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INCORPORATING SECURITY FORCE ASSISTANCE INTO THE CANADIAN ARMY'S MISSION READINESS TRAINING PLAN

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*“The most important military component [of the campaign] is not the fighting we do ourselves, but how well we enable and empower our partners to defend and govern their own countries” –
Former US Secretary of Defense Robert Gates*

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AIM

1. The aim of this paper is to recommend adopting Security Force Assistance (SFA) and Capacity Building (CB) into the Canadian Army's (CA) annual training cycle and Managed Readiness Plan (MRP) to better prepare the CA's Force Generated (FG) force for employment on operational missions. Over the last decade, SFA has become a bigger part of Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) missions abroad, with the CA contributing a large portion of the forces conducting the training of indigenous¹ forces. This trend is likely to continue with the current government's policy of internationalism and engagement, as reflected in the new Defence Policy². By having SFA and CB institutionalized, it will better prepare personnel, allow for more effective resource management, and improve synchronization for the Whole of Government (WoG) approach for Canada's international engagement strategy.

INTRODUCTION

2. In the present geopolitical climate, security remains a vital concern among many western countries with the intent of fostering stability. Within that context, Canada has been and continues to conduct robust SFA and CB. The CA bolstered security in the waning days of the Afghan campaign by transitioning from Combat Operations to SFA with the deployment of Op ATTENTION forces³, and in the Ukraine they participated in a multinational Task Force to

¹ Throughout this paper the terms "indigenous", "host-nation", and "local" are used interchangeably when referring to state security forces that the CAF are assisting in developing and capacity building.

² Canada, Department of National Defence. *Canada's Defence Policy: Strong, Secure, Engaged*. (Ottawa, 2017), 86.

³ Bruce Campion-Smith, "Canadian troops mark last holiday in Afghanistan", *Toronto Star* (Toronto, Ontario, 26 Dec 2013), A.21.

conduct SFA and Security Force Capability Building (SFCB) in the guise of Op UNIFIER⁴.

Although not a CA task, Op IMPACT also saw the increase of SFA by Special Operations Forces (SOF) as Canada shifted the strike mission in Iraq and Syria to a mission of indigenous force development⁵. For the CA, the current trend of deployed operations indicates that SFA and CB will likely continue into the near-future as part of the Canadian WoG approach. As such, the CA should look to formalize SFA training within their High Readiness (HR) training cycle and MRP.

3. Another aspect of SFA and CB that increases the chances of an operational deployment is that it exists across the spectrum of conflict⁶ since it falls into the category of stability operations. From the initial shaping phase, throughout conflict escalation, and in post-conflict transition to rebuilding, stability operations should be conducted as part of a comprehensive campaign plan. As a part of stability operations, SFA can be conducted throughout. In effect, it is paramount for mission success to allow the transition from allied/coalition forces to host nation forces assuming security. With this in mind, this paper will examine the current ad hoc approach the CA has toward SFA and CB and will propose improvements to the FG model. In formalizing SFA training, identifying dedicated forces for the task, and empowering the SFA centre of excellence (COE), the CA can improve the approach to SFA and CB while still leveraging the current HR training model.

DISCUSSION

⁴ Captain Mathieu Dufour, “5 Canadian Mechanized Brigade Group Deploys to Ukraine on Operation UNIFIER, 2 Canadian Mechanized Brigade Group Comes Home”, *Targeted News Service*; (Washington, D.C. Jan 10, 2016).

⁵ Michael Den Tandt, “This is now Trudeau's war”, *National Post*, (Don Mills, Ontario, 10 Feb 2016), A.4.

⁶ Canada. Department of National Defence. *B-GL-322-001/FP-001 Stability Activities and Tasks*. (Ottawa: Land Force Doctrine and Training System, 2012).

Terminology⁷

4. With broad definitions used by the CAF, allies including the US and GBR, and NATO, it is vital to provide concise definitions in which partner development is discussed. The following definitions will be used for this paper, with SFA focusing at the military tactical level, SFCB at the military operational level, and CB at the intergovernmental operational and strategic levels.

- a. SFA - In support of a legitimate authority, the generation, employment and sustainment of local, host-nation, or international security forces, and the transfer of security responsibilities.
- b. SFCB - Activities undertaken to develop the institutional and operational capabilities of foreign or international security forces to create appropriate, effective and legitimate security institutions and forces.
- c. CB - consists of four basic elements: creating an enabling environment with appropriate policy and legal frameworks; institutional strengthening and development, including local community participation; human resources development; awareness building and education at all levels of society.

Current SFA FG Model

5. The Canadian Army, through the Leading Mounting Division (LMD), annually conducts a Brigade (Bde) Group level collective training event to validate a Battle Group (BG) identified as HR for mission deployments, IAW the Managed Readiness Plan (MRP)⁸. This occurs

⁷ The terminology contained in this paper is IAW <http://www.btb.termiumplus.gc.ca/tpv2alpha/alpha-eng.html?lang=eng&index=alt> (PWGSC)

⁸ Canada. Department of National Defence. *Army Operating Plan FY2018/2019*, (Army Publishing Office, 2018), 3-3/7.

whether there is a named operational mission for the BG or not once it is declared HR for the following year. Often times, training personnel identified for SFA missions is incorporated into this training event when there is a specific named mission, such as rotations for Op ATTENTION and Op UNIFIER. Other times a separate, smaller scale training plan is conducted when the calendar does not permit synchronization, or on initial stand-up of an SFA mission outside of the training cycle.

6. The Bde training event, usually in the form of the Maple Resolve exercise series, is based on high-intensity conflict to prepare the BG for combat operations to ensure the force is prepared for the worst eventuality. Because of this, SFA training objectives are often not easily integrated into the training plan and there can be a lack of coordination for scarce training resources. Additionally, the SFA task is an additional burden CA senior non-commissioned officer (SNCO) and junior officer personnel as they are usually the composite members of SFA training teams. These members will either be over-burdened with SFA tasks over and above their normal duties, or more likely they will be tasked out of their parent units to the SFA Task Group, leaving leadership gaps in many organizations already suffering from junior leader shortfalls. The unit is left to adapt to the unforeseen personnel gap.

7. CA personnel identified for SFA missions typically originate from the Bde in the HR Training Cycle, especially for unforecasted missions, since the members are categorized as “green” and ready to deploy. Time permitting, members usually follow a tailored pre-deployment training program based on mission specific requirements, including cultural and language training. This training plan is adapted from direction and guidance received from the Force Employer (FE) Canadian Joint Operations Centre (CJOC) and the CA HQ, and input from

the Peace Support Training Centre (PSTC), as a part of the Canadian Army Doctrine and Training Centre (CADTC). Often times, SFA personnel deploy with minimal knowledge of their roles until they arrive in the operational theatre and adapt to the conditions and requirements of the mission. This challenge can be compounded in the context of coalitions. With other allied nations also contributing to the SFA mission, individual roles can be ill-defined. As missions mature, the coordination between subsequent rotations of CAF personnel allows for improved preparations and members deploy with a greater understanding of their expected roles and SFA development objectives.

8. In the case of the rarer SFCB mission, members are usually generated pan-CAF through CJOC due to the senior nature of their employment and inherent “jointness”, such as the Ministerial Liaison Team to the Iraqi Security Forces as part of Op IMPACT⁹. For the purpose of this paper and to limit scope, the focus will remain on the CA’s ability to generate SFA task groups, however there is no constraint on the CA providing training support to SFCB task groups. It is assumed that SFA and SFCB fall within the scope of Canada’s overarching CB mission.

Allied SFA Challenges

9. The CA is not unique in their lack of a formalized approach to SFA and CB and allied armies struggle with similar issues. Despite the size and operational history of the US Army, they do not have a permanent institution dedicated to development of SFA and CB doctrine and operations, with Secretary Gates framing the issue that “the Army has created ad hoc [SFA]

⁹ Canada. Department of National Defence. *Teleconference with Brigadier-General David Anderson, Director of the Global Coalition’s Ministerial Liaison Team (MLT) deployed on Operation IMPACT*, (National Defence Headquarters, August 24, 2016).

capabilities with no real joint or interagency backbone or lasting capability”¹⁰. Much like the CAF, the American operational expertise for SFA resides within the SOF community. Support to SOF SFA tasks from the greater organization and SFA tasks to conventional force units is, as the Secretary says, ad hoc. Some of the key SFA issues that the US Army faces are a lack of common planning approach, assessment tools and reliable measures of progress, and no unified operating system to ensure command and control¹¹. The US Army does have an advantage over the CA as they have elements of the SOF community integral to their organization, so sharing expertise and experience can be done more informally, whereas the CA needs to reach out to CANSOFCOM for theirs. NATO faces a different challenge than most National Armed Forces. In the Joint Force Training Centre (JFTC), they have an organization that can plan and coordinate training for SFA, including executing it in the operational theatre with the target audience forces, as well as the benefit of NATO-developed SFA and CB doctrine¹². However, NATO does not have any dedicated troops to execute the missions since the forces come from Troop Contributing Nations (TCN) for specific missions and timelines.

Baseline SFA and CB Training Requirements

10. The CA’s current doctrine for Capacity Building resides within an overarching document that covers all stability activities and tasks¹³. SFA is described to a limited extent in theoretical terms and principles, comprising security, governance, and development¹⁴. Although the doctrine

¹⁰ Robert M. Gates, Secretary of Defence, “*Landon Lecture*,” (Manhattan: Kansas State University, November 26, 2007).

¹¹ Scott G. Wuestner, “Building Partner Capacity/Security Force Assistance: A New Structural Paradigm.” *The Letort Papers Series*, (U.S. Army War College, 2010), 10.

¹² The primary NATO reference for SFA is AJP-3.16A Allied Joint Doctrine for Security Force Assistance (SFA): NATO Standardization Office, 2016.

¹³ Canada, Department of National Defence. *B-GL-322-010/FP-001 Stability Activities and Tasks*. (Ottawa: Land Force Doctrine and Training System, 2012).

¹⁴ *Ibid*, 170.

does cover some important planning factors, most notably the comprehensive approach to planning in an interagency and multinational environment¹⁵, it does not go into detail about developing a training plan for task groups assigned to SFA operations. The NATO doctrine is more comprehensive with a document specifically on the subject of SFA¹⁶. In it there is a baseline of considerations that can serve as a starting point for developing CA doctrine for SFA training, including

- a. SFA force requirements and primary purpose.
- b. Local force considerations, including motivation, morale, ethnicity, gender, education (for example, literacy) and culture.
- c. Training curriculum.
- d. Level of assistance.
- e. Operational training environment considerations and required training activities.
- f. Cultural expertise required for training the local forces.
- g. Enablers or specialists required.
- h. Training sustaining during and after the SFA mission.
- i. Assessment and evaluation strategies.

¹⁵ *Ibid*, 175.

¹⁶ NATO. *AJP-3.16A Allied Joint Doctrine for Security Force Assistance (SFA)*, (NATO Standardization Office, 2016).

- j. Integration of training activities (SFA) within broader strategic communications strategies (CB).
- k. Assumptions and limitations.
- l. Legal requirements.

New SFA and CB Direction

11. With the new defence policy elaborated in *Strong, Secure, Engaged*, the Minister of Defence formalized the importance of SFA and CB as part of the CAF mandate. Two of the eight core missions identified for the CAF directly deal with capability building and a third task could easily be argued to also touch on the subject of SFA since a better trained and developed indigenous force enhances the deterrence effect¹⁷:

- a. Lead and/or contribute to international peace operations and stabilization missions with the United Nations, NATO and other multilateral partners.
- b. Engage in capacity building to support the security of other nations and their ability to contribute to security abroad.
- c. Lead and/or contribute forces to NATO and coalition efforts to deter and defeat adversaries, including terrorists, to support global stability.

¹⁷ Canada. Department of National Defence. *Strong, Secure, Engaged*. (Ottawa: Chief of the Defence Staff, 2018), 17.

With this new direction, the CA is better enabled to develop and integrate SFA and CB into their current and future training. A better trained and coordinated force will also be more agile and responsive to the government of Canada's engagement needs.

12. The CA has captured these missions and incorporated them into the political direction in the CA annual Operating Plan¹⁸, however the newly accentuated SFA and CB concepts have not been translated into formalized tasks to the LMDs, training objectives, or task lines within the MRP¹⁹. The Commander of the CA has tasked the Chief of Staff Army Operations (COS A Ops) to reviewed the MRP in the next year²⁰, which could provide scope to developing and integrating SFA and CB tasks within the CA OPPLAN. With tasks integrated with the MRP and HR training cycle, baseline SFA training can be formalized and will cease to be ad hoc. A formalized training plan will also help SFA task groups to be more easily scalable, since groups will not need to be built from scratch or assembled haphazardly, with only mission-specific task-tailoring required for operational deployments.

Formalizing SFA Training

13. Within section of *Strong, Secure, Engaged* that describes the CAF's new approach to national defence operations, PSTC is mentioned specifically in the context of force development of partner forces and capacity building²¹. The CA should leverage PSTC's already integral role within the SFA and CB domain by formalizing the organization as the Centre of Excellence (COE) for SFA and CB within the CA establishment. In this regard, specific direction from CA

¹⁸ Canada. Department of National Defence. *Army Operating Plan FY2018/2019*, (Ottawa: Army Publishing Officer, 2018). 1-3/13.

¹⁹ *Ibid*, Chapter 2, Annex A.

²⁰ *Ibid*, 2-4/16.

²¹ Canada. Department of National Defence. *Strong, Secure, Engaged*. (Ottawa: Chief of the Defence Staff, 2018). 86.

HQ, through CADTC, can help shape their efforts in developing the CAF's SFA and CB operational requirements. This will also provide PSTC the leverage to develop a training plan and integrate it within the MRP. Finally, by identifying PSTC as the SFA COE, it will also enable them to coordinate internally with other CA organizations, specifically the Army Lessons Learned Centre (ALLC) and LMDs, and externally with CJOC, SOF, and SFA and CB COE of allied nations and NATO, to craft and continue to improve the CA's SFA baseline training plan.

14. For FG Divisions, specifically the LMDs in the Training for High Readiness (HR) Phase and the HR/Operations Phase, the CA should enable them by giving them explicit SFA task lines in the annual Army Operating Plan and MRP. This will be a forcing-function to generate a SFA trained HR capability that can then be task-tailored for mission-specific operations. Having a trained HR common SFA task group to build on will expedite short-notice SFA deployments and encourage cross-domain cooperation with other government agencies developing the CB plan.

15. To avoid diluting the mission and combat power of the HR BG and prevent competing training objectives, a separate unit in the Bde Group should be identified as the Lead Mounting Unit (LMU) for the HR SFA Task Group. The Bde Gp HQ can deconflict and synchronize training and resources between the two organizations, especially in the improbable event only one force is deployed on operations. This approach worked well in the final rotations of Op ATHENA in Afghanistan and lessons learned from that training cycle can be applied on a more permanent basis to the MRP.

CONCLUSION

16. With the trend in CAF operations abroad that has been developing over the last decade, SFA and CB will continue to be an integral part to Canada's international engagement strategy

for security operations. To better enable the CA to fulfil its operational readiness mandate, measures can be taken to formalize SFA training into the annual Army Operating Plan and MRP. The incorporation of Lessons Learned from CAF and allied operations and identifying organizations to develop and lead planning and training will better enable CA HR forces. These steps will help dedicated forces tasked with SFA to be more agile and responsive, and scalable and adaptable to specific mission requirements, within the WoG approach that now shapes all National Defence endeavours.

RECOMMENDATIONS

17. Canadian Army Doctrine and Training Centre Headquarters (CADTC HQ), in close cooperation with CJOC, should synchronize SFA training program through the PSTC as the COE.
18. A SFA Task Line should be inserted into the Managed Readiness Plan, whether there is a named SFA mission or not, within the tasks of the Lead Mounting Division (LMD) during HR training and HR operational readiness periods.
19. In the CA Operating Plan, the annual HR Training Cycle should incorporate SFA training objectives to ensure planning is conducted and synchronized, and resources allocated.
20. Within the HR Bde a unit, separate from the HR BG, should be identified for the SFA task. Bde Light Bns are ideally suited to the task, however the task should not be exclusive. SFA Task Groups should be task-tailored for named missions, and could also be led by Armour, Artillery, or Engineer units. The LMD, with input from the Bde, should decide to which unit the HR SFA task will be assigned.

21. SFA and CB planning should be used as a “forcing-function” to better coordinate interdepartmentally to improve understanding at the tactical level of objectives of named operational missions and the WoG approach.

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