The RAND Corporation is a nonprofit institution that helps improve policy and decisionmaking through research and analysis.

This electronic document was made available from www.rand.org as a public service of the RAND Corporation.

Skip all front matter: Jump to Page 1

Support RAND

Purchase this document
Browse Reports & Bookstore
Make a charitable contribution

For More Information
Visit RAND at www.rand.org
Explore the RAND Arroyo Center
View document details

Limited Electronic Distribution Rights
This document and trademark(s) contained herein are protected by law as indicated in a notice appearing later in this work. This electronic representation of RAND intellectual property is provided for non-commercial use only. Unauthorized posting of RAND electronic documents to a non-RAND website is prohibited. RAND electronic documents are protected under copyright law. Permission is required from RAND to reproduce, or reuse in another form, any of our research documents for commercial use. For information on reprint and linking permissions, please see RAND Permissions.
This report is part of the RAND Corporation research report series. RAND reports present research findings and objective analysis that address the challenges facing the public and private sectors. All RAND reports undergo rigorous peer review to ensure high standards for research quality and objectivity.
Leveraging Observations of Security Force Assistance in Afghanistan for Global Operations

Leslie Adrienne Payne, Jan Osburg

Prepared for the United States Army
Approved for public release; distribution unlimited
The research described in this report was sponsored by the United States Army under Contract No. W74V8H-06-C-0001.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data
Payne, Leslie Adrienne.
Leveraging observations of Security Force Assistance in Afghanistan for global operations / Leslie Adrienne Payne, Jan Osburg. pages cm.

UA853.A3P33 2013
355.4—dc23 2013038833

The RAND Corporation is a nonprofit institution that helps improve policy and decisionmaking through research and analysis. RAND’s publications do not necessarily reflect the opinions of its research clients and sponsors.

Support RAND—make a tax-deductible charitable contribution at www.rand.org/giving/contribute.html

RAND® is a registered trademark.

Cover photo by MC3 Richard J. Stevens

© Copyright 2013 RAND Corporation

This document and trademark(s) contained herein are protected by law. This representation of RAND intellectual property is provided for noncommercial use only. Unauthorized posting of RAND documents to a non-RAND website is prohibited. RAND documents are protected under copyright law. Permission is given to duplicate this document for personal use only, as long as it is unaltered and complete. Permission is required from RAND to reproduce, or reuse in another form, any of our research documents for commercial use. For information on reprint and linking permissions, please see the RAND permissions page (www.rand.org/pubs/permissions.html).

RAND OFFICES
SANTA MONICA, CA • WASHINGTON, DC
PITTSBURGH, PA • NEW ORLEANS, LA • JACKSON, MS • BOSTON, MA
DOHA, QA • CAMBRIDGE, UK • BRUSSELS, BE
www.rand.org
The U.S. Army’s Asymmetric Warfare Group (AWG) requested that the RAND Corporation conduct a study on how to leverage observations from Security Force Assistance (SFA) efforts in Afghanistan for global operations. Between January and April 2013, RAND researchers interviewed a total of 67 advisors and SFA practitioners at the tactical and operational levels—the majority of whom were based in Afghanistan’s Regional Command East (RC-East)—in order to collect their firsthand insights into SFA. Interviewees included members of Security Force Assistance Teams (SFATs) and Special Forces Operational Detachments–Alpha (ODAs), senior leadership at the brigade level, and AWG Operational Advisors (OAs).

Many challenges recognized by the interviewed advisors have been well documented in the past decade. Yet the enduring nature of most of these challenges suggests that solutions still remain uncertain. The results indicate that SFA efforts in future theaters will benefit from the following suggestions:

- Modernize Army advising and combat-related narratives to generate capable and confident SFA advisors.
- Aggressively leverage the experience and institutional knowledge gained by Special Forces conducting Foreign Internal Defense (FID).
- Continue to seek out the best advisor candidates.
- Recognize that good training takes time.1
- Ensure that attention to the mission’s end state overrides attention to advisors’ personal end states.
- Remain focused on team operations and security during the advising mission.
- Maintain mental and cerebral fortitude while advising.
- Communicate and adhere to existing doctrine.

Future SFA missions, such as those envisioned for the Army’s Regionally Aligned Forces, can benefit from the experience gained from SFA in Afghanistan, as captured, for example, in the insights above. These lessons need to be incorporated both at the institutional level and by individual SFA advisors.

---

1 Results of Headquarters International Security Assistance Force Joint Command SFAT Lessons Learned Section, 2012.