proper foresight within the following five overarching areas, listed by increasing impact, with the final one deemed the most decisive impact:

- Internal Joint Interoperability
- Multi-National Interoperability (MNI) *External to* (After) SFA Efforts
- MNI *Internal to* (During) SFA Efforts





A Ukrainian recruit tends to a SIMULATED casualty under the supervision of Canadian Armed Forces soldiers on 9 November 2022 during Operation UNIFIER in the United Kingdom. (Canadian Armed Forces photo by Corporal Eric Greico)

- Institutional Capacity Building (ICB) Through Establishing a Partner Nation (PN) Cadre
- *ICB Through Transforming PN Military Cultural Mindset*

The prime intent is that any U.S. combatant command (CCMD, including European Command, EUCOM), can derive and apply SFA principles from the article's observations, insights, and lessons (OIL) now, to most wisely posture and plan towards greater future success to compete and win in any CCMD area of responsibility (AOR). The broader intent is that the MN SFA community more fully recognizes that better MN SFA foresight can yield exponentially better results and avoid pitfalls due to our individual blind spots.

### Key Insights, Examples, Challenges and Principles

#### Establish Interoperability as an Enduring Goal and Sustain It

**Joint Interoperability.** Taking a *long-term end-state* view of any partner nation (PN, in this case the UAF) upfront is an enduring SFA principle, and interoperability is perhaps the best place to start. Though some SFA efforts require no inherent multi-national interoperability (MNI), for instance foreign internal defense (FID), the goal for any SFA effort should account for the PN's need for internal joint interoperability. Air power is rarely used without providing support to ground operations, thus the

need for Air-Ground Integration (AGI). PNs that have no coast lines often need maritime forces to patrol inland waterways. Border forces are almost universally inherent to any PN and are often separate from conventional ground forces. Thus, almost any significant SFA effort should seek to plan for nascent or improving joint and even whole of government interoperability from the start. The Canadian effort with the UAF was jointly organized from the start. Further, the Joint Multi-National Training Group-Ukraine (JMTG-U) has had continuous Canadian (as well as US, UK, etc.) participation for several years to the present day.

**Multi-National Interoperability.** SFA efforts should usually include MNI as a necessary by-product or end result, and it is best to begin planning SFA with these results in mind. Even FID might include some MNI requirements with allies. Developing a PN to conduct a peacekeeping operation (PKO) in another AOR might provide the US or CAN greater assurance in an AOR or PKO that they are less inclined to directly participate in. However, even if the US and CAN are not direct participants in a given PKO, they should still develop MNI within a PN that must work with the PKO's other participating nations.

**MNI External to SFA Efforts.** MNI with the many (primarily) NATO nations that are supporting Ukraine with T&E activities is an obvious concern. Right now, time is of the essence 'in the fight' and as such, the UAF will take every suitable piece of equipment they can. Thus, MNI might take a back seat in the middle of defending against a real-time invasion force. However, it is an immediate concern since the UAF is receiving different equipment with similar functions from more than five nations. This might require multiple types of associated training sets (all potentially different from each other and from Soviet training they are accustomed to), potentially varying sets of maintenance and sustainment packages, as well as conflicting tactics, techniques and procedures (TTPs). Time will tell what the future holds, but at some point, there will need to be some wise decisions made by and with the UAF. These decisions should include (but not be limited to) what type of equipment they will use, from which allies, and the MNI impacts to their ability to defend themselves



A Canadian instructor observes Ukrainian soldiers during a live fire defensive range exercise in Starychi, Ukraine on June 30, 2016. (Photo courtesy of Joint Task Force Ukraine)

and integrate with coalitions.

*MNI Internal to SFA Efforts.* The above concern on MNI regarding T&E with the UAF is exactly why *internal* SFA MNI is so important, but it essentially is not even a recognized term. The need for MNI *within* SFA efforts is often underestimated. Much of the current ‘chaos’ regarding the MN effort to urgently T&E the UAF could arguably have been avoided or at least mitigated with better MN foresight. However, we (the MN SFA community) must first acknowledge our need for better *internal* MNI in our SFA efforts. Recognizing that it is a prime factor is a necessary first step.

In the case of Ukraine, for many years the scope and scale of SFA efforts has vacillated and involved many participating countries. In fact, CAN SFA efforts toward Ukraine have long included the UK and the US (to include within the JMTG-U). In these MN SFA efforts, there is usually no command-and-control structure. Therefore, *coordination* is key to avoid duplicate efforts that might saturate, overwhelm, and even be harmful to the PN. One nation might be providing smaller scale basic and individual training (that may or may not have a large enduring impact) while another nation might provide collective training, and even the ability to ‘train the trainer’. It is possible the *UAF* has internally coordinated and accordingly requested particular levels and types of training over time in a synchronized manner. However, if the sum of these efforts are not MN synchronized and coordinated over time, the PN’s

progress runs the risk of severely limited results or even regression.

Regarding Ukraine, there is certainly evidence of some MNI amongst national-level SFA providers, but the challenge is to continue such synergy over a period of many years, vacillating national contributions, and without a clear international command and control (that will often not exist). As one example, the UK provided training at all levels to the UAF for several years. They currently provide a form of basic training to Ukrainian conscripts and look to add a ‘junior leader course’. As will be further explained, CAN long ago established a ‘train the trainer’ program that arguably progressed beyond its original intent. Meanwhile, the US is commencing collective training with select UAF units. Though these three nations worked together to some degree with the UAF over the past few years, how well coordinated were these efforts over time? Did the coordination include the UAF perspective? Are these three nations working with other SFA providers (e.g., Netherlands, Poland) and if so, are those efforts coordinated with all parties? The intent here is not to judge, but rather present how challenging this is, and ask all SFA-providing nations to fully consider the impacts on the recipient PN. Perhaps a look to NATO doctrine might better standardize these sometimes disparate efforts.

\*see the December 2020, 17th edition of the JCISFA newsletter for an article explaining how the US assigned a ‘Coordination Officer’ to orchestrate such disparate efforts with the Republic of Georgia. It might serve as a model of relative success but might also provide some challenges that induce solutions, as the US Army, Marines, and UK forces were all active in that PN.

### Institutions Sustain Capability and Establish Culture

The US definition of SFA (shared with many US allies) includes developing the ‘capability and capacity of a PN’s supporting institutions’. Conducting institutional capacity building (ICB) is very easy to talk about, but very hard to plan and execute because it requires



detailed planning, synchronization with lower-level capabilities and functions, funding and facilities, and time. The time required is an inevitable consideration for ICB. Some aviation institutions can take over a decade to build. The time required automatically implies the need for foresight to 'look out far enough' to see what capabilities should exist, when they are realistic to achieve, and the

**Building a PN Cadre.** CAN forces did progress beyond basic mission training that was individual in nature, smaller scale and with limited lasting impact. Though Ukrainian leader buy-in between older and younger leaders was sometimes divided and mixed, they were able to build a 'train the trainer' program that established some form of Ukrainian cadre. Though training began at a lower level, it did progress to Non-Commissioned Officer (NCO) and junior officer-level tasks. It also progressed to 'Ukrainian NCOs training other Ukrainian NCOs'. Though this effort did not necessarily progress to the point of establishing a 'Ukrainian NCO Academy', it did lead to some Ukrainian-led training that included junior officers and some advanced specialty courses (e.g., engineer and sniper training). These results were accomplished by each team 'advancing the goalposts' by looking to meet UAF needs and requests, but with an eye to producing a lasting effect. Like similar institutional efforts in the Balkans still paying dividends 20 years later, hopefully these efforts in Ukraine can continue to pay similar dividends despite and beyond this conflict.



A Canadian instructor gives the "thumbs up" to Ukrainian soldiers for their motivation and performance during a live fire defensive range exercise in Starychi, Ukraine on June 30, 2016. (Photo courtesy of Joint Task Force Ukraine)

need for a plan to get from point A to point B. PN buy-in is also paramount. This topic provides perhaps the best examples of where CAN armed forces wisely executed foresight to establish lower cost institutional capacity with UAF that has paid current (and perhaps even decisive) dividends that have prospects to be lasting.

**Lasting Cultural Dividends.** Having an enduring Ukrainian cadre of trainers in several basic, leader, and select functional areas is paying dividends towards the UAF's capability and capacity in the current conflict. However, what reaches beyond all of that (and is potentially making a decisive difference) are the impacts on Ukrainian military culture. The legacy Soviet hierarchical mindset lacked emphasis on independent thought and action. It fostered explicit obedience to orders.

The 'train the trainer' program helped break this mindset. It helped replace it with a mindset that can accept and issue 'mission type orders with intent'. Not all NCOs and junior leaders were open to this mindset shift, but many were. Over time, some leadership styles changed or were formed in a new way. The Russian invasion ignited the will and motivation of many of these young officers and NCOs, who now operate innovatively and with adaptive leadership styles. They largely discarded the 'top down' doctrine and methods of those more senior.

This mindset change, born in part by the 'train the trainer' initiatives from foresight in years past, is arguably making a larger positive and even decisive difference than the other institutional gains and T&E activities. Time will tell how lasting they will be. Though the UAF still has many institutional challenges in the areas of equipping, organization, medical services, casualty care, countering corruption etc., the adaptive and innovative mindset that has taken grip seems to be the most effective tool to overcome these challenges over time.

### Way Ahead - Improving Future Multi-National SFA

Time will tell the resulting future UAF internal role and their role with coalitions, and it is pointless to speculate too deeply on this right now. The menu of future options includes participation in (and even future leadership of) battle groups. Leader exchanges (e.g., a CAN Deputy Commanding General of a US Corps) have also been successfully executed through SFA and/or security cooperation.

More fundamentally, at the proper time there should be special and thoughtful foresight taken to plan associated SFA in accordance with the UAF's foreseen roles, and ideally in a bi-lateral or multi-lateral manner. It is also worth noting that North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) membership does not need to be a limiting factor. For many years, Sweden and Finland have been extremely involved with NATO exercises and other activities short of NATO membership, and there are other examples with non-NATO partners. Also within NATO, there are standard agreements (STANAGs) to

consider that contribute to MNI. STANAGs can reduce the logistics burden when using disparate equipment (as alluded to in the 'External MNI' section above) and can be considered with non-members. Taken further, such standardization might be very helpful if it leads to a standing central fund and/or equipment pool that could be rapidly drawn from and used by NATO nations and key partners as a given crisis or conflict might become imminent.

The common thread is executing proper SFA foresight, and this foresight is much easier said than achieved in a situation such as that revolving around the UAF. Returning to the article's intents, the five overarching insight areas are not all inclusive. Most fundamentally, if every U.S. CCMD *and* the MN SFA community takes a pause now, and ponder how to best use greater foresight towards SFA planning and execution with a longer-term view, the US, CAN and broader coalition will achieve much greater success competing and winning across the continuum of steady-state, crisis, and conflict. This pause can and should apply globally, and to any individual AOR.



Operation UNIFIER Combat Service Support (CSS) members give a demonstration of a roll-over vehicle recovery scenario to Ukrainian observer-controller-trainers and Security Force Ukraine members at the International Peacekeeping and Security Center in Ukraine, November 17, 2020. (Canadian Armed Forces photo by Aviator Melissa Gloude, Imagery Technician)





Canadian Armed Forces members deployed on Operation UNIFIER Roto 10 help design the Training Systems Specialist Course in Stare, Ukraine, 12 November 2020. (Canadian Armed Forces photo by Aviator Melissa Gloude, Imagery Technician)

From a US (and arguably also CAN) perspective, the Ukraine conflict has shown that US success in SFA efforts most critically *cannot* be optimized without such a MN look at what assistance allies provide (or maybe should provide) across *all* SFA roles. The formation of a security assistance group in Ukraine, with active MN partnership, is a positive step. However, how can we better organize and shape such efforts across the globe as part of steady-state operations, with greater foresight, and a more holistic longer-term view?

Each SFA providing nation and coalition should take the time to make their own lists of what is most important in national and coalition SFA efforts. A quick return to the article's five overarching areas induces some key takeaways that might assist such a list:

- **Internal Joint Interoperability.** Help the PN plan this longer term. Gain their buy-in! Make it a bi-lateral (or multi-lateral) roadmap with regular bi-lateral assessments (see the same December 2020 article on the Republic of Georgia and December 2021 article (21st edition with the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation).
- **MNI External To (After) SFA Efforts.** While conducting SFA during steady-state operations, plan in greater detail for how capabilities might be used in crisis and conflict.

- **MNI Internal To (During) SFA Efforts.** Use MN bodies (e.g., America, Britain, Canada, Australia, New Zealand (ABCANZ), NATO)), and create ad hoc MN bodies to plan for identified issues during steady state!
- **Institutional Capacity Building (ICB) Through Establishing a PN Cadre.** The answer might not always be a 'cadre', but take the next step to explore and prioritize PN institutional needs. *Also*, explore the realistic PN motivation (will) and ability to self-sustain over time (back to that bi-lateral assessment and monitoring).
- **ICB Through Transforming PN Military Cultural Mindset.** Though this turned out to be perhaps the most decisive SFA factor or effect with the CAN armed forces' SFA effort towards the UAF in the current conflict, it is one of many potential factors to consider. *Take the time and use the foresight to find that decisive effect(s) through PN engagement!*

## A Final Nugget on Foresight

*The last point on foresight helping to influence or transform a PN Military Cultural Mindset lends to an overarching SFA teaching point. The SFA Community of Interest often mentions that there are many things that you 'can't surge'. They must be built over time, and an imminent crisis is too late for creating many decisive effects:*

- *You can't surge trust and relationships*
- *You can't surge MNI*
- *You can't surge the ability to combat adversary disinformation. It is hard to influence a PN populace's thoughts towards the US and allies under the pressure of imminent crisis or conflict. It must be built, and disinformation combatted, through persistent engagement (which closely relates to the first bullet)*
- *Finally, you cannot (easily) surge a transformed cultural mindset (of any type)*

*\*Foresight is the common thread to all these things, and proper SFA foresight can certainly translate into a combat multiplier*

JCISFA will post this article to the Joint Lessons Learned Information System (JLLIS) and place it in an appropriate binder. JCISFA invites all US CCMDs, most notably the USINDOPACOM, to consider how some of these areas might be better applied with their key PNs, and in conjunction with other bodies (ABCANZ, NATO) that provide SFA.

Whether through JLLIS and other media, to include JCISFA's SFA Forum, JCISFA will invite the SFA-related community of interest to post and discuss related observations, comments, and related products. This includes items from and with CAN, the UK, other nations, and the potential for SFA-related issues to identify and resolve, as well as apply best practices to other AOR conditions.

These and other areas cut across all geographical AORs. Regardless of which AOR(s) you might be focused on, stay tuned as JCISFA posts this article

and related products in JLLIS. Accordingly, feel free to join the 1st Quarter SFA forum, promote dialogue, increase the body of knowledge, and consistently improve SFA and its related fields. Let's exercise greater foresight together now and take that deeper look!

### Article Approved for Public Release by JS J7 PAO

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The National Guard of Ukraine (NGU) Training Group delivers a NATO training package and conduct vehicle checkpoint drills with NGU Instructors at their Non-Commissioned Officer Academy in Zolochiv, Ukraine during Operation UNIFIER on January 22, 2021. (Canadian Armed Forces photo by Corporal Melissa Gloude, Imagery Technician)



# The Hidden Heroes Behind a Prestigious Air Enterprise: Records Management

by SSgt. Johnathan M. Brake, 81FS DOOF, Aviation Records Management

As I sat with my Brazilian counterpart, a leisurely conversation about how the US Air Force conducts flying operations compared to the Brazilian Air Force led to a fruitful discussion between two partner nations. Ultimately, we concluded that effective records management, specifically aviation records management, is the foundation of a successful aviation enterprise. To maintain a sustainable Air Force and to "put warheads on foreheads," the "unsexy" and unwanted job of building and maintaining aviation records management to incentivize pilots is imperative.

Aviation records management involves a myriad of things, to include building a realistic flying training program that fits your organization's needs. Some key aspects of a flying training program consist of tracking and management of pilot qualifications, developing and tracking both ground and flying currencies, operational risk management, development of an aircraft utilization report, an aviation incentive program, and an effective way to track each pilot's simulator and flight hours.

Having a dedicated team (or teams) whose primary responsibilities include establishing, tracking, and maintaining pilot qualifications, certifications, and flight/ground currencies is crucial to the sustainability of air operations. Established programs allow schedulers to select the most qualified (or in need) pilot(s) for missions. If you disagree, I implore you to imagine a "worst-case scenario." Let's take a brief second and imagine the catastrophic consequences if a pilot--who was not proficient--flew a night sortie without an instructor present and the plane crashed because there were no flying operations processes nor records management standards in place. If an air force establishes and maintains proper aviation records, they can prevent this nightmare.

Now that we've imagined this hellacious scenario and understand the embarrassment that could be involved, let us begin our dive into how to build an effective flying training program. First, there needs to be operational risk management procedures in place. Operational risk management is a "day-of-flight" assessment tool for both the involved pilots and operations officers to consider the pilot's fly-day stressors. Some factors the operations officer may take into consideration include the time of day, hours of sleep, weather, the pilot's personal stress, their proficiency level, and the amount of time passed since their last flight. An "aircraft utilization report" allows maintenance and operations to compare their hours and sorties tracked for each

The author and a Brazilian pilot exchange squadron patches during a Subject Matter Expert Exchange in August 2022. (Courtesy photo by USAF Master Sgt. Ron Olaes)



aircraft. This is important because some aircraft require special maintenance or inspections after a certain number of hours or flights. Managing hours for pilots will help track their proficiency, which enables their progression and experience in the aircraft they are tasked to fly, and ultimately build their prestige within their air force. I've seen countless times the respect experienced pilots command from junior pilots when they have logged thousands of hours versus a few hundred.

On the surface, managing all these aviation records (currencies, hours, required/accomplished training) sounds cumbersome. The US Air Force understands its value, and in turn, invests millions of dollars in aviation records management systems. In reality, modest aviation organizations can conduct records management with something as simple as creating a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet or an Access product. One partner nation I've had the pleasure of working shoulder-to-shoulder with uses a whiteboard to manually update and track currencies. Whether via

whiteboard, a simple Excel spreadsheet with date formulas and color coding, or another creative method, the need for maintaining a flying training program and aviation records management is still paramount for both building and sustaining aviation prestige.

Aviation records management is a relatively small career field in the US Air Force, but as seen in the "worst case scenario," this career field's impact can ultimately determine the life or death of both pilots and the aircraft. In some air forces one or two catastrophic events can even end a flight program. Therefore, sharing the importance of records management and establishing an effective flying training program with our partners not only helps further their capacity and prestige as an air force, but also strengthens our partnerships and helps us learn from each of our successes, which is the overarching agenda of air advising and security cooperation.

**Article Approved for Public Release by JS J7 PAO**



United States and Brazilian Air Force personnel strike poses from their squadron patches. The Panther represents the speed of a lightning strike from the sky while the Classical Archer represents precision in the attack. The units completed a Subject Matter Expert Exchange in August 2022 to share ideas, lessons, and best practices. (Photo courtesy of the 81 FS)





# NATO SFA Centre of Excellence

## Courses and Publications

*NATO SFA Centre of Excellence has courses available. [Link to NATO SFA Courses \(click here\)](#)*

**ETOC Code: MCP-CM-2556 Security Force Assistance Operators Course**

This course aims to improve the competency and the effectiveness of SFA operators working in current and future missions related to security capacity building.

**ETOC Code: MCP-CM-36713 Institutional Adviser Course**

The course contributes to meeting the need for sustained and standardized professional development of allied and partner military and civilian personnel to conduct stability activities. Advanced tenets of institutional advising are integrated into the course education curriculum.

Both courses are designed as blended learning with on-line and in residence portions.



**Security Force Assistance Operators Course**  
**15 - 19 May 2023**



**Institutional Adviser Course**  
**18 - 22 September 2023**



# JCISFA

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JCISFA Community has SFA courses available through Joint Knowledge Online (JKO). [Link to JCISFA SFA Courses \(click here\)](#)

## Be sure to check out the courses in JCISFA's SFA JKO Series:

### J3OP-US1398 SFA Considerations for Campaign Planning

This course offers ways to implement SFA as part of campaign planning, execution, and assessment. It is tailored for key leaders within organizations that plan and execute SC at the operational level.

### J3OP-US1399: Building Allied and Partner Security Institutions – Advanced

The focus of this course is building allied and partner defense institutions through SFA with an emphasis on FSF functions, core processes, and SFA developmental tasks.





# SFA Topics Online

To communicate with our SFA subject matter experts, we provide ways to submit a request for information (RFI) through various JCISFA information sites.

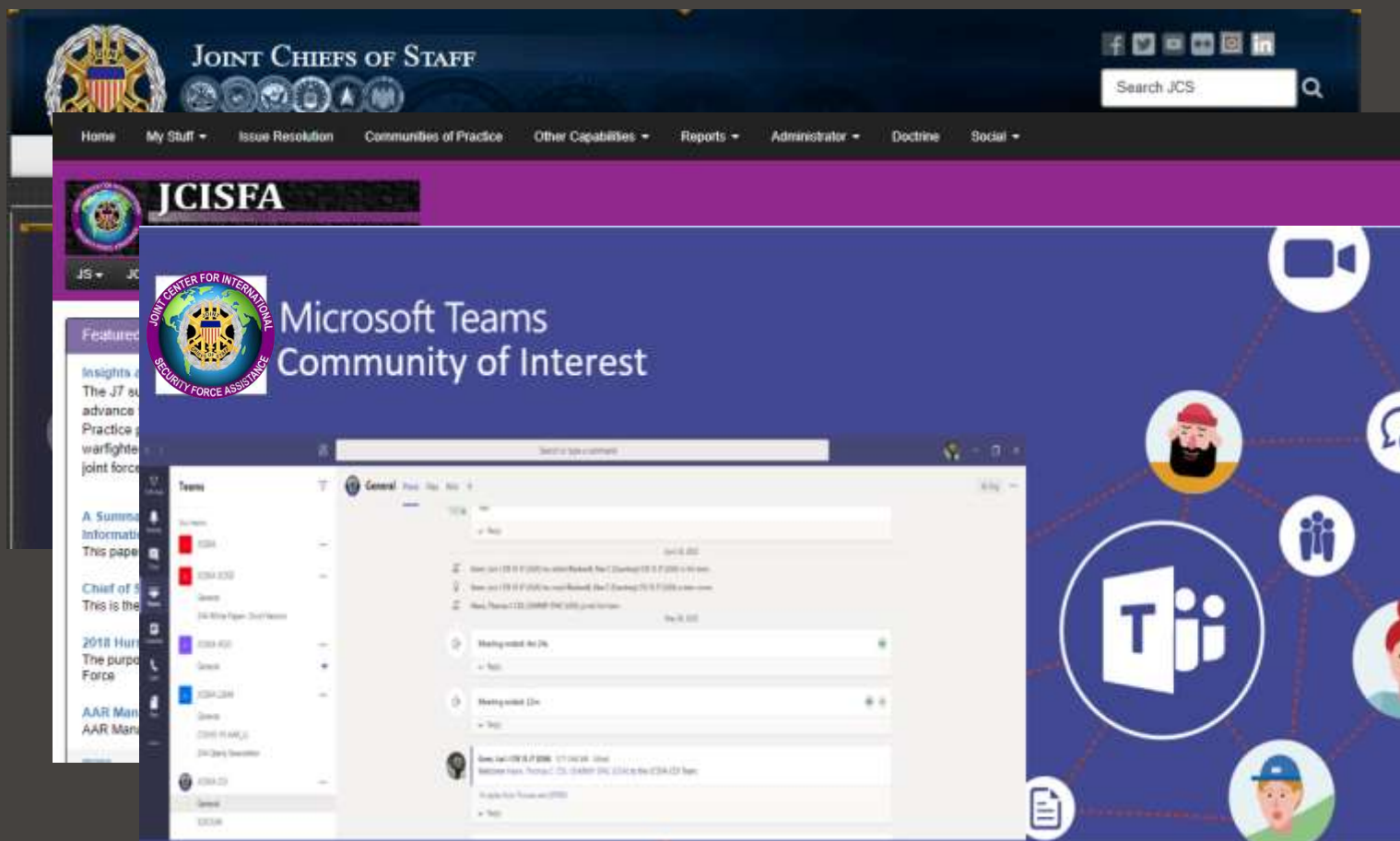
You may use an RFI, not only to request more information about Security Force Assistance, but also to provide feedback and recommendations on content or suggest topics for future editions of this newsletter.

For email, go to our website through the Joint Staff (<https://www.jcs.mil/Directorates/J7-Joint-Force-Development/JCISFA>) and click the email link at the bottom. Via the web, use any of our social media sites or through the Chairman's Joint Lessons Learned Information System (JLLIS).

To join our Community of Interest on Microsoft Teams, open Teams, select the "Teams" button on the left, and type "J7JCISFA Col" in the "Join or create a team" field at the bottom. Someone from JCISFA will add you to the members.

## JCISFA Social Media

JCISFA's presence on social media platforms, Facebook and Twitter, allows you to stay in touch with the latest JCISFA news. "Like" our Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/JCISFA> and follow us on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/JCISFA>. You can also find us on milSuite at <https://www.milsuite.mil/>.



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