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# Security Force Assistance and the Concept of Sustainable Training as a Role for the U.S. Military in Today's World

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*As the U.S. defense budget decreases, security cooperation programs, activities and missions that build partnerships and partner capacity are likely to become the primary focus of all geographic combatant commands. Although the Department of State (DoS) leads and provides oversight for security cooperation efforts through its bureaus, offices, and overseas missions, security cooperation activities are conducted and coordinated throughout the geographic combatant command area of responsibility (AOR), by, with and through the [Geographic Combatant Command].<sup>1</sup>*

– FM 3-22: Army Support to Security Cooperation, 1-1

Senior Army leadership use examples of Soldiers conducting Security Force Assistance (SFA) missions throughout the world as a demonstration of US Forces' adaptability and versatility. One such example is an Army Staff Sergeant traveling to Burundi to train African partner militaries within 36 hours of arriving on the continent. Another example is U.S. Army Combat Engineers providing instruction on counter-improvised explosive device (CIED) vehicle operation and IED interrogation instruction to soldiers from countries contributing forces to the African Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) in Mogadishu, Somalia. Members of the U.S. armed forces demonstrate the professionalism and skill that we expect of our Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, and Marines.

Their actions, while essential, must be tied into a broader strategy within a country, region, or theater in order to have a true impact. More importantly, the training must be sustainable, providing the partner country with experts who further disseminate that training throughout their armed forces. The execution of a CIED Train the Trainer program between Combined Joint Task Force – Horn of Africa (CJTF-HOA) and the Kenya Defence Forces (KDF) provides a snapshot of well-executed, sustainable training practices that can be implemented into future events at any level.

The U.S. military has successfully executed SFA missions around the world for decades. This article uses the successful CIED Train the Trainer experience with the KDF to illustrate the sustainable training model as a method of planning. The success of this event, and any other SFA operation, will be short-lived if this training is not grounded in a long-term strategy with the KDF and AMISOM or used to illustrate the success of sustainable training for the rest of the U.S. military. If we do not incorporate sustainable planning into



our operations, the military will demonstrate through action that it is not the adaptive, learning organization that we advertise ourselves to be.

### **What is Security Force Assistance?**

The U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) defines SFA as “DoD activities that contribute to unified action by the U.S. Government to support the development of capacity and capability of foreign security forces and their supporting institutions.”<sup>2</sup> These activities must also support regional and international security organizations that are operating as partners.<sup>3</sup> The US Army has adopted the DoD definition of SFA for use within its doctrine.

SFA operations are conducted as a subset of security assistance activities authorized by the Foreign Assistance Act and the Arms Export Control Act). Security assistance is also referred to as security cooperation when administered by DoD. These acts created 12 programs categorized as “components of U.S. foreign assistance” under the control of the U.S. Department of State (DoS).<sup>4</sup> The DoS has delegated administrative authority of seven of these programs to the DoD; they are managed by the Defense Security Cooperation Agency.<sup>5</sup>



**SECURITY FORCE ASSISTANCE**

*Security force assistance (SFA) is unified action to generate, employ, and sustain local, host nation, or regional security forces in support of a legitimate authority.*

- SFA actions include joint, interagency, intergovernmental, multinational, nongovernmental, and private company cooperative efforts to ensure and support unity of effort / unity of purpose.
- US forces assist foreign security forces (FSF) development and operation across the range of military operations -- combating internal threats such as insurgency, subversion, and lawlessness, i.e., foreign internal defense.
- To be successful, SFA must be based on solid, continuing assessment and include the organizing, training, equipping, rebuilding, and advising of the forces involved. It is critical to develop the institutional infrastructure to sustain SFA gains.
- The resulting FSF must possess the *capability* to accomplish the variety of required missions, with sufficient *capacity* to be successful and with the ability to *sustain* themselves as long as required.

Figure 1: Provides a description of Security Force Assistance and how U.S. forces make it successful. Source: JP 3-22: Foreign Internal

Defense, VI-32

### What is Sustainable Training?

The concept of sustainability is not new. It has been used in economics, as a tenet of engineering, and as a goal of international development. It has also found its way into the military doctrine describing security force assistance, though without a specified definition. Cassen *et al.* provided a question through which the sustainability of a training event can be evaluated: “[W]ill this help in the long-run to increase the recipients’ self-reliance?”<sup>6</sup> Sustainable training has a specified goal of “[eliminating] the need for future support from another outside organization.”<sup>7</sup>

The U.S. Army utilizes two specific concepts that provide a foundation for conducting sustainable SFA: Train-the-Trainer events and Mobile Training Teams (MTT). Train-the-Trainer events are focused on increasing an organization’s capacity to be self-



sufficient by creating experts in a specific capability. By creating a requirement that all Soldiers on an SFA mission be experts within their field, they will be agile enough to conduct a Train-the-Trainer event as required.

The concept of MTTs as utilized by the U.S. military<sup>8</sup> applies to the partner nation receiving the training. An MTT is a self-contained training element that can be sent to military installations throughout a host-nation or forward deployed in support of their forces. By utilizing the concept of Train-the-Trainer events to create MTTs within a partner nation, the U.S. military will create a sustainable training event that allows the partner to become self-sufficient and capable of executing training wherever their forces are deployed. In turn, this will support the holistic process of creating a sustainable capability by focusing on the Doctrine and Training portions of the DOTMLPF concept.<sup>9</sup>

#### **Unified Action – SFA as a Way**

Security Cooperation planning begins with the same document as all U.S. Government planning and strategy: the National Security Strategy. Published by the President of the United States, this document is utilized by both the DoD and DoS as the base of their respective strategic documents; the National Defense Strategy and National Military Strategy for the DoD and the Joint Strategic Goals and Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review for DoS. The Quadrennial Defense Review, which articulates how the DoD will execute the missions assigned within the National Security Strategy, is published every four years.<sup>10</sup>

Specific guidance for Combatant Commanders is found in the Guidance for Employment of the Force and the Joint Strategic Capabilities Plan.<sup>11</sup> It is at this level that the interaction between DoD and DoS elements within a combatant command become apparent.<sup>12</sup> Combatant Commanders, with input from DoS, are required to conduct planning for specific activities within the next 2 years and create goals for the next 5-10 years in a Theater Campaign Plan (TCS).<sup>13</sup> These goals provide the “road map” for attaining the end states within the command. In order to reach support the TCS, a strategy must take into account the Plan’s objective to be sustainable for both the U.S. and host nation.

The integration of DoD and DoS strategies is readily apparent at the point of execution with a Country Plan created by the Senior Defense Official/Defense Attaché (SDO/DATT) and the Integrated Country Strategy from the U.S. Ambassador and country team. This integration is necessary to ensure a strategy appropriate to the specific operational environment is created. This ensures a



focused, tailored, and sustainable training plan based on U.S. Government desired end states is implemented within a region or country.

The DoD documents produced at every level of planning, with corresponding documents from DoS, are illustrated in Figure 2.<sup>14</sup>

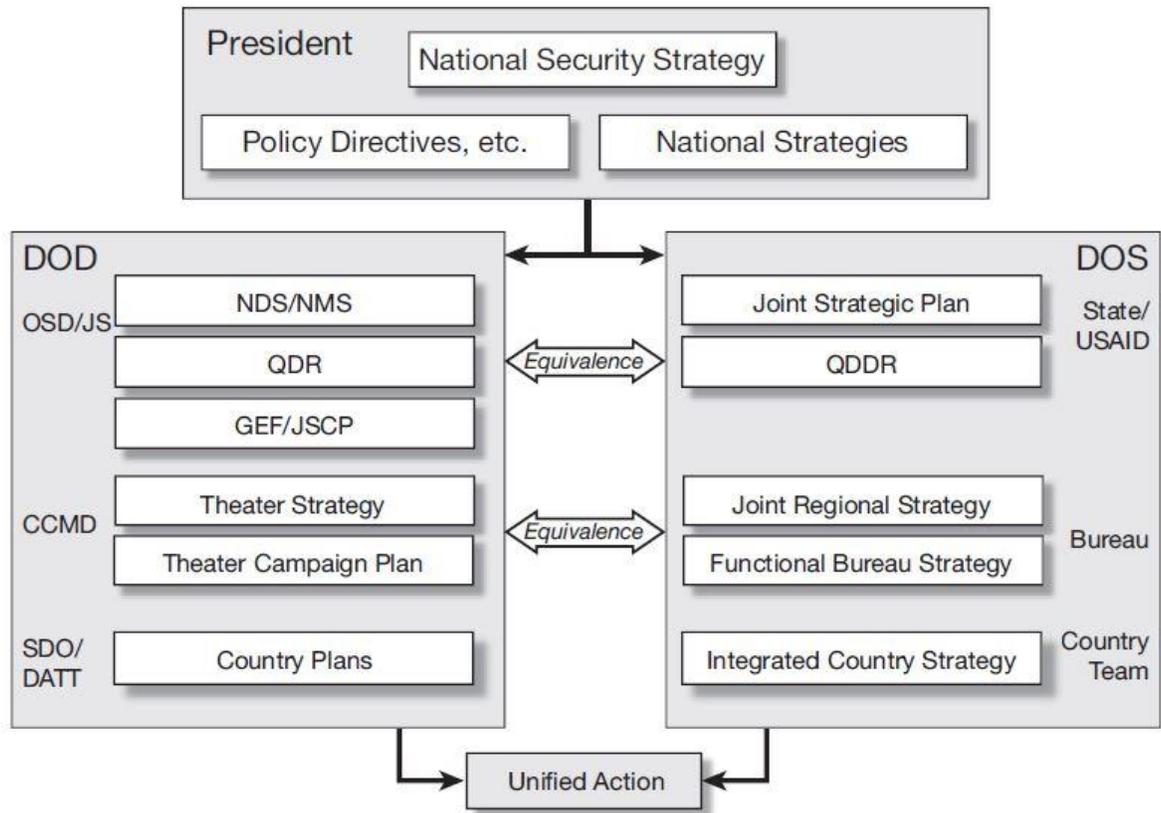


Figure 2: The flow of planning and strategy documents for both DoD and DoS from the National Security Strategy to the Country Plan and Integrated Country Strategy. Source: Defense Institute of Security Assistance Management, “The Management of Security Cooperation”, April 2014, 19-2.

### Kenyan CIED Program History

The government of Kenya, through the Kenya Defence Forces (KDF), has contributed forces to the AMISOM mission in Somalia for more than 10 years. In that time, the threat of IEDs against the AMISOM troops has increased concurrent with the IED threat against US forces globally. Prior to 2015, U.S. and partner forces trained KDF soldiers for an operational environment that included IEDs. These soldiers would then deploy to Somalia and conduct operations as a unit. The ability to transition the KDF to a sustainable CIED training model came in 2015, when KDF leadership wanted to create CIED training teams similar to US Army MTTs.



This was a two-fold opportunity, meeting the KDF desire to become self-sufficient in CIED instruction while also providing a tangible example of the U.S. military's willingness to create near-peer programs within partner nations.

As a member of the Regionally Aligned Brigade (RAB) deployed in support of CJTF-HOA, 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, 77<sup>th</sup> Armor (1-77AR) participated in a CIED planning conference with U.S. Navy Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) personnel, KDF Engineers, and KDF EOD Technicians in February 2015. The purpose of the conference was to develop a long-term CIED training strategy to counter the IED threat facing Kenya's forces deploying in support of AMISOM. This event was the first of its kind for U.S. and Kenya CIED partnership. The conference had two distinct purposes: to familiarize U.S. personnel with KDF CIED operations and develop a way forward for enhancing Kenya's capabilities.

Understanding the KDF's current capacity to conduct CIED operations was instrumental to developing a sustainable training plan. KDF officers demonstrated that they were implementing applicable doctrine and best practices developed by coalition forces in Afghanistan and Iraq to defeat the IED threat in Somalia. Many leaders had extensive knowledge of clearance operations from participating in demining efforts throughout Africa. To supplement those hard-won lessons, KDF personnel regularly receive CIED training from other entities such as the British Peace Support Team and Africa Contingency Operations Training and Assistance.<sup>15</sup> The KDF presentation also provided U.S. personnel with an understanding of the KDF's Combat Engineer and EOD task organization and material capabilities. The information provided by KDF leaders revealed that their CIED program could be improved through three lines of effort: additional material solutions to counter the IED threat, more pre-deployment training for Soldiers outside the Engineer and EOD community, and a pool of validated KDF CIED instructors.

Providing material solutions are governed by the Arms Export Control Act and occur when the requesting country submits a formal letter of request through the U.S. Embassy to the Department of State, Combatant Command, Defense Security Cooperation Agency, and implementing agency.<sup>16</sup> Such efforts were outside the scope of ability for the U.S. personnel attending the conference, but it was important to avoid the pitfall of making empty promises to deliver new equipment. Therefore, KDF and U.S. personnel agreed that the remainder of the conference should focus on developing Kenya's CIED training.



Providing more U.S.-led pre-deployment training for Soldiers outside of the Engineer and EOD community presented significant long term problems. Regionally aligned forces are rotational, making it difficult to establish continuity between U.S. instructors and the partner nation. Each individual mission requires extensive coordination between the requesting nation, the Embassy's Security Cooperation Officer, the combatant command, and the regionally aligned unit providing the training.

Training a pool of validated CIED cadre within the KDF provided an opportunity to initiate a sustainable CIED training program. This solution provided an affirmative answer to the question posed by Cassen *et. al* of "[W]ill this help in the long-run to increase the recipients' self-reliance?"<sup>17</sup> The KDF possessed a significant amount of CIED knowledge and proficiency within the organization, but they lacked the capability to distribute that knowledge throughout their formations. KDF CIED capacity could be increased by selecting the right group of Kenyan Engineers and EOD Technicians to attend a Train-the-Trainer course built on a standardized CIED curriculum and education via the U.S. Army's 8-Step Training Model. This solution gained the immediate support of both U.S. and KDF personnel attending the conference, who spent the final two days of the conference developing a way forward for the Train-the-Trainer program.

U.S. and KDF forces utilized a number of sustainability best practices in order to develop a curriculum and training plan. The Institute for Sustainable Infrastructure addresses leadership as part of a holistic view of sustainable design and practice. The Institute divides sustainable leadership into three categories: collaboration, planning, and management. These concepts proved applicable to developing sustainable security cooperation programs.<sup>18</sup> *Collaboration* for sustainable projects refers to "input from a wide variety of stakeholders to fully capture synergies, savings, and opportunities for innovation."<sup>19</sup> *Management* refers to a plan to "...expand the useful life of the project, and protect against future problems."<sup>20</sup> *Sustainability* is enhanced through planning by reducing the required resources over time through a long-term focus.<sup>21</sup>

These concepts enabled U.S. and KDF forces to develop a sustainable model for the Train-the-Trainer program. The course curriculum was created in full collaboration with KDF personnel to ensure that the most important stakeholder, the KDF, felt a sense of ownership for the future of the CIED program. KDF leaders worked to develop a management system to ensure that the right KDF



Engineers and EOD Technicians were selected for training. Finally, KDF personnel made a concerted effort to focus on the long-term view, committing to create a self-reliant KDF CIED training program within three years.

U.S. Army Engineers and Navy EOD conducted the Train-the-Trainer course in August 2015, training more than 30 KDF CIED instructors. This success is a step toward building sustainable near-peer competency for Kenya's CIED program. However, significant hurdles still remain to develop the realization of a long-term sustainable training model. The need also exists to implement stakeholders such as the British Peace Support Team into long-term, self-reliant CIED program planning to ensure that a consistent and unified CIED curriculum is used for all KDF personnel regardless of allied organization conducting it.

### **Conclusion**

While the future of conflict is unknown, it will undoubtedly include U.S. military service members teaching and mentoring partner nation militaries. Whether these are Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines, or Coast Guardsmen, the U.S. will continue to be a force of choice for our partner countries due to their skill and expertise. No matter how high quality this instruction is, it will not have a long-term impact if it is not sustainable, taking into account the needs of all of the stakeholders.

It is this stakeholder analysis that will truly determine the legacy of any training event. There are two types of primary stakeholders in each of these events: the partner organization (nation, regional security element, etc.) being trained and the U.S. government. Only by understanding the expectations of these stakeholders, designing an event that meets their disparate objectives and requirements, and integrating the resulting event into a long-term strategy, will an SFA event be truly successful.

The execution of the Counter-Improvised Explosive Device Train the Trainer program between CJTF-HOA and the Kenya Defence Forces provides an example of just such an engagement. If the event is not a part of a long-term strategy with the KDF and AMISOM, or used to illustrate the success of sustainable training for the rest of the U.S. military, this success will be short-lived. More worryingly, it will show the U.S. military is not the adaptive, learning organization that we tout ourselves to be.

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#### NOTES

1. FM 3-22: *Army Support to Security Cooperation*, (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office [GPO], January 2013), p. 1-1.
2. Joint Publication 1-02: *Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*, (Washington D.C.: GPO, amended 15 January 2015).
3. DoDI 5000.68: Security Force Assistance (SFA), 27 October 2010, accessed 9 August 2015, <http://dtic.mil/whs/directives/corres/pdf/500068p.pdf>.
4. Defense Institute of Security Assistance Management, *The Management of Security Cooperation* 34 (Washington D.C.: GPO, April 2014), 1-2. Hereafter referred to as DISAM.
5. *ibid*, 1-2.
6. Robert Cassen, et al, *Does Aid Work? Report to an Intergovernmental Task Force* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986). Cassen, et al. were writing about the effectiveness of monetary aid in international development. This question is applicable to security assistance, as both involve providing a good or service not currently available in a host country.
7. Adam R. Brady, “Sustainable Development as a Military Tool,” *Small Wars Journal*, accessed 9 August 2015, <http://smallwarsjournal.com/jrnl/art/sustainable-development-as-a-military-tool>.
8. JP 3-22: *Foreign Internal Defense Operations* (Washington D.C.: GPO, Jul 2010): VI-15.
9. DOTMLPF stands for Doctrine, Organization, Training, Materiel, Leadership & Education, Personnel, and Facilities. It is used by DoD as a construct to solve problems and manage change. See <http://www.arcic.army.mil/AboutARCIC/dotmlpf.aspx> for more information.
10. DISAM, AB-20.
11. *Ibid*, AB-12.
12. *Ibid*, 19-2 to 19-3.
13. *Ibid*, 19-2 to 19-3.
14. *Ibid*, 19-2. Figure 19-2: Flow of National Planning. Describes the documents which originate in DoD and their corresponding DoS equivalent.
15. The British Peace Support Team (BPST), located in Kenya, is the UK military’s element in East Africa that coordinates military assistance. See <http://www.army.mod.uk/operations-deployments/22724.aspx> for more information.



Africa Contingency Operations Training & Assistance (ACOTA) is a DoS program focused on improving the peacekeeping capabilities of African nations and regional institutions. See <http://www.state.gov/p/af/rt/acota/> for more information.

16. DISAM, "The Management of Security Cooperation", April 2014, 5-6 to 5-7.

17. Cassen, *et al.*

18. Institute for Sustainable Infrastructure, "Envision Rating System for Sustainable Infrastructure" (2015), 48.

19. *Ibid*, 48.

20. *Ibid*, 48.

21. *Ibid*, 48.