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### ***Enlisted Support***

Another alternative to improve the RAS program is currently being implemented by the Army, which is to recruit enlisted members to provide additional support in international affairs programs. The Army program is called the Foreign Area Noncommissioned Officer program. This program is for Senior NCOs and allows them to work alongside the FAO focusing on Security Cooperation Management and are key tools for "filling the gaps when there are Army FAO shortages."<sup>109</sup> In addition to filling the shortage gap, the FANCO program provides the ability for the Army to interact with foreign militaries, not only at the officer level, but from the NCO perspective as well.<sup>110</sup> Even if the Air Force does not choose to single-track, this would be an effective way to fill in gaps with qualified NCOs where there may not be qualified officers available to work Security Cooperation and BPC programs.

### ***Common Career Name***

The least significant recommendation is for the Air Force to have a common name as the Army and other services, therefore elevating confusion and ensuring awareness of their role in the international community. This simple recommendation was published by the IDA study which stated that all the services should use the designation of FAO because using other terms caused confusion within the Services, the Defense and the Joint communities.<sup>111</sup> It went on to



say that using a common name would ensure these organizations understood the role of the RAS/FAO and would clearly designate the qualifications they carry to perform international affairs functions.<sup>112</sup>

## **CONCLUSION**

RAS and FAO personnel are integral in furthering the objectives of the United States NSS. Ensuring their programs are effective and successful is essential given their role in implementing Security Cooperation and BPC. This paper employed an evaluation research framework to determine if the Army FAO or the Air Force RAS program better fulfills the objectives set by DoD Directive 1315.17 and DoD Instruction 1315.20 for international affairs programs. This paper evaluated how well RAS/FAO personnel were trained in language, regional expertise and cultural awareness, their ability to interact with foreign militaries, if officers were retained for international affairs assignments and if officers were provided opportunities for competitive career advancement. An analysis of the results showed that both programs require improvements in meeting DoD Directive 1315.17 and DoD Instruction 1315.20, but the Army FAO program exceeded the Air Force RAS program in many areas.

The RAS program has made improvements over the years, but continued improvement is required to meet DoD Directive 1315.17. Improving the RAS program would provide better qualified professionals who would be more culturally agile, have greater regional expertise, would be better able to interact with foreign militaries and would be fully vested in their career fields. Recommendations for improvement included creating a full time, single-track RAS program, creating a RAS Reserve Component, creating a NCO RAS career field and providing a common name as other services. Implementing these recommendations to the RAS program would result in professionals who are better qualified to implement Security Cooperation and

BPC programs. Some may say a full time billet would reduce operational capability and decrease promotion rates; however, the Army FAO program provides an example of how single-tracking can more successfully met DoD objectives and still keep professionals competitive. The Air Force would have fewer tradeoffs and more successes by allowing professionals to focus full time on their region, Security Cooperation and international relations. Full time RAS professionals would have the cultural awareness and specific knowledge to provide solutions that more effectively benefit the international partner and in the end meet the needs of the United States government.

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