



COMISAF ADVISORY AND ASSISTANCE TEAM

CAAT SPECIAL REPORT

SECURITY FORCE ASSISTANCE (SFA) SUMMARY

31 MARCH 2012

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DISCUSSION**(NIU) Institute SFA Training**

(NIU) ISAF must ensure that all stakeholders – Afghans, the US, and Troop Contributing Nations (TCNs) – have a common understanding of SFA and its criticality to the Transition of security to our Afghan partners. Personnel at all levels should be briefed and trained on the SFA concept and its implementation in support of the ISAF Campaign Plan and to facilitate transition and integrated operations. Operational elements serving within ISAF should receive SFA training similar to the SFA training that ATs receive. To support this goal, training modules should be incorporated into all Pre-deployment Training (PDT) for units deploying to the Afghan theatre. It is essential that such training recognize the delicate balance between kinetic operations and Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) development. Whenever possible, it should be reinforced during PDT that every member of ISAF is a potential sensor whose insights could contribute to the commander's situational awareness. Afghan forces should also be trained in the importance of their requirements within the SFA concept.

(NIU) One area that may require further education across the board is the relationship of the Partnered Unit (PU), Transition Support Unit (TSU), and the Advisory Teams (ATs) in regards to Transition, assessments, and Afghans in the lead. For example, the ATs are a supporting effort when assigned to a PU but become the main effort when assigned to a TSU. Whether a BCT is a PU or a TSU is determined by either the assessment of the Afghan unit being partnered or advised or the Tranche status of the district the Afghan unit operates. This sounds complicated but is not if demonstrated in real terms, which should be required as part of every leader's SFA preparation.

(NIU) SFA AT PDT

(NIU) The "half-life" theory of operational experience and relevance applies. Even when training an individual who served on the same type of Advisor Team he is currently deploying with – but who redeployed almost a year ago – his information and understanding of the operating environment and unit capabilities are severely dated. Whether through increased use of VTCs, or finding a way to return current advisors back to the JRTC rotation, the most valuable training tool available is the Marine or Soldier who is part of the team currently advising the specific ANSF unit in the specific AO where the team-in-training will advise.

(NIU) In a related area on manning, in an unscientific sampling of the March 2012 advisor course at Ft. Polk, the CAAT advisor discovered that logistics and fire support positions on the ATs were manned with strong and experienced SMEs. The police positions were manned by only military police. However, the biggest manning shortfall is in the intelligence positions. All teams are designed to have an intelligence officer; however, only one of the four teams questioned had an intelligence officer. In one case, the Captain responded to what his specialty was by asking the CAAT advisor "for this mission or by training?" He was an artillery Captain filling the intelligence position.

(NIU) Another alternative is for the BCTs to alter the task organizations of the ATs so the PU or TSU commander can weight specific efforts. For example, commanders can pull intelligence Soldiers from ATs and pool them in a new task organization to work with MICOs, or pool several police to make a “police heavy” AT.

(NIU) Based on observations by the CAAT during the second iteration of the 162nd ITB Advisor Academy in March 2012, there are four main issues on the new advisors’ minds: 1) How to advise (which was not addressed adequately in their minds); 2) enabler use and support; 3) force protection (requirement, what is organic and what has to be coordinated); and 4) the skill sets required to advise police and OCCs. The recent course had a module on how to advise and then five key leader engagement exercises, but the advisor module failed to adequately translate into the reality of the Afghan environment. When asked what enablers they needed to be able to apply as advisors, they only could identify two – CAS and MEDEVAC. Their force protection comments demonstrated a lack of understanding on the situation they will deploy into, i.e., they thought they would operate autonomously from their assigned BCT and were not dependent on them for support. They also had many questions on how the insider threat would impact their ability to advise. The term “guardian angel” was a foreign term. None of the personnel assigned to an OCC AT knew what an OCC was. They also recognized they were inadequately prepared to advise civilian police.

(NIU) **Deployment**

(NIU) As surge recovery continues, and Force Manning Level (FML) reductions limit commanders’ main effort options, SFA provides a streamlined approach to maintain ANSF capacity-building and, in particular, ANP development by utilizing an economy of force solution and expanding advisor enablers.

(NIU) **Inform the International Community (IC)**

(NIU) Currently, the IC is either uncomfortable – or generally ignorant – of what is meant by SFA or what it will achieve. In CAAT discussions with the civilian police community and representatives from the US, UK, and Australian Embassies, they either possess a general misunderstanding or a lack of any knowledge of the SFA concept. To address the difficulties of solving the poorly conceived sourcing strategy for police billets, the support of the embassies and the civilian police community is critical; however, they have not been approached for help and therefore are not directly part of the solution. The solutions developed to address the military stakeholders will address much of this shortfall, but a formal explanation and request for support seems necessary. The SFA FRAGO, SFA Narrative, SFA Principles and SFA videos and road show may address the IC’s concerns, but ISAF should review the effectiveness of these information initiatives after their release.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

(NIU) **Common understanding and unity of effort.**

- (NIU) Release the ISAF FRAGO on SFA as soon as possible. Distribute the Strategic Narrative to GIRoA as soon as possible. Commanders must ensure that personnel down to the lowest level understand the principles of SFA.
- (NIU) Record and distribute an SFA video as soon as possible. Once COMISAF approves the release of 15 video clips on the SFA principles, disseminate them for use at the pre-deployment training (PDT) for incoming troops and ATs from all TCNs.
- (NIU) Provide leader training on the concepts of Partner Units and Transition Support Units and their relationships with Advisor Teams, Afghan security force units and Transition.
- (NIU) Provide guidance to Advisor Team and BCT leaders on matching team leaders and teams to the optimal pairing of Afghan units and situations.

(NIU) **PDT for SFA ATs.**

- (NIU) Focus SFA ATs on the specific area in which they will be operating and the specific unit they will advise.
- (NIU) Ensure the SFA ATs receive current info on the specific area and the ANSF units they will be deploying with, by increased use of VTCs and SMEs from the theater, specifically the deployed ATs when possible.
- (NIU) Pair teams with their ANSF partner based on abilities and experience.

THE INTENT OF CAAT SPECIAL REPORT IS TO SHARE UNCLASSIFIED REPORTS TO UNITS DEVELOPING TRAINING PLANS IN PREPARATION FOR DEPLOYMENT INTO THE AFGHANISTAN THEATER OF OPERATIONS. ALTHOUGH UNCLASSIFIED, THESE REPORTS CAN CONTAIN SENSITIVE INFORMATION ON CURRENT TACTICS, TECHNIQUES AND PROCEDURES. RESPECTFULLY REQUEST THAT LEADERS HANDLE THIS INFORMATION TO BOTH SUPPORT TRAINING REQUIREMENTS AND PROTECT EFFECTIVE PRACTICES.

**John Walsh, COL, USMC
HQ ISAF-CAAT, Commanding**