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A Developmental Approach to Building Sustainable Security-Sector Capacity in Africa

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Preface

This report documents the results of the RAND Corporation's Implementation of Security Sector Assistance in Africa project. As part of the project, we analyzed the determinants of sustainable gains in partner-nation security-sector capabilities and their implications for U.S. security sector assistance (SSA) policies toward the U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM) area of responsibility.

The findings should interest those in the foreign policy and defense communities concerned with security sector assistance and counterterrorism policies, especially in Africa but also more broadly. It should be of particular interest to planners in AFRICOM, the Office of the Secretary of Defense, and other stakeholders in the SSA process.

This research was sponsored by the director of AFRICOM's J1/8 Directorate and conducted within the International Security and Defense Policy Center of the RAND National Defense Research Institute, a federally funded research and development center sponsored by the Office of the Secretary of Defense, the Joint Staff, the Unified Combatant Commands, the Navy, the Marine Corps, the defense agencies, and the defense Intelligence Community.

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Summary

Since the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, the United States has made massive investments in the security sectors of Iraq and Afghanistan and sizable investments in the security sectors of many other counterterrorism partners. In general, however, immediate operational goals have taken priority over concerns for the sustainability of the capabilities the United States has been helping to build. Nearly two decades after the United States committed itself to combating transnational terrorist groups, evidence suggests that this focus on immediate needs has led to the development of operational capabilities that partner nations cannot sustain on their own. As a result, U.S. policymakers are increasingly calling for heightened attention to sustainability as a critical criterion in deciding where, when, and how best to provide security sector assistance (SSA) to partners around the globe.[1] The most recent National Defense Authorization Act highlighted this emphasis on sustainability.

[1] According to Presidential Policy Directive 23, SSA

> refers to the policies, programs, and activities the United States uses to engage with foreign partners and help shape their policies and actions in the security sector; help foreign partners build and sustain the capacity and effectiveness of legitimate institutions to provide security, safety, and justice for their people; and enable foreign partners to contribute to efforts that address common security challenges. (White House, "Fact Sheet: U.S. Security Sector Assistance Policy," press release, April 5, 2013)

SSA is the term designated to encompass such related terms as security assistance, security cooperation, security sector reform, building partner capacity, and defense institution–building (DIB), among others.

Although policymakers and observers largely agree that sustainability is desirable in principle, it is much less clear how to achieve this goal in practice. As one planner whom we interviewed for this study commented, "Sustainability is now a part of all U.S. policy discussions. But how to get it is still a mystery. And it's not clear . . . where the guidance about how we should be going about it is coming from."[2] This report seeks to help fill that gap. We focus on ways to improve the sustainability of SSA for counterterrorism in one specific theater: the U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM) area of responsibility. In particular, we attempt to answer four questions:

- Is it possible—within current and likely future constraints—to build *sustainable* security capacity in African partner nations?
- If so, what practices best incorporate sustainability into capacity development?
- What challenges would the U.S. government face in implementing such practices?
- Given these challenges, how might the U.S. government—and DoD and AFRICOM in particular—modify its current practices to achieve improved sustainability?

Answering these questions is critical not only to combating current threats in this theater—such as the Islamic State in Libya, Boko Haram in Nigeria, and al-Shabaab in Somalia—but also, and perhaps more importantly, for preventing the emergence of future threats.

Research Approach and Initial Evidence

To determine the conditions under which capabilities developed through U.S. SSA are sustained in Africa, we ideally would examine all instances in which the United States has contributed such assistance, determine the extent of security capabilities developed, and then trace

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[2] Four U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) officials involved in SSA planning, interview with the authors, Interview 10, November 2016.

how long these capabilities were sustained. Unfortunately, data limitations prevent such analysis: The United States has historically done a poor job of systematically collecting data on the type and amount of assistance it provides, much less on partners' baseline capabilities and the amount of change observed following the provision of U.S. assistance. Because even such basic data are highly incomplete, it should come as no surprise that the United States has also failed to track the data in consistent ways over long periods to determine which capabilities are sustained.[3]

What evidence exists is a combination of a handful of quantitative analyses of related propositions and anecdotes derived from interviews, trip reports, after-action reviews, and so on. The quantitative analysis that does exist suggests that the success of SSA depends primarily on the quality of the partner's state institutions. Where the partner has relatively strong bureaucracies capable of managing budgets and personnel, and where the partner has incentives to use its security forces and U.S. assistance responsibly, SSA can contribute to improved capabilities. Unfortunately, many countries in Africa suffer severe deficits of governance. It is therefore unsurprising that prior quantitative analyses have found little evidence that U.S. SSA has substantially improved security capabilities in the region. Qualitative analyses provide more nuance, but the general picture is the same. Some examples of successful security projects in Africa exist, but these are overshadowed by many more stories of disappointments.

Less clear are the reasons for this record. Because the United States has typically not emphasized the sustainability of capability gains derived from its assistance, failures may be partly attributable to U.S. practices—particularly the United States' historical emphasis on building operational capabilities while neglecting the security institutions necessary to maintain these capabilities. While U.S. officials interviewed for this research were clear about the challenges of working

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[3] The historical inattention to monitoring and evaluation in this field is beginning to change. Many parts of the U.S. government have undertaken substantial new efforts to monitor and evaluate U.S. SSA. Unfortunately, these efforts are still nascent, so they do not yet provide the data necessary for generalizable conclusions.

with many African partners, they also were often emphatic about the problems of the United States' own making. "The system," one former senior U.S. official declared, "is designed for failure."[4] Another official echoed this judgment. Because of the U.S. focus on immediate operational objectives, he said, "The whole model is upside-down. We train and equip our partners first, then worry about institution-building."[5]

Instead of relying on highly limited quantitative data or on case studies with uncertain generalizability, this report adopts a different approach. While the security community has somewhat-limited experience seeking to build sustainable capacity in less-developed partner nations, the development community has decades of experience in this field. Although the development community certainly suffers from its own limitations, we seek to understand how insights from this community might usefully be modified to the unique challenges of the security sector and, even more specifically, to DoD's efforts to strengthen the security-sector capabilities of African partner nations.

To do so, we first undertook an extensive review of the relevant development literature, including evidence on the effectiveness of various development community practices. We also reviewed the record of a handful of security-sector initiatives in Africa that sought to incorporate principles and practices recommended by the development community. In a second stage, we interviewed several dozen U.S. SSA practitioners to understand the extent to which such principles and practices could be adapted to the requirements of the security sector. In a final step, we recommend how U.S. objectives, resources, and processes might be adapted to reflect those insights from the development community that are applicable to the security sector.

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[4] Phillip Carter, former U.S. ambassador to Côte d'Ivoire and former deputy to the commander for civil-military engagement at AFRICOM, interview with the authors, Interview 12, June 2016.

[5] Three DoD officials involved in SSA planning, interview with the authors, Interview 7, November 29, 2016.

Principles, Good Practices, and Challenges

Although the United States has relatively little experience attempting to build the security-sector institutions of developing nations, it does have decades of experience building other forms of government capacity in developing countries. This experience has provided extensive opportunities for the development community to observe what types of approaches and programs tend to work. The experience also has led to the identification of broad principles that guide the design of capacity-building development programs and offer insight into how capacity might be developed in SSA. Five principles have particular relevance to building sustainable partner capacity: local ownership; a comprehensive approach; selectivity; harmonization; and long-term, iterative adaptation. These principles are seen as important but still evolving guidelines rather than a set of unchanging and universally applicable rules that must be followed.

Although the principles for building sustainable partner capacity generally apply to the security sector, the challenges differ, sometimes greatly, from those in the development sector. Nonetheless, they provide insight and context for SSA approaches. First, lasting solutions cannot be imposed. They require the local government to take ownership of the program. Absent that, once U.S. officials turn their attention elsewhere or depart, the program will wither. Second, the approach must be comprehensive. That is, it cannot target one aspect of a systemic issue. For example, it is not difficult to teach effective patrolling techniques; however, unless changes are also made in doctrine and training institutions, any gains will be limited to those immediately receiving instruction, and they will not last beyond the time the individual unit stays together. Third, selection of partners and the type of engagement to use with them is critical. Assistance providers should have the appropriate experience, cultural understanding, and skill sets to carefully select the right partners and effectively engage with them. Fourth, efforts must be harmonized. This requires all stakeholders to share information, ensuring complementary rather than conflicting or duplicative efforts; collaborate to streamline processes and capitalize on lessons learned from prior efforts; and use the right personnel

Table S.1
Developmental Principles and Good Practices

Principle	Good Practices
Local ownership	• Collaborate with partners in goal-setting, program design, baseline assessments, and evaluations. • Build capacity within existing institutions using local systems and processes.
Comprehensive approach	• Analyze local institutions and incentives. • Identify and support critical enablers. • Support complementary capacity-building at the institutional level. • Evaluate a wide range of impacts over an extended period.
Selectivity	• Carefully select partners. • Focus on enduring gains. • Carefully select assistance that builds incrementally on existing partner capacity.
Harmonization	• Coordinate more effectively with other U.S. agencies and donors. • Build on and learn from others' efforts.
Long-term, iterative adaptation	• Target assistance to address specific local problems. • Build flexibility and responsiveness into program design. • Secure long-term funding and personnel commitments. • Adopt an experimental mindset. • Use repeated evaluations to adapt program implementation on the fly.

and resources to implement a program. Finally, enduring SSA requires long-term, iterative adaptation. This entails preserving the flexibility to adapt programs and methods as engagements progress and mature. Table S.1 summarizes these principles and associated good practices.

In conducting our research, we found that the SSA community is aware of many of these principles and good practices. Planners and

implementers in this field, however, face systemic barriers to adopting the practices, and they are unclear which of the practices might be adapted to the requirements of SSA. These challenges flow from both the U.S. government and the partner nation and can occur in each stage of SSA program development and execution. Some of these barriers result from the processes that define U.S. SSA planning, implementation, and evaluation. Others stem from inherent differences between development and SSA efforts, given that the latter often must balance immediate counterterrorism needs with both longer-term U.S. goals of building partner capacity and partners' own, sometimes divergent, security aims. In developing our policy recommendations, we paid particular attention to these challenges and the consequent need to adapt developmental principles to the specific context of the security sector.

Policy Recommendations

Our recommendations fall into three broad categories: objectives, resources, and processes. Within each area, we organize recommendations by the policy actor primarily responsible for implementing them.

Objectives

The first step in any strategic planning effort is to set focused, obtainable objectives derived from the interests of both the United States and its partners. We note that sustainability as an objective must compete with often more-powerful influences, such as a threat or the attractiveness of a willing partner.

At the national level, we recommend the following:

- *Clarify U.S. government goals for SSA.* Goal-setting for individual countries is shaped by national-level policy that extends beyond regional and threat-based strategy and directly affects the lower echelons in planning goals, programs, and metrics by which to measure those efforts. Appropriate higher-level guidance is an important prerequisite for successful country-level planning.

- *Emphasize continuity.* Consistently advocate for and approve SSA programs that foster continuity from engagement to engagement. These efforts must be collaborative and iterative across government agencies and based on continuous assessment efforts.

At the DoD level, we recommend the following:

- *Set realistic expectations among decisionmakers.* Building sustainable partner capacity takes a long time. Often, pressure exists within DoD to accomplish a mission under unrealistic expectations.
- *Dedicate funds for institution-building and sustainability.* These funds should be dedicated to investments in the partner institutions responsible for sustaining capacity gains over the long term.
- *Prioritize sustainability in oversight roles.* DoD should commit to sustained engagements to reinforce the capabilities developed in previous years and should exercise increased oversight over subordinate levels to ensure that proposals for new programs include provisions for capability sustainment.

At the AFRICOM level, we recommend the following:

- *Organize in ways that prioritize sustainability.* Currently, AFRICOM prioritizes threats over sustainability, and that priority is reflected in AFRICOM's organization and that of its working groups. A focus on sustainability would emphasize organization around priority partners, because the politics and social context of specific countries shape sustainability, rather than the characteristics of transnational threats. A focus on such threats means that staff members do not gain a deep understanding of a particular country's security sector.

Resources

Translating high-level objectives into the desired outcomes requires appropriate resourcing. However, the allocation of U.S. SSA resources and the procedures governing them pose challenges to implementing

developmental principles. In particular, the current system makes it difficult to implement a truly comprehensive approach, because funding is disproportionately oriented toward operational over institutional-level programming.

At the national level, we recommend the following:

- *Provide additional resources for DIB.* Funding shortages for DIB impede improving the sustainability of capacity gains supported by U.S. SSA. Although many programs might contribute to DIB, only five programs relevant to Africa focus on it specifically. Most DIB-specific programs have small budgets and limited scope in Africa.
- *Invest in the right people.* DoD has difficulty developing and managing personnel with the right skill sets to conduct its SSA activities. Some of the human resource requirements for improving SSA sustainability may simply not be possible without changes in broader personnel practices at the national level, potentially including changes in military promotion processes or authorizations for additional civilian billets in SSA planning offices.
- *Improve resources for monitoring and evaluation.* Rigorous evaluations by external, objective analysts can provide critical feedback for any program. While such evaluations are not cheap, they are not exorbitantly expensive if incorporated into a program's budget and into the design of the program. Moreover, improved efficiencies could offset a portion of that cost. Multiyear funding would enable AFRICOM and other SSA entities to plan evaluations into SSA programs more effectively and predictably and to shift focus to sustainability.

At the DoD level, we recommend the following:

- *Invest in the right people.* Even without any changes to appropriations, DoD can take many steps to cope with its critical shortage of appropriate personnel for SSA planning. Both DoD and the U.S. Army are taking steps to meet the personnel challenges, but they are limited in the steps they can take to rectify this issue.

Many human resources requirements for SSA rightly fall outside of what DoD can provide, and DoD should clarify these requirements to the White House and Congress so that the demand is recognized and can be acted on at those levels.

At the AFRICOM level, we recommend the following:

- *Invest in advisors.* The United States should invest in long-term advisory and education programs. Practitioners noted that the most effective type of engagement involves side-by-side mentorship and embedded engagement programs, but few resources are currently allocated to such long-term mentorship. AFRICOM has dedicated resources to try to correct this shortcoming, but it also might investigate the possibility of funding senior personnel (retired general or flag officers) to serve as senior advisors.
- *Resource repeated engagements.* Sustainable change often demands persistent engagement. AFRICOM should fund repeated engagements with the same partners and work to maintain capabilities developed in prior engagements. Given resource constraints, not all follow-on events need be as large or lengthy as the original ones.

Processes

SSA processes informed by developmental principles should emphasize collaborative planning with partner nations, iterative adaptation of SSA programming over extended periods, and efforts to harmonize the initiatives of the many stakeholders involved in the U.S. SSA enterprise. Although certain programs emphasize these principles, congressional notification processes, interagency coordination schedules, and other procedural hurdles pose major challenges to the principles' full implementation in other programs.

At the national level, we recommend the following:

- *Alter legislation and funding to facilitate iterative adaptation.* If Congress wants to emphasize the sustainability of capacity gains realized through SSA, it should consider altering legislation and funding to provide additional flexibility in how resources can be

used. For example, a pooled reserve of standard equipment could be withheld until a unit demonstrates that its responsibilities and capabilities are sufficient to receive the equipment. Another possibility would be to establish a small reserve of funds in certain programs for needs that are determined after the engagement begins.
- *Adapt approaches to partnerships.* Collaborating with recipient nations is important to improving sustainability. Such collaboration could include the requirement for some level of financial investment by the partner nation. This approach asks the partner nation to provide some of its own funding to secure U.S. support. The goal is to increase the partner nation's buy-in to the program.

At the DoD level, we recommend the following:

- *Continue to align interagency efforts.* Reforms in the fiscal year 2017 National Defense Authorization Act will assist DoD in aligning timelines and processes. DoD should work for similar alignments with other SSA authorities not included in the new law. This alignment could involve the development of clear memoranda of understanding between DoD and the U.S. Department of State to establish roles and responsibilities in SSA program development and coordination. DoD should also drive collaboration among its own offices and interagency partners to develop clear and cohesive articulations of each government program's goals in particular countries.
- *Develop two-track monitoring and evaluation processes.* Well-designed evaluations can play a critical role in iterative adaptation. Failures in some programs can occur, even when the partner is on a path to eventual success. Thus, DoD should develop a two-track approach to evaluation: (1) quick-turn, informal evaluations focused on rapid learning and adaptation and (2) much longer-term, rigorous evaluations focused on accountability. Quick-turn evaluations that uncover problems should result in either modifying the current program or directing funds elsewhere. The longer-term evaluations focus on the achievement of systematic data collection on a set of indicators. These evaluations can help deter-

mine whether the program should be adjusted, provided additional support, or terminated.

- *Focus on interconnections among programs.* Both observers and practitioners have recognized the need to tie train-and-equip efforts to DIB efforts to have a comprehensive approach to SSA. But planners have trouble in practice connecting these programs. DoD should provide actionable, sustainable direction for its SSA entities to implement and institutionalize over time and should model these procedures and policies at senior levels to foster adoption. Further, DoD can identify templates of good practices in SSA programs.
- *Conduct political risk assessments and develop risk mitigation strategies.* U.S. planners should consider political risk, in keeping with the principle of adopting a comprehensive approach to assistance. Although such analyses are difficult, DoD is already conducting some and could conduct others to develop its capacity for risk analysis. It could develop templates that could help guide political risk assessments, work with various DoD entities (such as U.S. Southern Command) and other U.S. departments to develop guidance on data collection that might inform risk assessments and ensure that such data are widely shared, and resource fact-finding missions and long-term tracking of data and trends.

At the AFRICOM level, we recommend the following:

- *Improve collaboration with priority partners.* Partners should be intimately involved in gauging their own weaknesses and developing plans to correct them. They should work with U.S. personnel to identify appropriate benchmarks to be achieved by agreed-upon timelines. Failure to achieve these benchmarks should prompt in-depth discussions about what changes are required by both sides to achieve the desired goals.
- *Tailor SSA to the local context.* The first step would be a careful assessment of a partner's needs, but many of the people interviewed for this report believed that the current U.S. assessment process does not facilitate such tailoring. AFRICOM should use

the equipment, processes, and mechanisms that are most familiar and conducive to sustainability in a given partner nation. SSA is often challenged by a lack of continuity and support in providing sustainment packages (e.g., replacement parts, maintenance training). Where possible, AFRICOM should provide equipment that is compatible with other equipment used by a partner nation and that can be sustained beyond the duration of the program. AFRICOM should also examine processes to better understand corruption challenges.

- *Experiment with different approaches.* Several interviewees expressed skepticism about the principle of local ownership. The United States cannot simply accept poor-quality proposals from its partners, but it can accept small-scale initiatives that are not expected to yield successful outcomes if these initiatives can be used to promote learning and adaptation. The United States should refuse to fund failed approaches but should be willing to fund alternatives if the partner can make a strong case for why a reformed approach would work.
- *Focus on interconnections among programs.* Long-term commitments in SSA require understanding how engagements at multiple levels relate to each other. To foster mutually enforcing and sustained capabilities across all levels, AFRICOM personnel need to understand the breadth of all engagements focused on a particular country's national security apparatus. AFRICOM should determine which levels of engagement (that is, operating force, generating force, or executive direction) would have the greatest influence and how to ensure that efforts at each level are coordinated and mutually supportive so that they have the greatest chance of long-term sustainability.
- *Improve SSA training for headquarters staff and implementers.* Standardized training for certain SSA positions would help create a baseline understanding across the SSA enterprise on authorities, funding mechanisms, and interagency coordination. AFRICOM should develop and implement a standardized, repeatable course to train and test its planners and program managers on SSA authorities, programs, lines of funding, coordination and

approval processes, interagency equities, knowledge management systems, lessons learned, and more. Additional training should also be provided to those implementing SSA on the ground.

- *Improve knowledge management.* Learning and adaptation require stakeholders to share knowledge of good (and failed) practices. For assessment, monitoring, and evaluation systems to be useful, they must be easily accessible by all major stakeholders and must prove themselves useful to those stakeholders. AFRICOM has improved its knowledge management systems, but work remains to be done. Connectivity issues outside of the AFRICOM headquarters limit access, automation of data-sharing across platforms is incomplete, and manual data entry is often slow and incomplete because of connectivity problems and the lack of full stakeholder commitment to providing the necessary data. This issue is sufficiently important that necessary resources should be dedicated to resolving the network and software issues.

None of these recommendations, either singly or together, guarantees that partner capacity gains will be sustained. The more of them that can be implemented, however, the greater the likelihood that the United States will realize enduring changes through its assistance.

Acknowledgments

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Abbreviations

9/11	terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001
AFRICOM	U.S. Africa Command
AIDS	acquired immunodeficiency syndrome
AME	assessment, monitoring, and evaluation
AMISOM	African Union Mission in Somalia
AOR	area of responsibility
COCOM	combatant command
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DIB	defense institution–building
DoD	U.S. Department of Defense
FY	fiscal year
G-TSCMIS	Global Theater Security Cooperation Management Information System
HIV	human immunodeficiency virus
IATTS	Integrated AFRICOM Theater Synchronization System
IMET	International Military Education and Training
NDAA	National Defense Authorization Act

NGO	nongovernmental organization
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OSD	Office of the Secretary of Defense
PPD	Presidential Policy Directive
SGI	Security Governance Initiative
SOF	special operations forces
SSA	security sector assistance
SSD	security sector development
SSR	security sector reform
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
USAID	U.S. Agency for International Development

CHAPTER ONE

The Goal of Sustainable Capacity Development

Before the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 (9/11), the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) infrequently engaged in sustained efforts to build the capabilities of partner or allied security forces in developing countries, apart from arms transfers.[1] When it did so, these efforts were typically intense and dedicated to immediate war-fighting requirements—in particular, the wars in Korea, Vietnam, and El Salvador. Because these capacity-building programs were usually reactions to immediate crises, DoD did not prioritize longer-term considerations. Thus, the department seldom focused on the sustainability of the capacity gains its partners in the developing world made, nor did DoD focus on developing its own capabilities for such efforts.[2] Instead, the United States typically sought rapid replication of its own military structures in partners, regardless of the appropriateness of these structures in the local context. When predictable failures occurred, "the

[1] The United States actively partnered with many developed allies, such as Germany and Japan, over several decades, but such cases present very different challenges from those found in developing countries.

[2] Thomas Ross, "Defense Institution Building: Defining the Discipline in Theory and Practice," unpublished manuscript, undated. This also was not purely a U.S. problem. The broader international lack of focus on security governance issues spurred the development of the security sector reform (SSR) paradigm. For a brief history of the evolution of SSR, see Querine Hanlon and Richard H. Shultz, Jr., *Prioritizing Security Sector Reform: A New U.S. Approach*, Washington, D.C.: U.S. Institute of Peace Press, 2016, Chapter 2.

solution often was to increase the effort," not to implement fundamental changes to DoD's approach.[3]

After 9/11, many of these patterns repeated themselves. But as efforts to combat transnational terrorism have continued for nearly two decades, with no apparent end in sight, this approach has come under increasing scrutiny. Short-term gains in partners' military and broader security capacity have repeatedly been wiped out by a combination of political reversals and military dysfunction, most glaringly in Iraq, but also in such partners as Yemen and Mali.[4] Consequently, policymakers have increasingly sought to prioritize the *sustainability* of partner capacity–building efforts. Concerns for sustainability were among the central motivations behind recent changes in DoD guidance on security sector assistance (SSA) and congressional legislation—most notably, the new framework for security cooperation in the fiscal year (FY) 2017 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA).[5]

This report focuses on ways to improve the sustainability of SSA. Here, *sustainability* is defined as the ability of partner nations to main-

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[3] Robert D. Ramsey III, *Advising Indigenous Forces: American Advisors in Korea, Vietnam, and El Salvador*, Fort Leavenworth, Kan.: Combat Studies Institute Press, Global War on Terrorism Occasional Paper 18, 2006, p. 113.

[4] See, for instance, Eric Schmitt and Tim Arango, "Billions from U.S. Fail to Sustain Foreign Forces," *New York Times*, October 3, 2015.

[5] On recent changes in high-level DoD policy, see Robert O. Work, "DoD Guidance for Security Cooperation," memorandum from the Deputy Secretary of Defense, August 29, 2016; and Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, *Defense Institution Building*, DoD Directive 5205.82, Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Defense, January 27, 2016. For an explanation of congressional concerns underlying the new legislation on SSA, see U.S. House of Representatives, *Joint Explanatory Statement of the Committee of Conference for the Fiscal Year 2017 National Defense Authorization Act*, Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2016. According to that statement,

> the conferees are concerned that insufficient attention and resources have been provided for building institutional capacity at higher echelons, particularly the generating force (e.g. those with 'man, train, and equip' responsibilities) and at the strategic level (e.g. ministerial and general staff levels). The conferees expect the Department to increase its emphasis on strengthening the defense institutions of friendly foreign nations as it builds security cooperation programs and activities and expects proposals submitted to Congress to include a robust defense institution building component.

tain gains in security-sector capabilities without continued inputs from donor nations. *Sustainability* implies that partner nations are able to undertake the full range of activities related to strategic planning and resourcing, human resource management, and acquisitions and maintenance required to support operational capabilities. Because this report was sponsored by U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM), it focuses on potential DoD actions to improve the sustainability of counterterrorism capabilities in AFRICOM's area of responsibility (AOR). Despite this focus, most of the discussion in this report also applies to building other forms of security-sector capability in other parts of the developing world. Because the U.S. Department of State has responsibility for policy oversight of all forms of U.S. SSA, and because the Department of State, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), and other civilian agencies have critical SSA planning and implementation functions, the report frequently discusses broader U.S. government roles and responsibilities even as it focuses on DoD and especially AFRICOM.

Four questions underlie the research in this report:

- Is it possible—within current and likely future constraints—to build *sustainable* security capacity in African partner nations?
- If so, what practices best incorporate sustainability into capacity development?
- What challenges would the U.S. government face in implementing such best practices?
- Given these challenges, how might the U.S. government—and DoD and AFRICOM in particular—modify its current practices to achieve improved sustainability?

Answering these questions is critical not only to combating current threats in this theater—such as the Islamic State in Libya, Boko Haram in Nigeria, and al-Shabaab in Somalia—but also, and perhaps more importantly, for preventing the emergence of future threats.

Scope and Definitions

Many practitioners and observers have struggled with the challenges of capacity development generally and in the security sector specifically. This report does not attempt to answer all of the many questions posed by these difficult issues. Instead, while it draws on insights from the broader field, its core focus is on particular types of assistance and the opportunities available to specific U.S. government actors.

Security Sector Assistance

SSA was the term designated in Presidential Policy Directive (PPD) 23, *Security Sector Assistance*, to describe all efforts to engage with partner-nation security sectors, influence decisionmakers in this sector, build the capacity of entities in this sector, and improve the interoperability of U.S. forces with partner-nation security services. It thus encompasses all of the many related terms in this field, such as SSR, security assistance (SA), security cooperation (SC), security force assistance (SFA), building partner capacity (BPC), defense institution–building (DIB), aspects of foreign internal defense (FID), and others.[6]

DoD has authority under Title 10 of the U.S. Code to administer a variety of SSA programs. Historically, there have been a bewildering number of these authorities and programs, although Congress recently simplified this structure considerably through the FY 2017 NDAA.[7] This report focuses on the Title 10 programs for which AFRICOM has major responsibilities in planning, execution, and evaluation.

Many of the findings in this report apply across the many forms of SSA, but it is particularly important to assess opportunities for improvement in Title 10 assistance. Since the 9/11 attacks, the proportion of DoD-administered SSA has increased enormously; previously,

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6 The contents of PPD 23 are summarized in White House, "Fact Sheet: U.S. Security Sector Assistance Policy," press release, April 5, 2013.

7 For a list of the 47 programs related only to institution-building in Africa that DoD has historically administered, see Appendix A. For a broader examination of the complexity of Title 10 authorities for SSA, see David E. Thaler, Michael J. McNerney, Beth Grill, Jefferson P. Marquis, and Amanda Kadlec, *From Patchwork to Framework: A Review of Title 10 Authorities for Security Cooperation*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, RR-1438-OSD, 2016.

the State Department was responsible for the vast majority of SSA, but now DoD administers a majority of SSA.[8]

Africa

This report focuses specifically on the AFRICOM AOR, which comprises all of Africa except Egypt. Although challenges to building sustainable security capabilities are by no means limited to Africa, the continent represents a particularly important region for study, for several reasons. First, although violent extremist actors in this region are not the primary focus of U.S. global counterterrorism efforts, many of them pose at least a limited threat directly to the United States and are major threats to regional stability and to U.S. allies in Europe. Second, challenges to sustainable capacity-building are particularly acute in Africa: Many states in the region are poor, with underfunded bureaucracies to manage the many needs of the security sector and relatively little experience with either accountable governance or the sorts of civil-military relationships that the United States considers appropriate. Finally, DoD's role in building security-sector capacity in Africa has risen rapidly, from $87 million in 2010 to $381 million in 2015, the most recent year for which full data are available. The latter figure exceeded the $374 million in State Department funding for SSA on the continent that year, when Egypt is excluded.[9]

Combatant Command Focus

Although this report approaches capacity-building principles holistically, its examination of the challenges that SSA planners and deci-

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8 Rose Jackson, *Untangling the Web: A Blueprint for Reforming American Security Sector Assistance*, Washington, D.C.: Open Society Foundations, January 2017.

9 This is still a small portion of global DoD SSA efforts, which stood at $6.9 billion in 2015. DoD figures include all funding for programs categorized as Cooperative Threat Reduction, Drug Interdiction and Counter-Drug, Foreign Military Financing, International Military Education and Training, and Other Military Assistance. State Department figures include all funding for programs categorized as Peacekeeping Operations; Narcotics Control; and Nonproliferation, Antiterrorism, Demining, and Related. See USAID, "U.S. Overseas Loans and Grants (Greenbook): U.S. Economic and Military Assistance Fiscal Years 1946–2014," data set, Washington, D.C., April 22, 2017.

sionmakers face and its policy recommendations focus more heavily on combatant command (COCOM) headquarters, and specifically that of AFRICOM. SSA involves an enormous number of actors throughout the U.S. and partner-nation governments. In the U.S. government alone, SSA requires the cooperation of several bureaus within the Department of State; a wide variety of DoD entities, including the Office of the Secretary of Defense, the Defense Security Cooperation Agency, the armed services, and the COCOMs; and other departments and agencies, including USAID and the U.S. Department of Justice. A focus on COCOM responsibilities is not meant to suggest that these other actors are less important. But many other studies have examined the challenges faced at senior levels of the U.S. SSA structure and at the level of implementers in the field. Despite the fact that COCOMs play a crucial intermediate role, taking the guidance set by senior decisionmakers in Washington and turning it into plans for the execution of Title 10 funds in their AORs, relatively few studies have focused on this level.[10] This report should be useful to planners in AFRICOM and other geographic COCOMs and to the many U.S. officials in other parts of the SSA structure who have relatively little insight into what happens in the geographic COCOMs.

Substantive Focus

Finally, the primary aim of this report is to understand how the United States can build *sustainable* capacity in African partner nations for *counterterrorism* efforts. In doing so, it pays relatively less attention to other important goals.

The United States has adopted a wide range of objectives in Africa.[11] AFRICOM, however, has responsibility for pursuing a much narrower subset of these goals. Of the five main lines of effort in AFRICOM's Theater Campaign Plan, three of them relate to coun-

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[10] See, for example, Jennifer D. P. Moroney, David E. Thaler, and Joe Hogler, *Review of Security Cooperation Mechanisms Combatant Commands Utilize to Build Partner Capacity*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, RR-413-OSD, 2013; and U.S. Government Accountability Office, "Security Force Assistance: Additional Actions Needed to Guide Geographic Combatant Command and Service Efforts," May 2012.

[11] White House, *U.S. Strategy Toward Sub-Saharan Africa*, Washington, D.C., June 2012.

tering violent extremist organizations, including al-Shabaab, Boko Haram, and various organizations that have taken root in the chaos in Libya since the fall of Prime Minister Muammar Ghaddafi.[12] Consequently, this report also focuses primarily on building partner capacity for counterterrorism, although it considers capacity-building in other domains (such as peacekeeping) as well. It does not focus on potential uses of SSA to achieve any other counterterrorism goals, such as assistance provided to improve U.S. interoperability with partner security forces or to influence partner-nation decisionmakers.

Similarly, the decision to focus on the sustainability of partners' capacity gains does not imply that other goals are unimportant. However, sustainability is a complex and important issue deserving of in-depth treatment. One planner whom we interviewed for this study commented, "Sustainability is now a part of all U.S. policy discussions. But how to get it is still a mystery. And it's not clear at a policy level where the guidance about how we should be going about it is coming from."[13] Consequently, while we do not ignore such issues as fighting effectiveness or accountability, we focus on sustainability in this report.

Research Approach

Ideally, we would learn about how to build sustainable security capacity by collecting data on partner nations' security capabilities and U.S. and other nations' programs designed to improve them, then analyze trends over time. Unfortunately, this approach is currently impractical, at least in any rigorous way, for most of the questions we would want to ask. Historically, the U.S. government has not even collected comprehensive, accurate data on the types of SSA it provides.[14] Even with these data limitations, rigorous evaluation of many questions would be possible if good data were available over time on partner nations' secu-

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[12] Commander, U.S. Africa Command, *Theater Campaign Plan 2000–16*, August 18, 2015.

[13] Four DoD officials involved in SSA planning, interview with the authors, Interview 10, November 2016.

[14] See, for instance, Jackson, 2017.

rity capabilities. However, systematically collected data of these sorts also do not exist. This situation is beginning to change. Both DoD and Congress (in the FY 2017 NDAA) have begun to demand improved assessment, monitoring, and evaluation (AME) of SSA. Some geographic COCOMs have improved their AME processes in recent years, although much progress remains to be made.[15] Various studies have used less-rigorous approaches or correlational analyses constructed around indirect measures. As we discuss in Chapter Two, these studies have provided important insights into what works in SSA. But for now, data quality severely limits what can be concluded with any rigor on many of the questions that are most important in this field.

There is, however, an even more profound issue than data quality. Before useful data collection can commence, it is essential to know what data to collect, which requires hypotheses about what leads to successful capability development. When a partner nation improved its security capabilities, was it because of SSA programs or some other factor(s)? Even if it can be determined that the SSA programs were responsible, were there preconditions in place in that success story that are not widely present elsewhere? Alternatively, if a partner nation failed to improve its security capabilities, was it because the wrong SSA programs were selected, or was it because appropriate SSA programs were implemented incorrectly? Or perhaps external factors caused efforts to fail. Without strong theories of what exactly leads to durable improvements in security capacity, it is difficult to develop tests of what works where and to collect data on relevant factors.

Unfortunately, efforts to build sustainable security capacity in sovereign developing countries have a relatively short history, so there is relatively little material on which to base theories in this field. Colonial powers built indigenous security forces over the course of decades, but their experience—where external actors maintained direct control over political structures, often over several decades—does not translate clearly into lessons applicable to sovereign states. In sovereign coun-

[15] Michael J. McNerney, Jefferson P. Marquis, S. Rebecca Zimmerman, and Ariel Klein, *SMART Security Cooperation Objectives: Improving DoD Planning and Guidance*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, RR-1430-OSD, 2016.

tries, outside actors have generally sought to build local security capabilities in response to major crises—for example, U.S. efforts in the Vietnam War. In the post–Cold War era, the most sustained effort to transform partner militaries has been among countries in Eastern Europe that have aspired to join the North Atlantic Treaty Organization; while these are important cases, they are of limited applicability to many developing countries.[16]

Instead of relying on highly limited quantitative data or on case studies with uncertain generalizability, this report adopts a different approach. While the security community has only limited experience seeking to develop sustainable capacity in partner nations, the development community has decades of experience in this field. In this report, we tap into the insights the development community has drawn from its years of grappling with this difficult challenge. Our goal is not to provide definitive guidance on what works in building durable improvements in security-sector capacity. Instead, we derive principles and good practices from the development community, then seek to understand how they might be modified to meet the unique challenges of the security sector and, even more specifically, to the security sectors of African partner nations.[17] The end result is a framework of options from which practitioners might draw as they seek to adapt programs to specific contexts. We do not claim that these options are unfailingly successful; rather, they are a step toward developing and testing contingent theories of successful security capacity–building.[18]

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[16] For a brief overview of the history of DIB, see Ross, undated.

[17] As is common in the development and many other communities, we use the term *good practice* rather than *best practice* to indicate that there is no single, optimal solution that can be applied across multiple contexts. Rather, there are useful ideas that might serve as inspiration but must inevitably be adapted to local circumstances. For a discussion of the evolution of thinking about optimal solutions in the development community, see Lant Pritchett and Michael Woolcock, *Solutions When* the *Solution Is the Problem: Arraying the Disarray in Development*, Washington, D.C.: Center for Global Development, Working Paper No. 10, September 2002.

[18] For an overview of the evidence behind the good practices derived from the development community, see Chapter Three.

The information in this report derives from numerous sources. We primarily distilled principles and good practices from the development community literature, supplemented by interviews with development experts and diplomats. For insights into the specific challenges of the security sector and how good practices should be modified for this context, we interviewed dozens of SSA stakeholders (military officers, government civilians, and some representatives of nongovernmental organizations [NGOs]) and reviewed available official documents from all levels in the SSA process. In all, we reviewed several hundred documents and interviewed more than 50 SSA planners, policymakers, researchers, and practitioners at levels of seniority ranging from deputy assistant secretaries and ambassadors to implementers in the field.[19]

Organization of This Report

The remainder of the report proceeds from a theoretical examination of these issues to specific options for improving SSA. Chapter Two briefly reviews debates over the appropriateness of prioritizing sustainability as a goal for SSA in Africa, as well as the existing evidence on what leads to sustainable change in this sector. Chapter Three turns to the experience of the development community in developing capacity. It distills five broad principles from the development literature and dozens of practices aligned with these principles. The security sector, however, differs from civil sectors in several critical ways, so lessons from the development community's experience cannot be uncritically imported into SSA practices. Consequently, Chapter Four examines the specific challenges that security-sector planners face and how these require us to modify existing good practices from the development community. Finally, Chapter Five proposes a set of options that the security-sector community generally and AFRICOM specifically might adopt to improve the sustainability of U.S. SSA.

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[19] See Appendix B for the full list of interviews. Our interview procedures were reviewed and determined to be exempt by the RAND Human Subjects Protection Committee.

CHAPTER TWO

Debating the Goal of Sustainability

It seems like simple common sense (and a prudent use of taxpayer money) to insist that partner nations be able to sustain the capabilities that the United States helps them build, sometimes at a cost of many millions or even billions of dollars. However, some observers have suggested that sustainability should *not* be a priority in SSA programming, at least in states with levels of development as low as that of many countries in Africa. Proponents of this counterintuitive line of thinking offer four arguments to support their perspective:

- *Feasibility*. Many observers believe that it is possible to strengthen the capabilities of partner nations that are already highly functional or to make short-term improvements in the effectiveness of even extremely underdeveloped partners. But helping to build sustainable improvements in capacity in poor partners with weak institutions may simply be unachievable.
- *Scale.* It may be that the United States and other external actors can build sustainable capacity in even the least-developed states, but only at extraordinary cost. Overhauling all of the institutions necessary to man, train, and equip security services would be a daunting task. Although the United States may have been willing to attempt it in Afghanistan, where tens of thousands of U.S. personnel were committed, no country in Africa currently commands a similar level of commitment.
- *Prioritization*. It may well be that the countries that are most threatened by violent extremist groups are those that are least able to sustain capacity gains achieved through SSA. In such cases,

should the United States divert aid away from the countries facing the greatest threats to those that are facing much lesser threats but that would be more capable of sustaining capability gains?

- *Control*. The United States has limited control over what partner nations do with their security services, and some uses may run counter to U.S. interests. If the United States helps a partner develop its warfighting capabilities to combat an immediate threat and then those capabilities dissipate because the partner cannot sustain them, then the United States actually faces less risk that the partner will misuse those forces later. The United States, in other words, may have an interest in *not* developing sustainable capabilities in its partners.

This chapter briefly reviews the debates and available evidence concerning each of these four arguments, while the remaining chapters turn to the question of how to build sustainable capacity.

The Feasibility of Building Sustainable Security-Sector Capacity

Few existing studies, either in publicly available reports or internal U.S. government analyses, have focused on sustainability. Nonetheless, qualitative evidence and more-systematic, quantitative analysis of related objectives suggest that it is indeed possible to build sustainable security-sector capacity, but that judgment remains subject to important caveats.

Iraq and Afghanistan provide the most-visible sources of anecdotes about the effectiveness of SSA. Although many high-profile incidents of failure have occurred among the security services of both countries, the forces with which the United States worked most intensively—the Counter Terrorism Service in Iraq and the Afghan National Army Special Operations Forces—have proven highly effective, even in high-intensity combat.[1] Where their security services have most often fallen

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[1] David Witty, *The Iraqi Counter Terrorism Service*, Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2015; Tim Craig, "These Are the 11,000 Soldiers Who Might Save Afghanistan,"

short is in higher-level military functions—logistics and sustainment, planning, and coordination—and the ability to sustain these capabilities over time and provide political oversight and accountability.[2] Without continued U.S. engagement, these weaknesses have become all too evident.

Turning to Africa, we can observe a similar pattern:

- Malian forces were criticized for abandoning the fight against extremist groups in northern Mali. But at least according to the account of one U.S. special operations forces (SOF) officer who worked closely with the Malian forces, these criticisms misread the actual record. The Malian special forces unit with which the United States worked most closely (the Company Forces Spéciales) performed well in combat until it was running out of ammunition because of the failures of the Malian logistics system.[3]
- Chadian forces (which had received substantial U.S. support) reportedly fought quite well alongside French forces during Operation Serval in Mali. They depended on France, however, for logistics and sustainment support, including water, fuel, and medical assistance, and they benefited from operating alongside

Washington Post, March 8, 2016; and Austin G. Long, Todd Helmus, S. Rebecca Zimmerman, Christopher Schnaubelt, and Peter Chalk, *Building Special Operations Partnerships in Afghanistan and Beyond: Challenges and Best Practices from Afghanistan, Iraq, and Colombia*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, RR-713-OSD, 2015.

[2] Logistics and sustainment functions occur at various levels, from the institutional to the tactical, but tactical logistics and sustainment functions cannot succeed if tactical units are not provided the necessary materiel from higher levels. For a discussion of how tactical-level units have been undone by higher-level logistics failures, see Simon J. Powelson, *Enduring Engagement, Yes, Episodic Engagement, No: Lessons from Mali*, thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, Calif.: Calhoun, 2013. On the military capability shortfalls of the Afghan National Security Forces, see Jonathan Schroden, Catherine Norman, Jerry Meyerle, Patricio Asfura-Heim, Bill Rosenau, Del Gilmore, Mark Rosen, Daniella Mak, and Nicholas Hutchinson, *Independent Assessment of the Afghan National Security Forces*, Alexandria, Va.: CNA, 2014; and Terrence K. Kelly, Nora Bensahel, and Olga Oliker, *Security Force Assistance in Afghanistan: Identifying Lessons for Future Efforts*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, MG-1066-A, 2011, p. xvii.

[3] Powelson, 2013, pp. 52–54.

French SOF, which played a key role in coordinating combined-arms offensives.[4]
- Nigeria has struggled to use and maintain its fleet of eight U.S.-made C-130s (military transport aircraft) ever since it purchased them several decades ago. Aircraft fell into disrepair in the 1990s when the U.S. barred military aid to Nigeria because of human rights concerns.[5] When aid transfers resumed in 2000, just two of the eight planes were functioning; C-130 repairs and pilot training consumed the largest portion of the U.S. aid package that year.[6] By 2010, as a result of lack of maintenance expertise and facilities, just one of the planes was still functioning, which prompted another round of U.S. technical assistance.[7]
- Liberia received U.S.-made vehicles during the multinational effort to rebuild its armed forces after its 2003 Comprehensive Peace Agreement. However, lack of an effective maintenance program meant that a decade later, more than 80 percent of its vehicles were typically down for maintenance. In 2014, yet another attempt was made to combine vehicle transfers with a plan to develop the maintenance capacity to sustain them.[8]
- U.S. programs to train African peacekeeping forces have failed to transition to a sustainable "train-the-trainer" model. As a result, these forces are in a repeated cycle of foreign-led train-up, deploy-

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[4] See, for instance, Michael Shurkin, *France's War in Mali: Lessons for an Expeditionary Army*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, RR-770-A, 2014, pp. 22–23.

[5] Herbert M. Howe, *Ambiguous Order: Military Forces in African States*, London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2001, p. 272.

[6] Douglas Farah, "U.S. to Help Nigeria Revamp Its Armed Forces," *Washington Post*, April 29, 2000.

[7] Alec Lloyd, "U.S. Air Forces Africa Help Nigerian C-130 Fly Again," U.S. Africa Command, September 1, 2009.

[8] Former DoD member of a U.S. country team in Africa, interview with the authors, Interview 26, February 2017; and Michael J. McNerney, Stuart E. Johnson, Stephanie Pezard, David Stebbins, Renanah Miles, Angela O'Mahony, Chaoling Feng, and Tim Oliver, *Defense Institution Building in Africa: An Assessment*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, RR-1232-OSD, 2016, p. 67.

ment, and declining post-deployment readiness, until a new force is trained for a new deployment.[9]

A common thread runs through all of these examples. Even the forces of extremely poor partner nations can perform basic tactical military functions, such as movement and maneuver, at a high level of effectiveness if given appropriate training and support. Where many fail is in higher-level functions that require well-functioning defense institutions. A single tactical unit may be highly successful in a firefight but only if the country's logistics system has provided it the ammunition necessary to fight. U.S. SOF can improve a partner's marksmanship skills, but unless the partner has the systems in place to continue to provide marksmanship training after U.S. forces have departed, those skills will quickly degrade.[10] If soldiers, even those with advanced tactical skills, are not paid on time or provided decent barracks, they are likely to suffer from low morale and lapses of discipline, making their technical proficiency largely irrelevant.[11]

Figure 2.1 illustrates the wide range of inputs required to develop and sustain a military capability. The vast majority of these inputs are at the institutional level, targeting what the U.S. military refers to as *executive direction* and *generating functions*. Executive direction is provided by the national-level institutions that "provide oversight, policy, and resources" to the partner military, such as a country's Ministry of Defense or Army Staff.[12] Generating functions include the personnel management, training, equipping, and sustainment responsibilities executed by service-level institutions.[13] Unfortunately, the vast majority of U.S. SSA programs and funding are directed at tactical units, not these institutions.

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[9] Daniel Hampton, "Creating Sustainable Peacekeeping Capability in Africa," Africa Center for Strategic Studies, Africa Security Brief No. 27, April 2014.

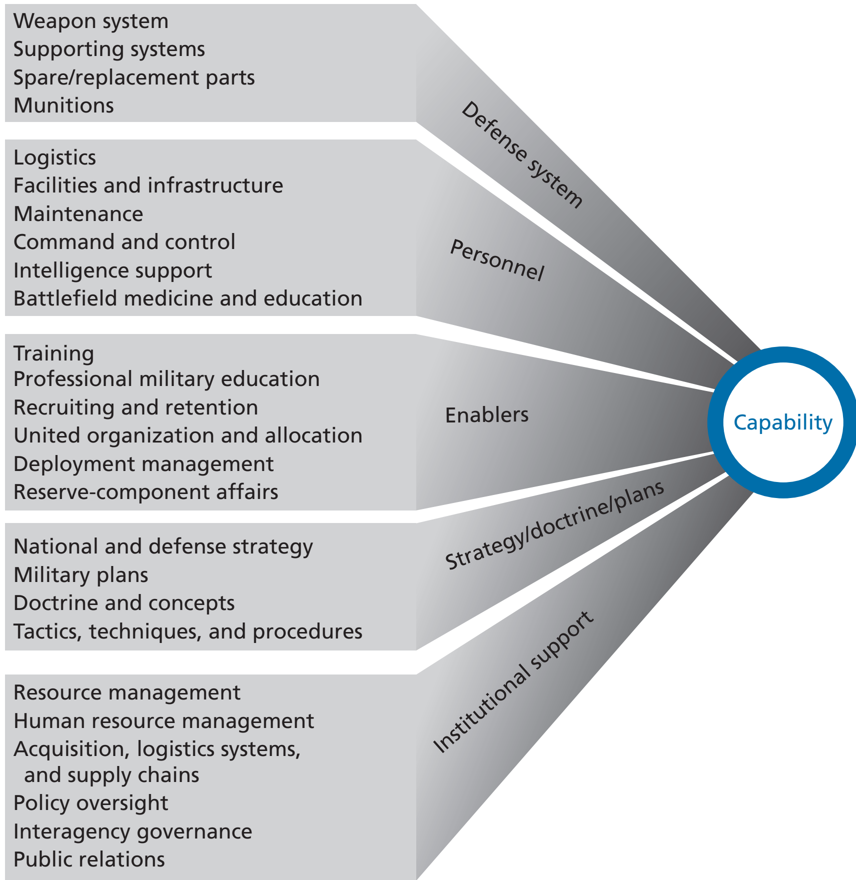
[10] Hampton, 2014, p. 2.

[11] See, for example, Powelson, 2013, p. 54.

[12] Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Security Force Assistance*, Washington, D.C., Joint Doctrine Note 1-13, April 29, 2013, p. III-6.

[13] Joint Chiefs of Staff, 2013, pp. III-7–III-8.

Figure 2.1
Inputs to Full-Spectrum Capability Development



SOURCE: Thomas W. Ross, "Enhancing Security Cooperation Effectiveness: A Model for Capability Package Planning," *Joint Force Quarterly*, Vol. 80, No. 1, 2016, p. 29.
RAND *RR2048-2.1*

These examples provide anecdotal support to the hypothesis that the United States can succeed in building tactical-level warfighting capabilities in even extremely underdeveloped countries, but higher-level military functions (especially logistics) and the sustainability of these tactical-level improvements (absent continued U.S. support) have frequently proven elusive. The consistency of the record across widely vary-

ing countries suggests that it is at least a good working hypothesis until better data become available to enable more-sophisticated evaluations.[14]

Few quantitative analyses examine the effectiveness of SSA in building military capabilities, and none (of which we are aware) specifically examines the sustainability of these capacity gains. The few studies of related issues, though, help to make clear the conditions under which sustainable capacity gains may be possible.

One recent series of RAND studies examined the record of 29 partner countries to determine the effectiveness of SSA in building partner capacity. It relied on the elicited opinions of experts involved in these SSA efforts. The studies found that U.S. assistance was indeed effective in building partner capacity, even in the more challenging objective of building the *institutional* capacity of partner nations.[15] Importantly, however, one of the studies also found that the characteristics of partner nations—in particular, their level of infrastructure development and quality of governance—were important predictors of success. Of the 29 countries in the sample, only two possessed the levels of development and quality of governance that are characteristic of most countries in Africa, and both of these cases were rated as SSA failures.[16]

Another RAND study analyzed the consequences of U.S. SSA on the stability of partner nations.[17] Although this analysis did not directly assess whether sustainable gains in military capacity were the

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[14] See Jeff Eggers, "Department of Defense Security Cooperation and Assistance Programs and Authorities," statement for the U.S. Senate Armed Services Committee, Washington, D.C., March 9, 2016, p. 5.

[15] Christopher Paul, Colin P. Clarke, Beth Grill, Stephanie Young, Jennifer D. P. Moroney, Joe Hogler, and Christine Leah, *What Works Best When Building Partner Capacity and Under What Circumstances?* Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, MG-1253/1-OSD, 2013, especially pp. 76–77.

[16] Christopher Paul, Michael Nixon, Heather Peterson, Beth Grill, and Jessica Yeats, *The RAND Security Cooperation Prioritization and Propensity Matching Tool*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, TL-112-OSD, 2013, p. 9. Of the 53 countries in the AFRICOM AOR, 33 of them fall into this category of poorer and less well-governed countries, which is defined in Paul, Nixon, et al. (2013) as having both per capita gross domestic product below the global average and a World Bank World Governance Indicator score in the bottom third globally.

[17] Michael J. McNerney, Angela O'Mahony, Thomas S. Szayna, Derek Eaton, Caroline Baxter, Colin P. Clarke, Emma Cutrufello, Michael McGee, Heather Peterson, Leslie

reason for the relationships between SSA and changes in partner stability, the correlations established in this study are nonetheless instructive. It found that U.S. assistance was positively associated with stability in U.S. partner nations. The improvements in stability were small but statistically significant. The study also found that the effectiveness of U.S. programs depended heavily on the characteristics of the partner nations. Better-developed, better-governed, and more-democratic partners were much more likely to make positive use of U.S. assistance. Among less-developed, worse-governed, and less-democratic partners, no improvements in stability were visible, and, in the worst cases, the relationship between the amount of U.S. SSA investment and stability was indeed negative (although statistically insignificant). Given the levels of development and quality of governance in many countries in Africa, it should therefore not be surprising that there was no statistically significant relationship between U.S. SSA and stability in either sub-Saharan Africa or in North Africa and the Middle East.[18] If U.S. assistance has been able to build sustainable military capacity in these regions, then it is not associated with any positive *political* impact. This failure could be due to poor political leadership (e.g., military capabilities being used for destabilizing ends, such as repression or coups) or the partners simply failing to build sustainable capacity in the first place.

Current evidence about SSA's effectiveness in building sustainable capacity is highly incomplete. The evidence that does exist, however, suggests that sustainable improvements in military capacity have typically been realized in countries with fairly good governance and reasonably well-developed institutions beforehand—preconditions lacking in much of Africa.

Less clear, however, are the precise reasons for these correlations. Capacity-building efforts may have experienced poor sustainability in many developing countries, in part, because the SSA programs were designed and executed either inappropriately or without sustainability as a goal. As discussed in Chapter One, DoD has historically had

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Adrienne Payne, and Calin Trenkov-Wermuth, *Assessing Security Cooperation as a Preventive Tool*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, RR-350-A, 2014.

[18] McNerney, O'Mahony, et al., 2014.

limited experience with capacity-building; it has only slowly begun developing the expertise and processes necessary to succeed in this field. Moreover, immediate operational requirements often have taken priority over sustainability. Now that SSA has become an important competence of DoD (a fact codified in the FY 2017 NDAA), SSA programming may evolve in ways more conducive to sustainability. The historical record, in other words, is not encouraging, but it also leaves open the possibility that appropriately targeted, carefully constructed capacity-building programs may experience more success in developing self-sustaining capabilities than has been the case in the past.

The Scale of Efforts Required

Some critics caution that sizable and sustainable gains in military capacity may be possible in any partner nation, but only if extremely large-scale initiatives are undertaken to remake these countries' security sectors. In Iraq and Afghanistan, for instance, the United States committed more than $20 billion and $60 billion, respectively, in an effort to rebuild their security services.[19] If sustainability in problematic partners can be achieved only through a complete overhaul of the security sector, as some maintain, then it appears to be an inappropriate goal in most of Africa, where most partners require substantial institutional reforms and the United States is unwilling to dedicate sizable resources.

Again, we are hampered in our ability to assess this question by a lack of systematically collected data. What analyses do exist, however, suggest that large-scale efforts to remake a partner's security sector are typically not necessary to develop the capabilities required to combat the sorts of threats that most African states face and indeed are likely to be effective only in certain circumstances. A 2014 RAND analysis of the stability gains associated with U.S. SSA, for instance, found

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[19] Amy Belasco, *The Cost of Iraq, Afghanistan, and Other Global War on Terror Operations Since 9/11*, Washington, D.C.: Congressional Research Service, RL33110, December 8, 2014, p. 52.

that such assistance was subject to rapidly diminishing returns of scale; small amounts of assistance improved stability appreciably, but much larger amounts of assistance had relatively little additional impact.[20]

Why might large-scale programs be unnecessary and potentially counterproductive? First, as discussed earlier, strong institutions and good governance are critical determinants of the effectiveness and sustainability of SSA. The highest-cost programs involve materiel transfers (weapons and other equipment), which go almost entirely to the operating force. In contrast, the education and advising programs necessary to improve institutional performance are relatively inexpensive.[21] Overall, no more than 5 percent of AFRICOM's resources were devoted to DIB-related programs in 2013 and 2014, and even this figure is likely an overestimate, given that it includes spending on humanitarian demining and pandemic response.[22]

Second, large-scale reform programs run some risk of replacing institutions and practices understood by local actors and adapted to

[20] McNerney, O'Mahony, et al., 2014. Interestingly, Paul, Clarke, et al. (2013) found that more assistance is better: Higher levels of spending were associated with greater gains in security capacity. What explains these seemingly contradictory results? The two studies were analyzing different outcomes, and neither was focused specifically on sustainability. Paul, Clarke, et al. (2013) assessed whether and to what extent security capabilities improved; it did not directly address sustainability. McNerney, O'Mahony, et al. (2014) addressed gains in stability, which presumably require that security capacity be sustained, because stability was measured with a lag (i.e., five years after U.S. assistance was committed). It may be that small but sustainable gains in capacity can be achieved through low levels of assistance, while large but potentially unsustainable gains in capacity require much larger expenditures. Although the available quantitative evidence does not allow us to assess whether this interpretation is correct, it is consistent with the qualitative evidence discussed later in this chapter.

[21] Education, training, and advising programs were also the programs associated with the largest gains in partner stability in McNerney, O'Mahony, et al. (2014).

[22] McNerney, Johnson, et al., 2016. In 2013, for example, U.S. *global* spending on the Defense Institution Reform Initiative and the Ministry of Defense Advisors program stood at $13 million, far less than the $100 million spent on training and equipping African militaries under NDAA Section 1206 (now known as Section 2282) alone, not even including other programs aimed at improving operational capabilities. See Defense Security Cooperation Agency, "Fiscal Year 2016 Budget Estimate," Washington, D.C., February 2015; and Nina M. Serafino, *Security Assistance Reform: "Section 1206" Background and Issues for Congress*, Washington, D.C.: Congressional Research Service, RS22855, 2014, p. 7.

local circumstances with foreign ones that are neither well-understood nor well-adapted, a dynamic known as *isomorphic mimicry* or *mirror-imaging*.[23] As is discussed in later chapters, creating institutions appropriate to local contexts can be a slow process of experimentation and adaptation. It may not initially be clear which reforms are appropriate, which creates a temptation to base the overhaul efforts on preexisting templates. This risk is much more acute when the United States faces an immediate and high-priority threat against which it hopes to make rapid gains.[24] In cases in which donor motivations are longer term and more humanitarian (e.g., in peace operations in countries that pose no threat to U.S. interests, as in Liberia), security-sector overhauls based on the SSR paradigm have met with some success. SSR successes have been concentrated in cases in which the international community maintains a large peacekeeping presence and possesses considerable leverage over local actors (as in Sierra Leone) or in cases of democratic revolutions, where the newly established democratic governments embrace international assistance to reform their security sectors (as in much of Eastern Europe). In other cases, smaller-scale efforts involving sustained engagement and careful targeting of relatively small amounts of funds may be more appropriate.[25] These examples, and the SSR approach as a whole, are discussed further in Chapter Three.

Debates over Prioritization and Control

Even if it is feasible to build sustainable security capacity in U.S. partners at a reasonable cost, it still may not be in the United States' interest to do so. First, the countries that may be most capable of sustaining capacity gains may not be the ones that most threaten U.S.

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[23] In the security sphere, see, for instance, Ramsey, 2006. In development practice, see, for instance, Matt Andrews, Lant Pritchett, and Michael Woolcock, "Escaping Capability Traps Through Problem Driven Iterative Adaptation," *World Development*, Vol. 51, 2013.

[24] On the Afghan example, see Kelly, Bensahel, and Oliker, 2011.

[25] See, for instance, Nicole Ball, *Lessons from Burundi's Security Sector Reform Process*, Washington, D.C.: Africa Center for Strategic Studies, Africa Security Brief No. 29, November 2014b.

interests. Second, countries that build sustainable security capabilities may use them in ways that the United States finds antithetical to its interests and values.

As discussed earlier, the countries best able to sustain capacity gains are likely those that already possess relatively higher levels of development and good governance. In many parts of the world where the United States seeks to counter conventional threats, such as the Korean peninsula or the Baltics, the countries most threatened are also those that are highly developed and well governed. But the countries most affected by irregular threats, such as insurgency and terrorism, are precisely those in which levels of development and good governance tend to be low. In such regions as Africa, therefore, the United States often must choose between prioritizing the threats it seeks to counter or the sustainability of the capabilities it seeks to develop in its partners. In reality, decisionmakers usually try to balance both concerns. But placing greater weight on sustainability almost inevitably means placing less weight on threats in the calculus of where to make SSA investments. This trade-off may well be one worth making, but it is important to keep in mind that emphasizing sustainability comes at a cost. And in at least some cases, it may be in the United States' interest to develop capabilities to combat an immediate threat, even knowing that these capabilities are unsustainable. As one of the officials interviewed for this study noted, "Security cooperation has actually worked pretty well. We build operational capabilities that we need in African partner nations right now. No, it's not sustainable, but we don't really need it to be sustainable to achieve critical U.S. goals" in such areas as counterterrorism.[26]

Indeed, a partner's inability to sustain new military capabilities may even be a good thing from the U.S. perspective. Once the United States has helped develop the security-sector capabilities of partner nations, it cannot control what the partners do with these capabilities. Obviously, these capabilities pose some risk of being misused for repression, coups, criminal agendas, and so on. The United States has

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[26] Three DoD officials involved in SSA planning, interview with the authors, Interview 7, November 2016.

mechanisms through which it seeks to avoid such outcomes, including Leahy vetting, training on human rights and governance, end-use monitoring, and others.[27] These mechanisms, however, only reduce the risk involved in security capacity–building. Particularly in poorly governed states, these risks remain a substantial concern despite current U.S. efforts to mitigate them.[28] However, if partner nations cannot sustain the newly developed capabilities without continued U.S. support, the risk of their misuse by the partner is obviously lower, although, in some cases, this may increase the risk that underutilized equipment is abandoned or sold for use by malign actors.

The map in Figure 2.2 illustrates the relevance of these debates for Africa. Countries shaded in light red are those with low state reach (as measured by an index of infrastructure indicators used by many development economists). As discussed earlier in the review of existing quantitative analyses, countries with low state reach are least likely to sustain capability gains and most likely to use these capabilities in destabilizing ways.[29] They also are many of the United States' priority counterterrorism partners, as indicated by their participation in two of the United States' primary counterterrorism initiatives for the continent, the Trans-Sahel Counterterrorism Partnership and the Partnership for Regional East Africa Terrorism.[30] Clearly, some degree of tension exists between U.S. counterterrorism goals in Africa and U.S. concern for the sustainability and appropriate use of security-sector capabilities developed through U.S. assistance.

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[27] Leahy vetting refers to the process whereby Congress prohibits

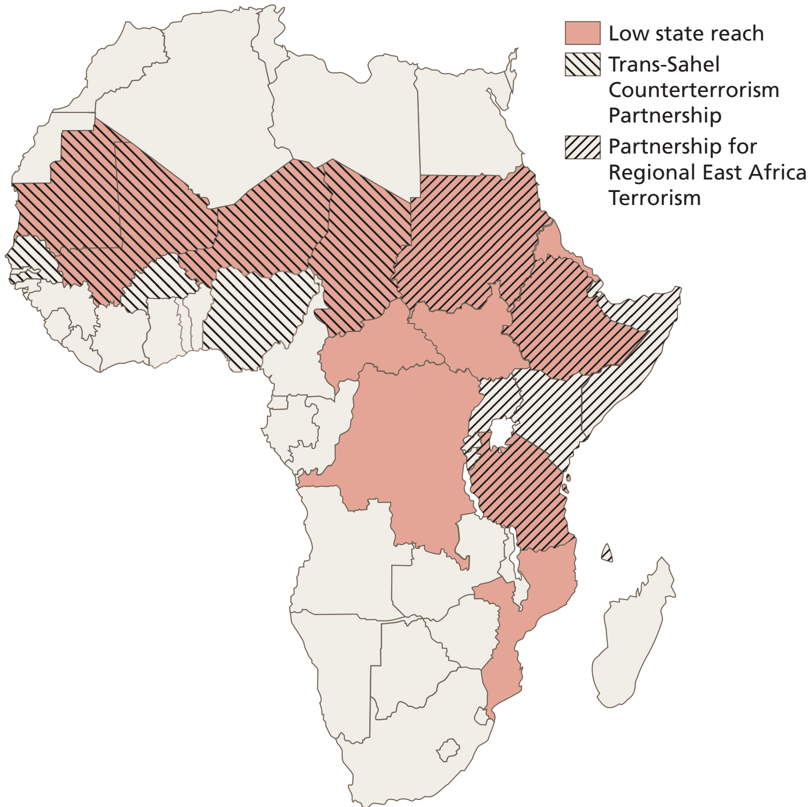
> assistance to any unit of the security forces of a foreign country if the Secretary of State has credible information that the unit has committed a gross violation of human rights. . . . The U.S. government includes torture, extrajudicial killing, enforced disappearance, and rape under color of law as [violations] when implementing the Leahy law. Incidents are examined on a fact-specific basis. (Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, "Leahy Fact Sheet," U.S. Department of State, July 18, 2017)

[28] Stephen Watts, *Identifying and Mitigating Risks in Security Sector Assistance for Africa's Fragile States*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, RR-808-A, 2015.

[29] McNerney, O'Mahony, et al., 2014, pp. 59–61.

[30] For further background on the data and methods underlying this figure, see Watts, 2015, pp. 13–15.

Figure 2.2
Countries of Concern for Security Sector Assistance in Africa



SOURCE: Watts, 2015, p. 15.
RAND *RR2048-2.2*

Conclusion

The existing body of SSA evaluations is highly incomplete. The existing evidence, however, enables the following tentative conclusions about SSA's effectiveness and sustainability:

- The United States has had substantial success building tactical-level warfighting capabilities among even highly underdeveloped partner nations.

- More-complex warfighting functions appear much more difficult to develop; in particular, logistics and sustainment functions that depend on the functioning of higher-level institutions appear both critically important and a repeated area of partner weakness.
- Partners with relatively strong government institutions appear much better positioned to absorb and sustain security-sector capabilities developed through SSA.
- Countries with well-functioning government institutions are seldom those acutely threatened by insurgency and large-scale terrorism.
- In countries with weak security-sector institutions and low *absorptive capacity* (that is, the ability to make use of aid), there has historically been a perceived conflict between investing in generating forces and building operating forces, with the latter generally seen as more urgent.[31]
- Most investments in institutional capacity-building (such as education of government officials and advising programs) are relatively inexpensive. As discussed in Chapter Four, however, these types of programs are sometimes unwelcome by partner nations and almost always require long-term investments.
- The United States has relatively little experience attempting to help build the security institutions of partner governments outside of contexts in which the United States was fighting a large-scale war and prioritizing immediate operational requirements over long-term sustainability.[32] While U.S. military aid during the Cold War included some efforts to build institutional capacity through training and advising (such as in El Salvador), these efforts received less attention and resources than arms transfers. It is therefore unclear how successful the United States is likely to be in helping partners strengthen their security-sector institutions if it makes institution-building a priority over long periods.

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[31] For more on the concept of absorptive capacity, see Robert D. Lamb and Kathryn Mixon, *Rethinking Absorptive Capacity: A New Framework Applied to Afghanistan's Police Training Program*, Washington D.C.: Center for Strategic and International Studies, June 2013.

[32] As noted earlier, for a brief history of U.S. DIB efforts, see Ross, undated.

Fortunately, despite the relatively short record of DoD experience building institutions outside of large-scale warfighting contexts (e.g., in Korea, Vietnam, Iraq, and Afghanistan), we have other records on which we can draw. The next chapter turns to the experience of the development community and the closely related SSR literature for insights about the conditions under which institutional capacity-building and other efforts to promote sustainability are more likely to succeed.

CHAPTER THREE

Principles and Good Practices Derived from Development Experience

Although the United States has relatively little experience attempting to build the security-sector institutions of developing nations, it and other international donors have long sought to build other forms of government capacity in developing countries, including throughout Africa. These efforts have targeted a wide range of public sectors, focusing on both high-level institutions and ground-level service providers; occurred in a variety of contexts; and adopted many approaches, some with more success than others. These decades of experience have provided extensive opportunity for the development community to observe which types of approaches and programs tend to create lasting capacity gains. This experience has led to the identification of broad principles that have been used to guide the design of capacity-building development programs.

This chapter discusses five of these principles that have particular relevance to building sustainable partner capacity: local ownership; a comprehensive approach; selectivity; harmonization; and long-term, iterative adaptation. These principles are treated by the development community as important but still evolving guidelines rather than a set of unchanging and universally applicable rules that must be followed. Even the most prominent proponents of these principles within the development community recognize that they must be adapted to different types of capacity-building programs and local contexts.

We begin this chapter by briefly reviewing the historical evolution of the development community's approach to capacity-building. The bulk of the chapter, however, focuses on the five principles of sustain-

able capacity-building that have been widely adopted across the development community. Each principle is discussed in a separate section. Each section first describes the principle as it has been articulated by development practitioners, by academics, and in official declarations from the United States and other donor-nation development agencies. It then describes the principle's application to capacity-building programs in the form of general *good practices*—that is, practices that have demonstrated success in certain contexts and that should be carefully considered and adapted as appropriate when planning for new programs. A final section reviews the existing evidence on the effectiveness of these principles, both in the development community where they originated and in the handful of initiatives where they have been most intensively adapted to SSA in Africa. Subsequent chapters discuss the challenges of incorporating these principles into U.S. SSA efforts in Africa and ways that the related good practices might be adapted to the needs of the security sector.

The Evolution of Capacity-Building Practice in the Development Community

International development assistance in something like its current form arose in the years immediately after World War II. Beginning with the Marshall Plan in postwar Europe, the United States sought to promote economic development in key partner nations, first in Europe, then more widely. Although the scope and modalities of development assistance changed significantly over the intervening decades, the core challenges of capacity development remained remarkably constant.

Through the 1970s, development assistance was directed primarily at three goals: building partner-nation physical infrastructure, transmitting technical knowledge (or "know-how") to less economically developed countries, and building the state institutions required to implement these infrastructure and technical projects. The experience of the United States in the New Deal era—in which the central government supported growth and development through massive projects, such as the Tennessee Valley Authority (begun in 1933) and the Marshall Plan

(begun in 1948)—suggested that such infrastructure and technical improvement projects could spur economic growth more generally.

Perhaps the disappointments of this approach should have been predictable. Development officials in this early period assumed that approaches that had worked in the United States and other economically developed countries could be readily transplanted to other less-developed parts of the world. In many cases, aid programs appeared to be based on the assumption that government officials in partner nations wanted to "do the right thing" (in this context, help end poverty and promote broad-based economic development) and that they were capable of doing so if only they were taught the "right way" to do things. Reality repeatedly fell far short of this expectation.[1]

If the failures of these early aid efforts seem so predictable, we are left to wonder why similar approaches characterized many (although certainly not all) of the United States' "nation-building" activities in the wake of the 9/11 attacks. Development experts Thomas Carothers and Diane de Gramont's characterization of the early period of development assistance as one in which projects were conducted by "visiting Western experts with little knowledge of local contexts, often carried out on hurried time frames and with little buy-in by local counterparts," could equally well describe many aspects of the more recent U.S. experience in Iraq, Afghanistan, and elsewhere.[2]

In fact, Carothers and de Gramont argue that, despite considerable evolution in development thinking, the "technocratic" approach to development assistance—one in which neither politics nor social context plays a major role in how policy solutions are formulated or implemented—has remained remarkably resistant to change. By the

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[1] This assessment of the early evolution of U.S. development assistance is largely drawn from Thomas Carothers and Diane de Gramont, *Development Aid Confronts Politics: The Almost Revolution*, Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2013. See also David L. Lindauer and Lant Pritchett, "What's the Big Idea? The Third Generation of Policies for Economic Growth," *Economía*, Vol. 3, No. 1, Fall 2002; and Verena Fritz and Brian Levy, "Problem-Driven Political Economy in Action: Overview and Synthesis of the Case Studies," in Verena Fritz, Brian Levy, and Rachel Ort, eds., *Problem-Driven Political Economy Analysis*, Washington D.C.: World Bank, 2014, pp. 1–4.

[2] Carothers and de Gramont, 2013, p. 27.

1990s, recognition that good governance played a critical role in the success of development assistance increased substantially.[3] Even with this recognition, however, many in the development community simply changed the focus of their technocratic approach to insist on specific policies as a condition for aid or renewal of aid. For many, the belief persisted that broad generalizations were possible about what the "right thing" for development was and the "right way" to go about it.

In the past decade, the certainties of previous generations of development assistance have largely dissolved. Critics of the development assistance community have contended that there is no evidence that development assistance, in aggregate, has had a measurable effect on poorer countries' rate of development, despite the expenditure of trillions of dollars.[4] Meanwhile, China, the biggest economic success story of the past several decades, received next to no foreign development assistance during its rapid rise. These facts have led to considerable introspection in the development community and a search for answers about how to build partner nations' capacity to foster their own development.

Unlike previous eras of development assistance, no single answer has emerged from this introspection—and, indeed, the development community as a whole appears increasingly skeptical of generalizable paradigms or "best practices."[5] The well-known development economists Lant Pritchett and Michael Woolcock argue that earlier generations' emphasis on finding "*the* solution" was, in fact, "the problem."[6] Pritchett and coauthor David Lindauer suggest that the recent past has been marked by "the end of big ideas."[7] Similarly, Harvard economist

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[3] See, for instance, World Bank, *Assessing Aid: What Works, What Doesn't, and Why*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1998.

[4] See, for instance, William Easterly, "Was Development Assistance a Mistake?" *American Economic Review*, Vol. 97, No. 2, May 2007; and William Easterly, *The White Man's Burden: Why the West's Efforts to Aid the Rest Have Done So Much Ill and So Little Good*, New York: Penguin, 2006.

[5] NGO personnel involved in SSA, interview with the authors, Interview 40, September 2016.

[6] Pritchett and Woolcock, 2002.

[7] Lindauer and Prichett, 2002, p. 12.

Dani Rodrik writes, "straightforward borrowing (or rejection) of policies without a full understanding of the context that enabled them to be successful (or led them to be failures) is a recipe for disaster."[8]

What has emerged instead are principles emphasizing the importance of fostering local ownership; taking a comprehensive approach; carefully selecting program beneficiaries, goals, and activities; harmonizing efforts with other actors; and adopting a long-term and iterative approach to program adaptation.

Some of the more established aspects of these principles have already been applied to certain parts of the security sector under the rubric of SSR. This should come as little surprise, given that the SSR approach was proposed, developed, and is still often carried out by actors in the international development community.[9] However, the SSR approach has been designed to improve partner institutions responsible for providing basic public security and justice and covers only a subset of U.S. SSA programs. These principles have been less frequently applied to SSA programs administered by the U.S. military, which tend to focus on building partner capacity to confront specific security threats, such as terrorism. This report covers the developmental principles and good practices that have long been a focus of SSR, as well as those that have been more recently adopted by the development community.

Local Ownership

Local ownership of capacity-building efforts has become a core tenet of development practice. In fact, the document that is probably the single clearest articulation of contemporary development principles, the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, lists local ownership as its

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[8] Dani Rodrik, *One Economics, Many Recipes: Globalization, Institutions, and Economic Growth*, Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2007, pp. 4–5.

[9] This includes the United Kingdom's Department for International Development, as well as the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), which is the primary multilateral forum for donor nations. See Nicole Ball "The Evolution of the Security Sector Reform Agenda," in Mark Sedra, ed., *The Future of Security Sector Reform*, Ontario, Canada: Centre for International Governance Innovation, 2010.

first core principle.[10] At a minimum, the principle of local ownership means allowing partner-nation officials to set their own priorities and working to the greatest extent possible within those nations' existing processes.[11] Donor nations, of course, can work with partners to help them develop their priorities. But it is clear that developing countries with weak state institutions cannot simultaneously address all of the many problems they face; failing to work within partners' priorities and thus spreading their limited administrative and leadership capacity too thin is a recipe for ineffectiveness.[12]

Local ownership is particularly important if capacity is to be sustained for any length of time after being built.[13] Programs that are not led and shaped by partner institutions from the very beginning are unlikely to fully reflect partner interests or be appropriately tailored to local contexts. Any gains made by programs not already fully embedded in partner institutions are often not retained after program completion and donor disengagement.[14] In contrast, capacity gains from programs built by partner institutions in pursuit of their own goals and

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[10] OECD, *The Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and the Accra Agenda for Action*, Paris, 2005/2008.

[11] Development Assistance Committee (DAC), *Supporting Statebuilding in Situations of Conflict and Fragility*, Paris: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2011; United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), *Practice Note: Capacity Development*, New York: United Nations, 2008; International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding, "The Monrovia Roadmap on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding," Monrovia, Liberia, July 2011; World Bank Task Force on Capacity Development in Africa, *Building Effective States: Forging Engaged Societies*, Delft, Netherlands: World Bank, September 2005; World Bank, *Strengthening Governance, Tackling Corruption: The World Bank Group's Updated Strategy and Implementation Plan*, Washington, D.C., March 6, 2012.

[12] Rodrik, 2007; Merilee S. Grindle, "Good Enough Governance Revisited," *Development Policy Review*, Vol. 25, No. 5, 2007.

[13] DAC, *OECD DAC Handbook on Security System Reform: Supporting Security and Justice*, Paris: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2007, pp. 16–17, 64.

[14] See, for example, Lebanon's low interest in sustaining capacity gains following a State Department–funded police training program because the program lacked local ownership (Robert D. Lamb, Kathryn Mixon, and Andrew Halterman, *Absorptive Capacity in the Security and Justice Sectors*, Washington D.C.: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2013, pp. 14–15).

using their own processes are more likely to be retained and supported over the long term.[15] Furthermore, by being meaningfully involved in program planning, implementation, and evaluation—as opposed to just being the recipient of technical training—partner institutions are provided the additional opportunity to develop their own capacity for program administration. Being able to carry out these institutional functions independently is a fundamental prerequisite to a partner's ability to sustain capacity on its own.

It is important to recognize that local ownership is a matter of degree, not a yes or no proposition.[16] Different branches of a government may embrace a new program to lesser or greater extents. International actors can work with local champions of a capacity-building effort even if other levels or organs of government are indifferent or, in some cases, even hostile to such efforts. But absent a critical mass of local actors in the appropriate positions who actively embrace and champion an SSA program, external efforts will have little lasting impact.

The extent to which local ownership can be incorporated into capacity-development programs will vary with context. Development community experience suggests, however, that the following two good practices can have significant benefits for program sustainability.

Collaborate in Goal-Setting, Program Design, Baseline Assessments, and Evaluations

Fostering local ownership throughout a capacity-building program includes closely collaborating with partners during goal-setting, program design, baseline assessments, and evaluations. This entails close consultation with partners from the very beginning of the program's inception. Donors following this practice often need to be flexible to align their assistance programs with partner goals, including those for-

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[15] Laurie Nathan, "The Challenge of Local Ownership of SSR: From Donor Rhetoric to Practice," in Timothy Donais, ed., *Local Ownership and Security Sector Reform*, Geneva: Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces, 2008, pp. 20–21.

[16] Eric Scheye, "*Unknotting Local Ownership* Redux: Bringing Non-State/Local Justice Networks Back In," in Timothy Donais, ed., *Local Ownership and Security Sector Reform*, Geneva: Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces, 2008, p. 61.

mally laid out in partner institutions' existing capacity-development strategies.[17]

This approach does not imply that donor countries should simply defer to their partners' priorities. Donor countries may assess that certain priorities are inappropriate or infeasible, or some may simply not align with the donors' own goals. Instead, this guidance suggests that donors should identify areas of overlap in their priorities and those of their partners. Within those areas of overlap, the donor may well be better off collaborating on issues that are a core priority of the partner, even if it is of lesser interest to the donor, if sustainability is a central goal. It also suggests that the very act of encouraging the partner to prioritize and accept trade-offs is important to helping the partner develop its own strategic-planning capacity.

Involving partners when conducting initial baseline assessments early in the planning process also can help create a common framework for understanding the current status of a problem and the government capacity available to deal with it. This involvement, in turn, can help donors manage expectations and minimize disagreements during the collaborative process of deciding on program priorities and methods. At a minimum, this practice takes the form of consulting with partner institutions during the assessment process, although these institutions often would be fully involved in leading, designing, and conducting the assessment as well.[18]

Similarly, local ownership can extend to cover the evaluation phase of a capacity-building program.[19] USAID policy holds that "the conduct of evaluations will be consistent with institutional aims of local ownership through respectful engagement with all partners, including local beneficiaries and stakeholders, while leveraging and building local evaluation capacity."[20] Even independent evaluations can take partner ideas into account, and all nonsensitive findings can

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[17] OECD, 2005/2008, p. 3.

[18] DAC, 2007, pp. 47–49, 56; OECD, 2005/2008, pp. 16–17.

[19] DAC, 2007, pp. 94–96.

[20] USAID, "ADS Chapter 201: Program Cycle Operational Policy," Washington, D.C., September 7, 2016, p. 119.

be shared with the partner to enable joint learning and suggest areas for future improvements. Collaborative evaluations do not always focus solely on assessing partner capacity gains; they might also be used to assess donor practice and suggest improvements. Partners that collaborate in setting benchmarks are also more likely to accept responsibility for failures and engage in introspection about the reasons for those failures than are partners that see evaluations as the product of outsiders who have little understanding of local context.[21]

Build Capacity in Existing Institutions Using Local Systems and Processes

Fostering local ownership is significantly aided when a program is designed to work within and take advantage of existing partner institutions and processes as much as possible, even if these are less familiar to the donor.[22] At times, donors seek to have the partner adopt new processes to better resemble a prescriptive set of general best practices, with little regard for a partner's existing way of doing things.[23] Scrapping existing processes in favor of creating new ones—however rational or efficient they may have been elsewhere—can impose an extremely heavy burden on partner-nation officials forced to adapt quickly to unfamiliar procedures. This good practice does not imply that donors should uncritically accept utterly dysfunctional partner processes. Rather, it suggests that donors should focus on pressing for major change only in the highest-priority areas, recognizing that complete overhauls of existing systems require significant effort and that incremental improvement of existing practices is often easier to sustain.

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[21] DAC, 2007, p. 242.

[22] DAC, *The Challenge of Capacity Development: Working Towards Good Practice*, Paris: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2006, p. 37.

[23] Andrews, Pritchett, and Woolcock, 2013.

Comprehensive Approach

A comprehensive approach to capacity-building takes into account the full range of factors that affect program success. This accounting includes understanding the roles, abilities, and incentives of a variety of partner actors and institutions—both direct recipients and others with a stake in the target sector—as well as the broader political and economic environment that shapes them. Understanding these factors is particularly important given donors' increased reliance on and transfer of substantial responsibility to local partners, following the principle of local ownership. Achieving such understanding is a complex task that benefits greatly when program planners and implementers have appropriate analytical expertise and significant country-specific knowledge.[24]

Capacity-building is not simply a technical enterprise that primarily depends on transferring knowledge through training and education. Rather, it is also a highly political process that creates winners and losers, both in state institutions and in the society more generally. Development assistance has sometimes had consequences opposite of those intended, because practitioners did not fully understand the political and social environments in which they were operating.[25] For example, foreign funding of local women's organizations in poor areas of Kenya actually increased marginalization of the most-disadvantaged

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[24] Fritz and Levy, 2014, pp. 10–12; Brian Levy and Patricia Palale, "Using Political Economy Assessment to Reorient Sectoral Strategy: Infrastructure Reform in Zambia," in Verena Fritz, Brian Levy, and Rachel Ort, eds., *Problem-Driven Political Economy Analysis*, Washington D.C.: World Bank, 2014, p. 140. For an argument advocating the application of more-comprehensive approaches to SSA, see Rachel Kleinfeld, *Fragility and Security Sector Reform*, Washington, D.C.: Fragility Study Group, Policy Brief No. 3, September 2016.

[25] Fritz and Levy, 2014, pp. 1–2. Also see, for instance, Peter Blunt and Mark Turner, "Decentralization, Democracy, and Development in a Post-Conflict Society: Commune Councils in Cambodia," *Public Administration and Development*, Vol. 25, No. 1, 2005, pp. 84–85; Ben D'Exelle, "Excluded Again: Village Politics at the Aid Interface," *Journal of Development Studies*, Vol. 45, No. 9, October 2009; Richard Fanthorpe, "On the Limits of Liberal Peace: Chiefs and Democratic Decentralization in Post-War Sierra Leone," *African Affairs*, Vol. 105, No. 418, 2006, p. 40; and Harry G. West and Scott Kloeck-Jenson, "Betwixt and Between: 'Traditional Authority' and Democratic Decentralization in Post-War Mozambique," *African Affairs*, Vol. 98, No. 393, 1999.

community members, the opposite of the program's intended effect.[26] Capacity-building programs informed by a comprehensive view of partner dynamics are less likely to result in negative unintended effects. They also are more likely to achieve sustainable capacity gains, because they are deliberately crafted to draw on partners' existing institutional strengths and incentive structures.

Development community experience suggests that the following four good practices can have significant benefits for program sustainability.

Analyze Local Institutions and Incentives

Adopting a comprehensive approach to capacity-building begins with conducting rigorous analysis of relevant partner institutions, actors, and incentive structures, which is variously referred to as "political-economy," "institutional," or "drivers of change" analysis in the development literature.[27] Development agencies have emphasized the importance of using formal assessment frameworks to better understand the local context rather than relying solely on the intuitions of practitioners, who inevitably operate on the basis of a partial picture. As OECD's DAC notes, this type of analysis "uncovers the incentive structures behind the 'lack of political will' often blamed for the limited success of capacity development programs."[28] Understanding these incentive structures provides insight into the factors that have an enduring influence on partner behavior at both the individual and the institutional levels.[29]

A rich understanding of local context helps practitioners predict which types of capacity development are feasible in the existing system

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[26] Mary Kay Gugerty and Michael Kremer, "Outside Funding and the Dynamics of Participation in Community Associations," *American Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 52, No. 3, July 2008.

[27] DAC, 2006, p. 21.

[28] DAC, 2006, p. 8. See also OECD, *Principles for Good International Engagement in Fragile States and Situations*, Paris, 2007 (often referred to as the "Paris Principles"); DAC, 2011; UNDP, 2008; and World Bank, 2012.

[29] Fritz and Levy, 2014, pp. 5–6.

and which might require deeper changes to incentive structures if they are to be retained.[30] Such an understanding similarly helps anticipate any risks associated with a program, particularly when a partner's capacity gains might threaten existing balances of power or institutional arrangements. Finally, this type of analysis helps practitioners ground their *theories of change*—an articulation of the pathways by which the practitioners expect that their assistance will result in capacity gains—within a realistic view of existing partner dynamics.[31] For example, an aid program whose theory of change posits that teacher training will increase effective use of classroom time and lead to improved child learning would benefit from understanding the extent to which other factors, such as absenteeism or poor management, might be more important to these outcomes than training.[32]

Identify and Support Critical Enablers

A comprehensive approach to capacity-building also includes analysis and support of the critical enablers that targeted recipients rely on to carry out their mission. Comprehensive engagement with actors throughout the targeted sector can help identify ways to make capacity-building more effective and sustainable.[33] Development programs to build sustainable partner capacity to support vaccination efforts, for example, have focused not just on training frontline health workers but also on building the broader vaccine storage, transportation, and distribution systems necessary for those health workers to fulfill their mission.[34] Similarly, SSR efforts to improve the capacity of partner-nation police

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[30] UK Department for International Development, *How To Note: Political Economy Analysis*, London, July 2009.

[31] Isabel Vogel, *Review of the Use of "Theory of Change" in International Development*, London: UK Department for International Development, April 2012, p. 34.

[32] Vogel, 2012, Appendix 3.

[33] Andrews, Pritchett, and Woolcock, 2013, pp. 240–241.

[34] Richard Murray Trostle and Angela K. Shen, "Three Decades of USAID Investments in Immunization Through the Child Survival Revolution," *Emerging Microbes and Infections*, Vol. 3, No. 2, 2014; and World Health Organization, "Immunization Supply Chain and Logistics: A Neglected but Essential System for National Immunization Programmes," Geneva, March 2014.

have often been paired with efforts to support the prison and judicial systems that they rely on to bring criminal suspects to justice.[35]

Support Complementary Capacity-Building at the Institutional Level

Taking a comprehensive approach to capacity-building can also include improving the institutions that support capability development and retention among targeted recipients. These institutions include those responsible for managing policy, personnel, budgets, and training. UNDP recommends that donors not work solely with frontline service providers while ignoring the "institutional arrangements[, or] the policies, practices, and systems that allow for effecting functioning" of those providers, because these arrangements have significant influence on their prospects for sustainable capacity development.[36] Instead, donor efforts to train partner government personnel, for example, would ideally also consider how to improve partner institutions' capacity to effectively recruit, manage, promote, and retain the same personnel they are training. Similarly, the provision of needed equipment can be coupled with efforts to build partner institutions' capacity to budget, maintain, and account for such equipment.

As will be detailed in Chapter Four, U.S. practitioners face many challenges to connecting train-and-equip programs with broader efforts to build institutional capacity. Wherever feasible, however, such interlinkages are mutually reinforcing: The partner's desire for improved operational capabilities can bolster its willingness to undertake difficult institutional reforms, while successful institutional reforms reinforce its ability to sustain operational capability improvements.[37]

Evaluate a Wide Range of Potential Effects over an Extended Period

Donors adopting a comprehensive approach also tend to measure a broad range of potential program effects on targeted recipients and other related actors and institutions. The types of effects and actors covered in this evaluation process are generally informed by the ini-

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[35] DAC, 2007, pp. 22, 67.

[36] UNDP, *Capacity Development: A UNDP Primer*, New York: United Nations, 2009, p. 13.

[37] DAC, 2007, p. 146

tial program assessment and include both intended and unintended program effects. Such evaluations seek to examine any capacity gains, as well as any unintended effects on partner institutions and incentive structures that may affect the sustainability of those gains.

A comprehensive approach to program evaluation also involves expanding the time frame covered by evaluations. This expansion is especially important to understanding what types of capacity gains are sustainable under what circumstances. Evaluations conducted directly following program completion may miss longer-term effects of programs; only evaluations that are carried out a few years afterward can examine whether capabilities have been retained.[38]

Selectivity

Capacity-building programs can benefit from being highly selective when it comes to the partners involved and the types of assistance provided. Successful capacity development is highly sensitive to local contexts. In its review of capacity-building assistance, OECD's DAC notes,

> Until recently, capacity development was viewed mainly as a technical process, involving the simple transfer of knowledge or organizational models from North to South. Not enough thought was given to the broader political and social context within which capacity development efforts take place. This led to an overemphasis on what were seen as "right answers," as opposed to approaches that best fit the country circumstances and the needs of the particular situation.[39]

Similarly, in its practice note on capacity development, UNDP warns that its experience "suggest[s] a 'best fit' rather than a 'best practice' approach that steers away from a one-size-fits-all formula that could represent an operational recipe or blueprint."[40]

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[38] Japan International Cooperation Agency, *JICA Guideline for Project Evaluation*, Tokyo, September 2004, p. 196.

[39] DAC, 2006, p. 7.

[40] UNDP, 2008, p. 7.

The move from a development approach based on best practices to one based on what fits well in the local context has led to a more complex range of options available to donors—and made selectivity that much harder and more important. As part of working within their partners' priorities, donor nations should work to ensure that they do not press for an unmanageably large list of reforms to be implemented simultaneously; prioritization is as critical among donor nations as it is within recipient governments. Development agencies have found this particularly important when working in the types of fragile environments often found in African states.[41] For example, the 2005 aid compact signed by Liberia and international donors prioritized building the government's capacity for financial management and oversight; this "narrow focus of the compact is seen as one of its key strengths."[42]

Development community experience suggests that the following three good practices can have significant benefits for program sustainability.

Carefully Select Partners

Development agencies have identified the careful selection of partners as an important part of success in capacity-building programs. Partner selection is important at all levels, from deciding which countries to prioritize to deciding which institutions and actors to engage within a country. Such decisions often take into account both the types of partners that are most important in addressing a particular problem and the types of partners that have the greatest ability to gain from external assistance.[43] Where partners are not willing to make the commitments necessary to sustain gains in capabilities, donors should consider reorienting assistance to partners that are willing to make these commitments.

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[41] DAC, 2006, p. 35.

[42] Christina Bennett, *Aid Effectiveness in Fragile States: Lessons from the First Generation of Transition Compacts*, New York: International Peace Institute, April 2012, pp. 17–18.

[43] DAC, 2006, pp. 25–26.

Focus on Enduring Gains

Development experience in capacity-building also suggests that donors should carefully design assistance to focus on the types of actors and institutions that themselves generate and sustain partner capacity.[44] Resource constraints often limit donors to assisting just a few of the individuals working in an institution. Rather than spreading these efforts thinly throughout the organization, donors should consider concentrating efforts in a single unit or a handful of units that are critical to the broader functioning of the organization. An effort that focuses on assisting partner education or training programs, for example, can have a broader and more lasting effect because improved education and training leads to increased capacity across an entire institution. Where donor resources are limited, donors may consider concentrating resources in a smaller number of better-financed, deeper-reaching programs. Certain types of assistance, including repeated engagement in the form of long-term mentorship, can be particularly helpful in achieving enduring capacity gains.[45]

Carefully Select Assistance That Builds Incrementally on Existing Partner Capacity

Development experience has also highlighted the importance of appropriately tailoring assistance to match partners' existing capacity levels. This involves carrying out initial capacity assessments and incorporating their findings into program design, as well as being realistic about partner institutions' abilities to benefit fully from a capacity-building program and sustain any gains after its completion. Factors that determine a partner's ability to absorb and sustain capacity-building assistance include their human capital; available financial resources; and institutional structures, systems, and capacities.[46]

Even with fully committed partners, it is important to be aware of the limitations of external assistance. As the World Bank has noted,

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[44] World Bank, 2005, pp. 40, 51.

[45] UNDP, 2009, p. 6.

[46] DAC, 2007, p. 65.

both partner governments and donors have too often pursued "overly ambitious objectives and unrealistic timeframes" that are "ill adjusted to the different capacity development trajectories of African countries."[47]

Harmonization

Harmonization of the various capacity-building efforts carried out by the United States and other donor nations helps minimize waste, improves learning, and reduces the burden on a partner nation to engage with a bewildering array of development programs. It also allows different capacity-building efforts to complement and build on one another, supporting the long-term sustainability of capacity gains beyond the term of any one program. Harmonization goes beyond merely having formal coordination meetings between donor agencies and actors; it also involves joint efforts in establishing development strategy, conducting assessments, engaging with the partner nation, and carrying out programs.[48] This point was echoed by several DoD officials, who noted in our interview that, while the existing system of biannual SSA planning conferences is important for coordination, these forums alone are not enough to ensure that SSA programs in Africa are fully synchronized across the U.S. SSA community.[49]

Too often, a large number of development actors have descended on a country, each pursuing its own priorities and taking a distinct approach to program planning and accountability systems. Partner-nation officials are overwhelmed by the many offers of assistance and are often unable to interact with donor agencies and simultaneously go about the business of implementing their own programs.[50] Lack of harmonization among development donor nations, or even among dif-

[47] World Bank, 2005, p. 143.

[48] OECD, 2005/2008, pp. 6–7.

[49] Four DoD officials involved in SSA program management, interview with the authors, Interview 1, March 2016.

[50] See, for instance, Nicolas van de Walle, *Overcoming Stagnation in Aid-Dependent Countries*, Washington, D.C.: Center for Global Development, 2005.

ferent offices in the same government, can also lead to programs that unknowingly duplicate other efforts, fail to learn from related mistakes, or even work at cross-purposes. Such programs often fail to take advantage of or can even derail progress made by earlier capacity-building interventions. The development community has recognized this problem and proposed ways to reform itself, including the following two good practices.

Coordinate More Effectively with Other U.S. Agencies and Donors

Development guidance stresses that donors should improve coordination among themselves so as not to duplicate others' efforts or work at cross-purposes.[51] This coordination involves program planning that takes into account related capacity-building efforts, including those undertaken by other donors and those that focus on partner institutions in other sectors. Identifying these efforts—and the ways they might complement, duplicate, or conflict with the proposed assistance program—is a useful part of the baseline assessment process.

This practice also extends to harmonizing planning and accountability processes across programs in order to minimize partner-nation requirements.[52] Harmonizing accountability processes often includes donor efforts to rationalize and simplify assistance processes and thus ease the administrative burden of their aid on recipients.[53] Partners may struggle to understand and comply with a multitude of different donor assistance processes, which can divert their attention and resources away from the ultimate goal of building capacity to improve service provision.

Build on and Learn from Others' Efforts

Harmonization also entails learning from others' assistance efforts and building on their successes. Programs that are heavily informed by others' efforts are more likely to be carried out in a way that comple-

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[51] OECD, 2005/2008, p. 1.

[52] DAC, 2007, pp. 75–76; World Bank, 2005; World Bank, 2012.

[53] OECD, 2005/2008; OECD, 2007.

ments the efforts of other donors and the partner government. The OECD handbook on SSR recommends that donors

> Build on what exists and support ongoing local initiatives: Do not waste effort duplicating what already exists. There may be numerous justice and security development efforts under way, seeking to strengthen state and non-state justice and security systems. It may take time and careful analysis to uncover these initiatives, but they should be built upon, supported and, if necessary, adapted whenever feasible.[54]

Even capacity-building programs that seemingly failed, or that were derailed by a sudden change in political regime, may still have had a positive effect on patterns of partner behavior and social norms that can be built on at a later time under more-favorable conditions.[55]

Similarly, an assistance program can be designed to provide a platform for other development actors to build on. Particularly if a donor has limited time or resources, the efforts might still support enduring capacity gains if they are designed to support other actors' longer-term programs. This can require additional coordination but may be the only way for development actors unable to make long-term commitments to ensure that partner capacity gains are sustained.

Assistance providers can often improve their own program design and efficacy by learning from the experiences of others in the same country or in similar programs. This type of learning is supported by effective knowledge management and knowledge-sharing among development actors, both within organizations and throughout the broader donor community.[56] Plans, assessments, evaluations, and lessons learned from previous capacity-building efforts all can provide

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[54] DAC, 2007, p. 64.

[55] For a related discussion on the enduring effects of human, social, and political capacity on economic development, even when the conditions that build that capacity are no longer in place, see John Gerring, Philip Bond, William T. Barndt, and Carola Moreno, "Democracy and Economic Growth: A Historical Perspective," *World Politics*, Vol. 57, April 2005.

[56] DAC, 2006, p. 30; World Bank Operations Evaluation Department, "Sharing Knowledge to Achieve Development Goals," *Precis*, No. 234, Fall 2003.

value to others when shared. At times, this may involve removing sensitive information from documents before sharing, although this can often be done with minimal effort and without reducing the documents' relevance.[57]

Long-Term, Iterative Adaptation

Development experience suggests that adherence to the four principles described already improves the prospects for sustainable capacity-building but does not guarantee program success. Political landscapes are extremely complex, and even local practitioners often do not know how a new initiative will unfold until it is tried. For this reason, many development agencies and experts recommend that implementers additionally embrace an approach based on experimentation—what some have called "iterated adaptation," "problem-driven learning," or "purposive muddling."[58] This approach provides multiple opportunities for a capacity-building program to improve over time, particularly when coupled with longer-term donor commitment.

Development experience suggests that the following five good practices can have significant benefits for program sustainability.

Target Assistance to Address Specific Local Problems

Several development actors have begun to embrace a problem-driven approach to program design that targets assistance to address specific local issues.[59] This targeting involves identifying a development challenge; "analyzing why the observed, dysfunctional patterns are present"; and identifying ways to change these patterns.[60] Persistent capacity shortfalls have often resisted previous efforts to remediate them, often because these efforts failed to identify correctly the underlying

[57] Fritz and Levy, 2014, p. 20.

[58] World Bank, 2012; Matt Andrews, *The Limits of Institutional Reform in Development: Changing Rules for Realistic Solutions*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013.

[59] DAC, 2007, p. 29.

[60] Fritz and Levy, 2014, pp. 4–6.

problem and took a prescriptive approach that began with best-practice solutions rather than analysis of local context.

In keeping with the principle of local ownership, this approach seeks to address problems that are "nominated and prioritized by local actors" as much as possible.[61] Care must be taken to avoid focusing on just the most-visible problems, such as lack of adherence to a particular standard or lack of capacity to perform a certain function. Instead, program planners and assessors seek to examine the underlying reasons for why these more superficial problems matter. Such analysis can reveal deeper issues that may need to be addressed and lead to a capacity-building program that more directly targets the underlying problem.[62]

Build Flexibility and Responsiveness into Program Design

Iterative adaptation requires that development planners build flexibility and responsiveness into program design. This step ensures that capacity-building practitioners have room to experiment, learn, and adapt while a program is ongoing. This approach can still benefit from detailed planning processes to determine program goals, guidelines, and initial efforts, although rigid adherence to prescribed plans is discouraged so that it does not impede learning and adaptation during implementation.[63]

Secure Long-Term Funding and Personnel Commitments

The principle of iterative adaptation also suggests that, at the outset, donors should approach capacity-building as a long-term effort and should secure multiyear funding and personnel commitments accordingly.[64] Donor commitment and patience improves the likelihood that a program will lead to enduring capacity gains, which are generally the result of progress made over a period of years. Longer-term funding also supports the type of gradual and exploratory approach entailed in

[61] Andrews, Pritchett, and Woolcock, 2013, p. 235.

[62] Andrews, Pritchett, and Woolcock, 2013, p. 237.

[63] Andrews, Pritchett, and Woolcock, 2013, p. 240.

[64] OECD, 2005/2008; OECD, 2007; UNDP, 2008; International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding, 2011; World Bank, 2005.

the principle of iterative adaptation.[65] This approach furthermore benefits from continuity of personnel for as much of a program's duration as possible so that the mistakes of one iteration are learned from and not repeated when a new practitioner rotates through. The long duration of the World Bank's village development program in Afghanistan allowed for successive rounds of adaptation, for example, with lessons learned from the pilot and first two phases incorporated into the design of later phases.[66]

Adopt an Experimental Mindset

The principle of iterative adaptation also involves donors adopting what has been variously called an "experimental" or "entrepreneurial" mindset during program implementation. This mindset accepts that "failure is a necessary part of trial and error" and leads to "an approach that takes 'small bets' to identify what is most likely to succeed."[67] This approach requires a broader donor environment that encourages practitioners to experiment with a wide range of capacity-building approaches, even if these deviate from global best practices.[68] Such an approach is designed to respond to failure as an opportunity to learn and improve the next program iteration.

One long-standing development practice that aligns with adopting an experimental mindset is the use of small-scale pilot initiatives during the program implementation phase. The OECD handbook on SSR states that "if well designed, pilot projects can test new approaches and identify important lessons, as well as immediately strengthen ser-

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[65] Andrews, Pritchett, and Woolcock (2013, pp. 238–239) gives the example of a partner's procurement system that is deficient not because its processes fail to adhere to international standards but because government offices fail to anticipate procurement needs.

[66] Rushda Majeed, *Building Trust in Government: Afghanistan's National Solidarity Program, 2002–2013*, Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University, Innovations for Successful Societies, May 2014.

[67] Leni Wild, David Booth, Clare Cummings, Marta Foresti, and Joseph Wales, *Adapting Development: Improving Services to the Poor*, London: Overseas Development Institute, February 2015, p. 34.

[68] Andrews, Pritchett, and Woolcock, 2013, pp. 238–239.

vice delivery to meet local needs."[69] Pilot initiatives have traditionally been used to explore the effectiveness of a proposed capacity-building method in the initial phase of implementation. The principle of iterative adaptation further suggests that multiple pilot-type projects might be initiated at any point during a program's duration and could be used to explore the effectiveness of a range of possible capacity-building methods.

Use Repeated Evaluations to Adapt Program Implementation

Finally, this principle hinges on the ability of donors to conduct repeated evaluations and use them to inform and adapt implementation on the fly. Iterative experimentation is most valuable in increasing program effectiveness if the lessons learned in these experiments are used rapidly to drive changes in the next round of implementation.[70] The sources of any capacity-building successes should be evaluated and incorporated into ongoing efforts, while failures should lead to changes in approach. Such feedback loops can be built into program design in advance, by specifying how particular outcomes or conditions could prompt the use of alternative implementation methods from those planned at the start.

Evaluations are more useful when they are designed to provide insight into which parts of a program iteration are working or not working, and why. This idea is supported by a clearly articulated theory of change, which describes how a specific type of assistance might lead to desired capacity-building outcomes through intermediate steps. Examining whether assistance is having the expected effect at each of these steps helps practitioners more precisely identify problems in their approach so the problems can be addressed in the next iteration.

[69] DAC, 2007, p. 35.

[70] Andrews, Pritchett, and Woolcock, 2013, p. 239.

Can It Work? Evidence on the Effectiveness of Developmental Principles

The five principles outlined in this chapter represent the dominant strands of thinking within the development community about how to make assistance work. Given the many failures of previous generations of development assistance, however, skeptics are fully justified in asking what evidence supports these judgments. Moreover, even if the evidence were unambiguous about the principles' effects on developmental outcomes, such as economic growth and poverty reduction, the principles might not be easily applied to the security sector. In this section, we review the evidence on the effectiveness of these principles, first in the development realm and then in the few initiatives in which they have been applied to SSA in Africa. Although there remain important debates and areas where the evidence is ambiguous, the record overall provides strong support for these principles.

Evidence from the Development Community

As described in the first section of this chapter, the development community has come under sustained criticism in the past several decades for inefficiencies, failures, and, in some cases, outcomes that were the opposite of those intended. Recent rigorous analyses, however, suggest that the development community has, on balance, had a relatively small but positive impact on a wide range of development outcomes, from economic growth to poverty alleviation to public health.[71] Assessing capacity development specifically is somewhat more difficult because of conceptual and data challenges. Here too, though, several

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[71] Bernard Wood, Julia Betts, Florence Etta, Julian Gayfer, Dorte Kabell, Naomi Ngwira, Francisco Sagasti, and Mallika Samaranayake, *The Evaluation of the Paris Declaration, Phase 2 Final Report*, Copenhagen: Danish Institute for International Studies, May 2011; Jonathan Glennie and Andy Sumner, *The $138.5 Billion Question: When Does Foreign Aid Work (and When Doesn't It)?* Washington, D.C.: Center for Global Development, CGD Policy Paper 049, November 2014; Channing Arndt, Sam Jones, and Finn Tarp, "Assessing Foreign Aid's Long-Run Contribution to Growth and Development," *World Development*, Vol. 69, 2015; and Tseday Jemaneh Mekasha and Finn Tarp, "Aid and Growth: What Meta-Analysis Reveals," *Journal of Development Studies*, Vol. 49, No. 4, 2013.

pieces of recent scholarship suggest that development assistance has made important contributions.[72]

Understanding how specific approaches to aid become effective is even more challenging. For each of the five principles described, it is important to understand (1) to what extent the development community (both generally and in the United States in particular) has implemented aid in accordance with the principle and (2) when aid did conform to recognized good practice, what have been the returns in terms of efficiency and effectiveness?

The evidence is perhaps clearest for the principle of harmonization. A wide range of studies, using a variety of approaches, have found that the large number of donors, each with their own program management requirements and sometimes competing priorities or directives, has led to considerable inefficiency and even perverse outcomes.[73] This effect appears to be particularly pronounced in countries that lack the human capital to staff government bureaucracies with well-trained professionals, because compliance with donor requirements absorbs a substantial share of the limited human capital available. Unsurprisingly, Africa has been disproportionately affected by these dynamics.[74] Despite the clear evidence of the negative consequences of donor fragmentation, relatively little progress has been made toward harmonization since this principle was made a priority in the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness in 2005.[75]

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[72] Arndt, Jones, and Tarp (2015, p. 12), for instance, finds that development assistance is associated with an increased ability of developing countries to collect taxes and other revenues (a challenge for many weak states) and higher levels of expenditure on critical public sectors, such as education.

[73] Arne Bigsten and Sven Tengstam, "International Coordination and the Effectiveness of Aid," *World Development*, Vol. 69, 2015; Simeon Djankov, Jose G. Montalvo, and Marta Reynal-Querol, "Aid with Multiple Personalities," *Journal of Comparative Economics*, Vol. 37, No. 2, 2009; and Hidemi Kimura, Yuko Mori, and Yasuyuki Sawada, "Aid Proliferation and Economic Growth: A Cross-Country Analysis," *World Development*, Vol. 40, No. 1, 2012.

[74] Kimura, Mori, and Sawada, 2012; and Stephen Knack and Aminur Rahman, "Donor Fragmentation and Bureaucratic Quality in Aid Recipients," *Journal of Development Economics*, Vol. 83, No. 1, May 2007.

[75] Stefan Leiderer, "Donor Coordination for Effective Government Policies?" *Journal of International Development*, Vol. 27, No. 8, November 2015.

Also, considerable empirical support exists for the principle of selectivity—that is, selecting assistance recipients carefully, based on where assistance is most likely to do good and bear the lowest risk of counterproductive outcomes. There is less agreement about which criteria should guide the selection of aid recipients. In recent years, many development economists have emphasized the importance of good governance and institutional capacity, a finding echoed in previous research on the effectiveness of SSA specifically.[76] A previous generation of research had emphasized the importance of specific policies,[77] although this approach has come under criticism more recently. The extent to which donors steer assistance disproportionately toward the best performers, however, varies by circumstances. Some initiatives—such as the Millennium Challenge Corporation established by Congress in 2004—have been based explicitly on this principle. In other cases, donors feel compelled by strategic or humanitarian imperatives to assist even poor-performing governments. Unfortunately, the countries most in need of assistance are often those least able to make effective use of it.

There is evidence to support the principle of long-term, iterative adaptation, but it is incomplete. Numerous studies have found that long-term, predictable aid commitments are a critical predictor of aid effectiveness.[78] Unfortunately, the efficacy of iterative adaptation is harder to measure through traditional approaches because the goals

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[76] Daron Acemoglu, Simon Johnson, and James A. Robinson, "Institutions as a Fundamental Cause of Long-Run Growth," in Philippe Aghion and Steven N. Durlauf, eds., *Handbook of Economic Growth*, Vol. 1A, Amsterdam: Elsevier, 2005; Mina Baliamoune-Lutz and George Mavrotas, "Aid Effectiveness: Looking at the Aid–Social Capital–Growth Nexus," *Review of Development Economics*, Vol. 13, No. 3, 2009; and Luis Angeles and Kyriakos Neanidis, "Aid Effectiveness: The Role of the Local Elite," *Journal of Development Economics*, Vol. 90, No. 1, 2009. On the importance of selectivity in SSA, see McNerney, O'Mahony, et al., 2014.

[77] The seminal article in favor of policy-based selectivity is Craig Burnside and David Dollar, "Aid, Policies, and Growth," *American Economic Review*, Vol. 90, No. 4, September 2000. For a broad critique, see Rodrick, 2007.

[78] Ales Bulir and A. Javier Hamann, "Volatility of Development Aid: An Update," *IMF Staff Papers*, Vol. 54, No. 4, 2007; and Masahiro Kodama, "Aid Unpredictability and Economic Growth," *World Development*, Vol. 40, No. 2, 2012.

are in such rapid flux.[79] Donors have made some progress in implementing this approach. In particular, the use of rigorous monitoring and evaluation to adapt assistance programs and policies has become much more widespread.[80] Bilateral donors continue to face challenges in committing to multiyear assistance packages, but progress has been evident here as well.[81]

The most difficult principles to evaluate rigorously are those of local ownership and a comprehensive approach. In both cases, the principles apply to planning processes that are difficult to measure rigorously, particularly on a cross-national basis. One recent evaluation of assistance in 21 countries found that recipient nations have more-effectively-articulated national strategies to help guide the allocation of assistance, and donors have made some progress in steering assistance toward partners' priorities.[82] Other observers are more skeptical.[83] At this point, however, rigorous evaluation of these principles across multiple countries remains thin; we hope that future research will help provide more clarity.

As is to be expected when making generalizations about high-level principles across a wide variety of contexts, the available evidence comes with ambiguities and gaps. Overall, however, recent research suggests that development assistance has made modest but clear contributions to a variety of development outcomes. The development assis-

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[79] Bertha Vallejo and Uta Wehn, "Capacity Development Evaluation: The Challenge of the Results Agenda and Measuring Return on Investment in the Global South," *World Development*, Vol. 79, 2016.

[80] On USAID's use of evaluations, see, for instance, Molly Hageboeck, Micah Frumkin, Jenna L. Heavenrich, and Lala Kasimova, *Evaluation Utilization at USAID*, Arlington, Va.: Management Systems International, February 2016.

[81] Wood et al., 2011, p. 20.

[82] Wood et al., 2011, pp. 22–25. For an overview specifically of the U.S. commitment to local ownership, see Casey Dunning, Sarah Rose, and Claire McGillem, *Implementing Ownership at USAID and MCC: A U.S. Agency-Level Perspective*, Washington, D.C.: Center for Global Development, CGD Policy Paper 099, January 2017.

[83] Stephen Brown, "Putting Paris into Practice: Foreign Aid, National Ownership, and Donor Alignment in Mali and Ghana," Helsinki: United Nations University World Institute for Development Economics Research, Working Paper No. 2016/145, December 2016.

tance principles laid out in this chapter generally receive strong support in the empirical record, although additional research on local ownership, a comprehensive approach, and iterative adaptation is needed. These principles currently remain somewhat aspirational: The development community has made progress in living up to its commitments in these areas, but much work remains to be done. Nevertheless, as a broad blueprint for guiding assistance efforts, these principals have a considerable basis in rigorous evidence and analysis.

Evidence from Applications of These Principles to SSA in Africa

A handful of U.S. SSA programs—most notably, the Security Governance Initiative (SGI)—have been built around these and related developmental principles, as have a somewhat larger number of European initiatives. Most of these programs are of very recent origin, however, and thus do not yet have enough of a record on which to base rigorous evaluations. Yet a few efforts at least partially conform to these principles and provide some preliminary evidence of how these principles and good practices might work when adapted to African security sectors.

In this section, we discuss three of these efforts: the U.S.-funded rebuilding of the Liberian military, U.S. assistance to Kenya, and the Burundi-Netherlands Security Sector Development (SSD) program. The latter effort receives particular scrutiny, because it has been held up as an exemplary case of how to apply these developmental principles to SSA in a challenging context.

Liberia

After the end of Liberia's civil war in 2003, the United States provided extensive SSA to demobilize the country's entire military and then rebuild it from the ground up. This effort was overseen by the State Department, which contracted out execution to DynCorp. While the program's scope was in some ways unique, it occurred in a country context not unfamiliar in Africa—a poor, postconflict state with an ongoing United Nations peacekeeping presence. In this case, the program somewhat, though not completely, adhered to developmental principles. In particular, several observers identified the program's

comprehensive approach, selectivity, and adaptability as key factors in achieving its goals.

Local ownership was sometimes lacking, however, partly because the United States and DynCorp assumed most of the planning responsibility for the effort and partly because of limited interest by Liberia's civilian government.[84] Modest steps to support local ownership included joint decisionmaking on force structure and sizing, extensive use of Liberian employees and subcontractors, and use of training courses designed and delivered by Liberians.[85] Observers also identified shortfalls in program harmonization, with poor coordination between the United States and the United Nations, as well as among different U.S. contractors.[86]

The effort to create an entirely new military required a comprehensive approach by its very nature. U.S. SSA focused on rebuilding all military units and institutions, as well as the civilian bureaucracy at the Ministry of Defense. Furthermore, U.S. officials took a combined approach that linked demobilization and reintegration with the effort to create a new military.[87] DynCorp also engaged additional stakeholders and built Liberian popular support for the new military, including through a "public sensitization" campaign implemented by a Liberian firm.[88] Basic training focused less on tactical skills, such as marksmanship, and more on "the civil-military relationship, professionalism, and the laws of war" to meet the postconflict imperatives of "discipline and

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[84] Morten Boas and Karianne Stig, "Security Sector Reform in Liberia: An Uneven Partnership Without Local Ownership," *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding,* Vol. 4, No. 3, September 2010, p. 289.

[85] Sean McFate, *Building Better Armies: An Insider's Account of Liberia*, Carlisle Barracks, Pa.: U.S. Army War College, Strategic Studies Institute, November 2013, pp. 50–51; and John Blaney, Jacque Paul Klein, and Sean McFate, *Wider Lessons for Peacebuilding: Security Sector Reform in Liberia*, Muscatine, Ia.: Stanley Foundation, June 2010, p. 9.

[86] Josef Teboho Ansorge and Nana Akua Antwi-Ansorge, "Monopoly, Legitimacy, Force: DDR-SSR Liberia," in Melanne A. Civic and Michael Miklaucic, eds., *Monopoly of Force: The Nexus of DDR and SSR*, Washington, D.C.: National Defense University, 2011, p. 280.

[87] Blaney, Klein, and McFate, 2010, p. 7.

[88] McFate, 2013, p. 63.

moral judgment."[89] In addition, recruitment was broadened to ensure representation of all ethnic groups in the military.[90]

Despite its expansive goals, the effort also prioritized selectivity in the manning, type, and scale of the new security forces. The force structure and sizing of the new Liberian Army was based on DynCorp's assessment of local needs and agreed upon with the U.S. Department of State and the Liberian government.[91] As a result of postconflict sensitivities, the SSR effort deliberately avoided creating SOF and elite units of the type that had been responsible for serious abuses during the civil war.[92] Recruitment involved a rigorous vetting process intended to ensure that the new army did not include individuals responsible for human rights violations. The process was highly selective, rejecting nearly half of all applicants.[93] One independent NGO concluded that "the vetting process in particular has been a notable success—the best, several experts said, they had witnessed anywhere in the world."[94]

According to one program manager, DynCorp's status as a private-sector contractor enabled it to take a more innovative and flexible approach in line with the principle of iterative adaptation.[95] This approach was in contrast to a perceived historical U.S. military approach of shaping a foreign military to "mirror its own" structure.[96] State Department and DynCorp leaders recognized that, in the absence of any postconflict blueprint for rebuilding an army, their effort would necessarily be experimental.[97] While there were some issues with personnel continuity and uncertainty surrounding funding, the program

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[89] Blaney, Klein, and McFate, 2010, p. 9.

[90] Blaney, Klein, and McFate, 2010, p. 9.

[91] McFate, 2013, pp. 50–51.

[92] Blaney, Klein, and McFate, 2010, p. 9.

[93] Ansorge and Antwi-Ansorge, 2011, p. 278.

[94] International Crisis Group, *Liberia: Uneven Progress in Security Sector Reform*, New York, Report No. 148, January 13, 2009, p. ii.

[95] McFate, 2013, p. 39.

[96] McFate, 2013, p. 49.

[97] Blaney, Klein, and McFate, 2010, p. 8.

represented a significant commitment of funds over six years (through 2010), with additional SSA provided in the years since.[98]

By 2009, the International Crisis Group assessed that SSR in Liberia overall, and the U.S.-funded effort to reform and rebuild the Liberian army in particular, was "a provisional success."[99] Liberia's new army was also generally viewed positively by the civilian population.[100] In 2016, the United Nations Security Council reported that the Liberian army remains "well trained and equipped," though it lacks experience.[101] The ability of the new army to maintain its capacity, five years after the end of the main U.S. effort, is a testament to the program's success in achieving at least a minimal level of sustainability.

Kenya

U.S. SSA to Kenya has focused primarily on building counterterrorism and peacekeeping capacity, with some additional focus on police reform in recent years. These efforts have increased significantly over the past decade and include support to troops deploying as part of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM). Unlike either Liberia or Burundi, Kenya is larger, less poor, and relatively stable, with security forces that have long been among the more capable in East Africa. Over time, U.S. SSA efforts in Kenya have come to adhere more closely to the developmental principles outlined in this report, especially local ownership, a comprehensive approach, and harmonization.

Local ownership of SSA has been aided by the relative congruence of U.S. and Kenyan interests, particularly when it comes to countering al-Shabaab in Somalia and strengthening internal counterterrorism capabilities. The United States has also provided extensive technical and financial support to partner-initiated efforts to strengthen

[98] International Crisis Group, 2009, p. 14; Ansorge and Antwi-Ansorge, 2011, p. 280.

[99] International Crisis Group, 2009, p. 9.

[100] Liza E. A. Briggs, "Civilian and Enlisted Perspectives on the Armed Forces of Liberia," U.S. Africa Command, October 2010.

[101] United Nations Security Council, *Special Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission in Liberia*, New York: United Nations, November 15, 2016, pp. 7–8.

accountability and oversight of security forces, especially the police.[102] For example, the United States provides much of the funding for the Internal Police Oversight Authority, the creation of which was led by the Kenyan government.[103] The United States also provided funding and advisory support to Kenya's 2013 baseline survey to identify gaps in police institutions and recommend priorities for further capacity-building efforts.[104]

Over the past decade, U.S. SSA to Kenya has increasingly adopted a comprehensive approach. The United States provided significant assistance to build police capacity for counterterrorism after 2001, including for the creation of specialized police anti-terror units.[105] U.S. assistance later began supporting institutional police reforms following the 2007 electoral crisis and the outbreak of communal violence in which the police were heavily implicated.[106] This support has included assistance to both internal police and external civilian oversight bodies, with complementary mandates to strengthen security force accountability.[107] The United States has also broadened its SSA efforts more recently through the SGI in Kenya, which focuses on border control, police human resource management, and justice system reforms.[108]

U.S. SSA has been somewhat selective in its targeting of aid to Kenya as well. The United States has consistently supported elite

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[102] Alexander Noyes, "Securing Reform? Power Sharing and Civil-Security Relations in Kenya and Zimbabwe," *African Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 13, No. 4, Winter 2013, pp. 38–40.

[103] Swedish National Police Board, *Assessment of the Preconditions for Further Swedish Support for Police Reform in Kenya*, Stockholm, June 30, 2013, pp. 20–22; Noyes, 2013, pp. 35–36, 39.

[104] Government of Kenya, Internal Police Oversight Authority, *Baseline Assessment on Policing Standards and Gaps*, Nairobi, 2013, p. 4.

[105] John Davis, ed., *Terrorism in Africa: The Evolving Front in the War on Terror*, Plymouth, UK: Lexington Books, 2012, p. 211.

[106] Government of Kenya, *Report of the Commission of Inquiry into Post-Election Violence*, Nairobi, 2008, pp. 384–393.

[107] Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, "Kenya," Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of State, undated.

[108] Bureau of African Affairs, *Security Governance Initiative: 2015 Review*, Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of State, March 2, 2016.

counterterrorism units in both the police and the military for several years.[109] U.S. SSA has also more recently begun focusing on the institutional functions—such as personnel management, accountability, and interagency coordination—necessary to ensure that capacity gains are sustained and properly employed.

Reports regarding the harmonization of U.S. SSA have been mixed. At a high level, "coordination between international donors [supporting police reform] seems to be efficient," partly because of clear divisions of responsibility and shared funding mechanisms.[110] At times, less coordination has occurred on the ground during SSA execution, however; one observer stated that the "U.S., U.K., and European Union training efforts sometimes train the same police officers with different approaches, making it more difficult to institutionalize reforms."[111]

As with other SSA cases, it is not easy to disentangle the effects of SSA on partner security capacity from the effects of other factors. The Kenyan security units that have worked closest with U.S. officials have demonstrated their capacity for counterterrorism, including in challenging contexts. Kenyan troops that received U.S. SSA performed well in AMISOM operations—for example, successfully retaking territory from al-Shabaab. Kenyan SOF, which have received more U.S. assistance than other units, did particularly well even in complex amphibious and joint operations.[112] Similarly, the elite paramilitary police General Services Unit, which has received substantial U.S. support, performed more competently than other units responding to the Westgate Mall attack in 2013, although the overall security forces' response

[109] Ilan Goldenberg, Alice Hunt Friend, Stephen Tankel, and Nicholas Heras, *Remodeling Partner Capacity: Maximizing the Effectiveness of U.S. Counterterrorism Security Assistance*, Washington, D.C.: Center for a New American Security, November 14, 2016, pp. 23–24.

[110] Swedish National Police Board, 2013, pp. 14–15.

[111] Goldenberg, Friend, et al., 2016, p. 25.

[112] Seth G. Jones, Andrew M. Liepman, and Nathan Chandler, *Counterterrorism and Counterinsurgency in Somalia: Assessing the Campaign Against Al Shabaab*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, RR-1539-OSD, 2016, pp. 47–48. Also see Cedric Barnes, "Somalia's Al-Shabaab Down but Far from Out," International Crisis Group, June 27, 2016.

was plagued by "significant shortcomings."[113] Interagency coordination in response to terrorist attacks has reportedly become more effective in the years since.[114]

Security forces' professionalism and accountability also appeared to improve after 2008, although significant problems remain. During 2008–2013, the police became less politicized and more professional, resulting in better performance in the 2013 elections.[115] Also, some evidence suggests that, following U.S. training, the Anti-Terrorism Police Unit is carrying out fewer extrajudicial killings, collecting better evidence, and making more arrests than in the past.[116] Continuing reports of human abuses by this and other Kenyan security force units highlight the need for further improvements, however, even as the current Kenyan leadership appears to be backsliding on some of the reforms made since 2008.[117]

Burundi

Of the three cases discussed here, the Burundi-Netherlands Security Sector Development program is the clearest example of an SSA effort in Africa designed in accordance with the developmental principles laid out in this chapter. The program, which lasted from 2009 to 2015, demonstrated that a program can adhere to all of these principles, even in a challenging environment characterized by extreme poverty, recent conflict, and fragile governance.[118] While it is difficult to measure, some evidence indicates that this approach led to institutional gains

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[113] Bureau of Counterterrorism and Countering Extremism, *Country Reports on Terrorism 2013*, Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of State, 2013.

[114] Bureau of Counterterrorism and Countering Extremism, *Country Reports on Terrorism 2015*, Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of State, 2015.

[115] Noyes, 2013, pp. 39–40.

[116] Goldenberg et al., 2016, p. 76.

[117] Human Rights Watch, *Deaths and Disappearances: Abuses in Counterterrorism Operations in Nairobi and in Northeastern Kenya*, Report No. 148, New York, 2016, pp. 57, 73.

[118] Burundi is one of the poorest countries in Africa (and the world), having emerged in the mid-2000s from a decade of civil war. Furthermore, Burundi's security institutions were dysfunctional and had been corrupted by financial incentives to serve elite interests. See OECD, *Improving Security and Justice Programming in Fragile Situations: Better Political*

in the security sector before the program's suspension in 2015 and may have contributed to the military playing a relatively stabilizing role in the subsequent years of political crisis.

The Netherlands developed the SSD program with the developmental principles embedded in the SSR framework in mind.[119] By 2014, the program was seen as an exemplar that "stands out for the lessons it holds of how SSR can be applied in a fragile, conflict-affected state."[120] Local ownership was a key part of the program, which formally began with the signing of a memorandum of understanding between the governments of the Netherlands and Burundi and included "joint execution of a detailed baseline assessment of the Burundian military and police."[121] A broad range of Burundian stakeholders served on the project advisory group, including "representatives of parliament and other oversight bodies, the executive branch, the military, the police, the intelligence service, and civil society."[122] Burundians progressively took on greater responsibilities for day-to-day program management as well, as they replaced Dutch and international staff in key positions after the initial implementation phase.[123]

The program also took a comprehensive approach to SSA. The program targeted the army, the police, and security governance actors, with a particular focus on strengthening institutional capacity for training, planning, accountability, and oversight.[124] Technical capacity-building assistance for the security forces was paired with efforts to improve their sustainment and accountability systems, as

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Engagement, More Change Management, Paris, OECD Development Policy Papers No. 3, 2016, pp. 19–20.

[119] International Security Sector Advisory Team, *Evaluation: Dutch Mandate in Burundi*, Geneva: Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces, March 7, 2017.

[120] Ball, 2014b, p. 3.

[121] OECD, 2016, pp. 31–32.

[122] Ball, 2014b, p. 3.

[123] Ball, 2014b, p. 3.

[124] Nicole Ball, *Putting Governance at the Heart of Security Sector Reform: Lessons from the Burundi-Netherlands Security Sector Development Programme*, The Hague, Netherlands: Conflict Research Unit, Clingendael Institute, March 2014a, p. 21.

well as capacity-building for civilian oversight bodies.[125] For example, the program paired the provision of equipment, such as vehicles and spare parts, with efforts to build capacity to manage maintenance and track supply usage, particularly for items with financial value on the black market.[126] The program explicitly took political considerations into account throughout its execution and involved high-level efforts, particularly by the Dutch embassy and through Burundian stakeholders, to overcome political constraints and build high-level Burundian support for institutional reform.[127]

Despite this broad, integrated approach to SSA, the program also managed to be selective in its targeting of aid. Initial aid focused on "concrete activities," including equipment provision, to establish credibility and generate "tangible benefits" before it began focusing more on changing security force institutions, attitudes, and incentives to accept greater democratic oversight.[128] The National Intelligence Service was excluded from the technical capacity-building aspects of the program because of past human rights abuses; however, it did receive aid promoting "integrity" and institutional reform under the program's governance component.[129] Aid was also targeted to produce enduring gains. For example, Dutch army officers provided ethics training to a small cadre of Burundian officers, who were then supported as they developed a training curriculum and program used by the entire army in the following years.[130]

Harmonization of aid was another goal of the SSD program, which established "a mechanism to coordinate all SSR interventions in country to maximize the complementarity of activities and objectives."[131]

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[125] Ball, 2014b, p. 5.

[126] International Security Sector Advisory Team, "Capacity and Accountability in the Military: Some Examples from the SSD-Program, Burundi," Geneva, undated-b.

[127] Alwin van den Boogard, "Security Sector Development and Lessons from Burundi," video, International Security Sector Advisory Team, July 1, 2015.

[128] Ball, 2014b, p. 4.

[129] Ball 2014a, p. 21.

[130] International Security Sector Advisory Team, undated-b.

[131] Ball, 2014b, p. 4.

This included frequent consultation with other donors, including Belgium, Germany, and the European Union.[132] The program was the product of close coordination in the Dutch government—namely, the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Defence, and Embassy in Burundi.

Long-term commitment and iterative adaptation were other hallmarks of the SSD program. The Netherlands committed in the memorandum of understanding to funding the program for eight years, with annual funding levels starting at around $10 million.[133] The Dutch Ministry of Defence also doubled the length of advisor deployments to aid with personnel continuity.[134] The program was consistently guided by "loosely defined strategic objectives" and a "shared vision" agreed upon by the two governments, but it had no formal logical framework or other rigidly defined plan at the outset. Instead, the program

> adopted a highly flexible problem-solving approach, taking conditions on the ground as its starting point and building on them to progressively achieve the shared vision and objectives. At the end of each 2-year phase, the program evaluated its progress and adjusted accordingly.[135]

Funds were additionally held in reserve to allow "for flexible funding for unexpected windows of opportunity" that might arise during program execution.[136] The program's leadership also encouraged taking risks when trying out new approaches to aid delivery.[137]

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[132] Ball, 2014a, p. 29; Nicole Ball, Jean-Marie Gasana, and Willy Nindorere, *From Quick Wins to Long-Term Profits? Developing Better Approaches to Support Security and Justice Engagements in Fragile States: Burundi Case Study*, Centre d'Alerte et de Prevention des Conflits, March 29, 2012.

[133] International Security Sector Advisory Team, "Burundi SSR Background Note," Geneva, September 1, 2015.

[134] Ball 2014a, p. 25.

[135] Ball, 2014b, p. 4.

[136] International Security Sector Advisory Team, "Burundi-Dutch Security Sector Development Programme: Building Local Trust in a Difficult Environment," Geneva, undated-a.

[137] Van den Boogard, 2015.

The SSD program was fairly successful in achieving its short-term goals, as measured by equipment delivered and maintained, adoption of army-wide training programs, and the completion of the country's first comprehensive defense review.[138] The program's effect on its ultimate intended outcome—security forces that are more professional and accountable—is more difficult to measure, although indications are positive. During the SSD program, security force involvement in extrajudicial killings, rape, theft, and other crimes fell and public perceptions of the army improved; however, it is difficult to quantify how much of this is due to the program's ethics training and efforts to strengthen accountability mechanisms as opposed to other factors.[139]

Outside observers also attested to the military's significant progress during these years, with the United Nations Secretary General stating that "the army, once a perpetrator of violence, has transformed itself into a pillar of stability and ethnic unity that enjoys the confidence of Burundians while helping to secure peace elsewhere in Africa."[140] Burundi has also become one of the largest contributors of troops to peacekeeping in Africa, with its sizable AMISOM contingent reportedly perceived as behaving professionally in Somalia.[141] While Burundi's current political crisis led to the SSD program's suspension in 2015, the military has largely remained a stabilizing and nonabusive force, even when faced with major civil unrest and an attempted coup.[142]

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[138] International Security Sector Advisory Team, undated-a; Institute of Economic Development in Burundi and Conflict, Security, and Development Research Group, King's College London, *The Burundi Defence Review: Lessons Identified*, June 2014, p. viii.

[139] Ball, 2014a, pp. 38–39.

[140] United Nations Security Council, *Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Office in Burundi*, New York: United Nations, January 19, 2015, p. 13.

[141] International Security Sector Advisory Team, undated-b.

[142] Africa Center for Strategic Studies, "Dismantling the Arusha Accords as the Burundi Crisis Rages On," Washington, D.C., March 13, 2017; Alexis Arieff, *Burundi's Electoral Crisis: In Brief*, Washington, D.C.: Congressional Research Service, R44018, May 14, 2015, pp. 5–6; Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, "Burundi: Overview of Main Development Results in 2015," The Hague: Netherlands, September 2016.

Conclusion

The principles and associated good practices derived from the development community are summarized in Table 3.1. Together, they emphasize the importance of working closely with partners, prioritizing those partners willing to commit to reforms, taking into account the broader political and social context when planning, integrating multiple lines

Table 3.1
Summary of Developmental Principles and Good Practices

Principle	Good Practices
Local ownership	• Collaborate with partners in goal-setting, program design, baseline assessments, and evaluations. • Build capacity within existing institutions using local systems and processes.
Comprehensive approach	• Analyze local institutions and incentives. • Identify and support critical enablers. • Support complementary capacity-building at the institutional level. • Evaluate a wide range of impacts over an extended period.
Selectivity	• Carefully select partners. • Focus on enduring gains. • Carefully select assistance that builds incrementally on existing partner capacity.
Harmonization	• Coordinate more effectively with other U.S. agencies and donors. • Build on and learn from others' efforts.
Long-term, iterative adaptation	• Target assistance to address specific local problems. • Build flexibility and responsiveness into program design. • Secure long-term funding and personnel commitments. • Adopt an experimental mindset. • Use repeated evaluations to adapt program implementation on the fly.

of effort in mutually reinforcing ways, and committing to iterated cycles of experimentation over long periods.

The rest of this report considers how these principles and good practices for building sustainable partner capacity might be better incorporated into U.S. SSA efforts in Africa. The following chapter discusses many of the ways in which these good practices are already incorporated into SSA procedures. Its focus, however, falls on the many challenges that U.S. officials face in trying to incorporate these principles more fully into SSA practices. In Chapter Five, we recommend ways that good practices from the development community might be adapted to the very real limitations imposed by the SSA field.

CHAPTER FOUR

Challenges to Applying Development Principles to Security Sector Assistance

In SSA programs, planners often endeavor to adopt practices from the development community that have proven effective in development assistance over the long term. However, because many characteristics distinguish SSA from development assistance, SSA practitioners face distinct challenges in achieving sustainability when attempting to adopt development practices.

In conducting our research for this study, we found that the problems generally do not stem from lack of awareness; the SSA community is aware of many of the principles and good practices delineated in the previous chapter. Planners and implementers in this field, however, face systemic barriers to adopting the principles, and they are unclear which of the practices might be adapted to the requirements of SSA. These challenges are posed both by the U.S. government and by the partner nation and can occur in each stage of SSA program development and execution. Some of these barriers are imposed by the processes that define SSA planning, implementation, and evaluation, while others are imposed by the inherent difficulty that accompanies attempts to align a partner nation's goals with those of the United States.

In response to these challenges, many SSA stakeholders have taken steps to improve planning, implementation, and measurement. Despite these positive changes, challenges to implementing SSA in accordance with development principles persist. Understanding the nature of and underlying reasons for these challenges is critical so that planners and policymakers can better anticipate potential impediments and ultimately execute more-effective SSA.

To understand the challenges DoD faces in applying a developmental approach to SSA, we explore in this chapter the major challenges that confront each of the development principles outlined in Chapter Three: local ownership; a comprehensive approach; selectivity; harmonization; and long-term, iterative adaptation. In each section, we briefly discuss ways that DoD has attempted to incorporate the good practices associated with each principle. We then analyze SSA challenges specific to fuller adoption of the development principles. This analysis provides a basis for our recommendations to overcome barriers to enacting development principles in the SSA process, which are outlined in Chapter Five.

Local Ownership

AFRICOM's repeated precept that calls for "African solutions for African problems" is both practical acknowledgement of limited U.S. resources and a recognition of the principle of local ownership. This tenet remains fundamental to DoD's activities on the continent.[1] Several of the people we interviewed noted that local ownership is critical to SSA programs as well. As one SSA practitioner stated, "We can't care more than our host nation partner. . . . We can have a great initiative, but there's no need to push if they are giving you a lukewarm response. Just stop."[2] However, interviewees also reported that local ownership is often very difficult to secure and maintain in SSA programs. Furthermore, the United States may sometimes be able to address partner concerns to attain greater support, and ultimately any decision to withhold assistance depends on both the program's priority to the United States and the availability of reasonable alternatives. These difficulties and constraints pose challenges to each of the good practices related to the principle.

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[1] See David M. Rodriguez, "United States Africa Command 2016 Posture Statement," statement before the Senate Armed Services Committee, Washington, D.C., March 8, 2016.

[2] DoD member of a U.S. country team in Africa, interview with the authors, Interview 20, July 2016.

Collaborate in Goal-Setting, Program Design, Baseline Assessments, and Evaluations

A key aspect to local ownership is collaboration with the partner nation throughout all stages of an SSA program, starting with planning assessments and continuing through evaluation. U.S. government guidance recognizes the need for such close collaboration; for instance, USAID's *Interagency Security Sector Assistance Framework* states,

> Where possible, host-country views should influence how the assessment is conducted and how the deliverables will be used. Local experts can frame and clarify culture and context by interpreting terms of art and customary practices that international participants may not even realize are at play. They can open doors that would not otherwise be accessible to foreigners.[3]

Moreover, in most U.S. embassies in Africa, DoD maintains personnel (defense attachés, security cooperation officers, and others) whose job it is to coordinate closely with the host government. In practice, however, DoD is often challenged to work jointly with the host nation in gaining and sustaining local ownership in planning and evaluations, for a variety of reasons.[4]

First, the partner nation's SSA goals may differ from those of the United States. For example, although the United States may consider a particular transregional terrorist group to be a significant threat, U.S. partners are often more focused on internal threats. Even when the partner agrees with a condition to be addressed or a requirement to be met, partner officials may differ in how they see the root causes of the problem or the extent of the risks it poses. As a result, a partner may not display the commitment to action or reform that is required to successfully collaborate on a program. For example, many SSA programs are designed to address what the United States considers to be critical counterterrorism threats, but the partner nation may not be as

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[3] USAID, *Interagency Security Sector Assistance Framework*, Washington, D.C.: Chemonics International, October 1, 2010, p. 3.

[4] Former DoD official involved in SSA program management, interview with the authors, Interview 3, July 2016.

motivated as its U.S. counterparts to deal with that threat.[5] Without a meaningful level of commitment from the partner nation, SSA programs are challenged to succeed.[6] One interviewee noted that gaining this commitment at a sufficiently high level is so critical that "it doesn't guarantee success, but its absence almost always guarantees failure."[7] This failure can occur quickly: A former congressional staff member familiar with AFRICOM SSA programs noted that, without senior-level buy-in to security reforms in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the effects of U.S.-led training for a Congolese battalion were erased within two years.[8]

A second challenge to gaining and sustaining local ownership is that current U.S. SSA processes often do not lend themselves to robust collaboration with the host nation, particularly because of time and resource constraints. COCOM SSA staff members are frequently overburdened with competing responsibilities (overseeing multiple countries, programs, or even entire portfolios) and are not able to commit the time and budget necessary to conduct coordination visits with partner nations.[9] In many cases, COCOM SSA planners also are not specialists in a particular country or in assistance programs and, given the resource constraints, may base proposals on blueprints for what has been submitted in the past for other countries or units rather than tailoring programs to specific needs.[10] This problem may be exacerbated if DoD personnel are rewarded for short-term program execution instead

5 Former DoD official involved in SSA program management, interview with the authors, Interview 3, July 2016.

6 Former State Department official involved in SSA policy, interview with the authors, Interview 37, July 2016.

7 Former State Department official involved in SSA policy, interview with the authors, Interview 29, July 2016.

8 Former U.S. Congressional Appropriations Committee staff member involved in SSA, interview with the authors, Interview 38, July 2016.

9 DoD official involved in SSA planning, interview with the authors, Interview 6, November 2016.

10 U.S. government contractor involved in SSA program implementation, interview with the authors, Interview 24, September 2016.

of longer-term progress that may not be realized during the initial practitioner's assignment.

Further, standardized evaluation without partner-nation input can be challenging because baseline conditions and difficulty of implementation may range widely among countries in Africa. For example, two armies may have the same level of minority underrepresentation, but it may not pose the same consequences or be due to the same challenges; one might be the result of institutional barriers to military service while the other reflects the minority's greater options for civilian employment.[11]

Third, the partner nation may not be willing or able to collaborate in an ideal manner. Partner nations may not have sufficient familiarity with evaluation concepts and processes to contribute fully to these evaluations.[12] In other cases, lack of partner willingness to engage in evaluations may indicate a broader lack of commitment to the SSA programs' overall goals. Further, the partner nation may not want an assessment that points out fundamental security shortcomings, instead seeking an assessment that supports the partner's request for particular training or items that it desires for other reasons, such as status and prestige. Partner nations may also exaggerate the documented requirements to promote U.S. investments in training, construction, or acquisition.[13] For partner nations that are less eager to receive U.S. assis-

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[11] Former DoD official involved in SSA program implementation, interview with the authors, Interview 18, July 2016. The same official suggested treating SSA evaluations like some Olympic events, with scores for both execution and degree of difficulty. Marquis and colleagues make a similar point in their 2016 report on AME (Jefferson P. Marquis, Michael J. McNerney, S. Rebecca Zimmerman, Merrie Archer, Jeremy Boback and David Stebbins, *Developing an Assessment, Monitoring, and Evaluation Framework for U.S. Department of Defense Security Cooperation*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, RR-1611-OSD, 2016, p. 60).

[12] Four DoD officials involved in SSA program management, interview with the authors, Interview 1, March 2016.

[13] The Ugandan campaign against the Lord's Resistance Army is one case in which critics have repeatedly called into question the balance between the threat's severity and the government's requests. For an impartial summary of this case, see Alexis Arieff, Lauren Ploch Blanchard, and Tomas F. Husted, *The Lord's Resistance Army: The U.S. Response*, Washington, D.C.: Congressional Research Service, R42094, September 28, 2015, p. 18.

tance, the partner may not see the utility of an assessment, particularly when its leaders are suspicious of U.S. objectives.[14] SSA programs are also challenged in generating local ownership when there is a division between what the public or the security sector wants and what a few leaders want. This disparity often challenges African nations, as well as nations in postconflict environments.[15]

Build Capacity in Existing Institutions Using Local Systems and Processes

Local ownership may be more effectively achieved when a program is designed to incorporate systems and processes that local forces use and understand. Pay-by-text and other payment mechanisms tailored to local context, for instance, will likely be necessary to set up well-functioning payroll systems.[16] These systems and processes can ensure that key needs are met in ways familiar to local forces and can put a more local face on SSA initiatives. Currently, DoD does not tailor many of its SSA programs with sensitivity to these processes, and several factors contribute to this, including DoD's limited personnel, time, and resources to conduct planning assessments.[17] Further, equipment and supplies are often selected for a particular force without rigorous analysis examining whether they can be easily trained on, maintained, or replaced without U.S. support. Accordingly, not only is it more challenging to train units on equipment different from what local forces

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[14] USAID, 2010, p. 3.

[15] Former State Department official involved in SSA policy, interview with the authors, Interview 37, July 2016. See also Timothy Donais, "Understanding Local Ownership in Security Sector Reform," in Timothy Donais, ed., *Local Ownership and Security Sector Reform*, Geneva: Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces, 2008, p. 4; and Albrecht Schnabel, "Ideal Environments Versus Real Environments in Security Sector Reform," in Hans Born and Albrecht Schnabel, eds., *Security Sector Reform in Challenging Environments*, Geneva: Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces, 2009, pp. 27–28.

[16] Former DoD official involved in SSA program implementation, interview with the authors, Interview 19, July 2016.

[17] U.S. government contractor involved in SSA program implementation, interview with the authors, Interview 24, September 2016.

may be familiar with, but it also makes it less likely that units will sustain the trained capabilities if they cannot maintain the equipment beyond the duration of U.S. support.[18]

Comprehensive Approach

DoD is often challenged in adopting a comprehensive approach to providing SSA. Such an approach requires that programs are designed to complement each other across the range of diplomatic, economic, and security sectors, as well as within the security sector, from the institutional level down to tactical units. This holistic approach requires substantial coordination of stakeholders and timelines and a careful balancing of resources, all of which are challenging to execute.

Analyze Local Institutions and Incentives

SSA stakeholders have become increasingly aware of the importance of the generating-force and the executive-direction institutions. This sensitivity, in turn, has been reflected in improved assessments. AFRICOM, for instance, has developed a standardized framework for assessing the current and desired status of partner-nation executive direction and generating-force institutions.[19] Such innovations represent a substantial step forward.

These assessments, however, typically remain purely descriptive exercises focusing narrowly on formal or technical military matters. When officials assess that a dimension of an institution is problematic, they seldom explain why it is problematic or explore the broader contextual reasons for dysfunctions. Several interviewees noted that the U.S. government does not often fully incorporate political conditions, economic requirements, or other domestic contextual factors into plan-

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[18] Former DoD official involved in SSA program management, interview with the authors, Interview 3, July 2016; and DoD member of a U.S. country team in Africa, interview with the authors, Interview 16, June 2016.

[19] DoD official involved in SSA planning, interview with the authors, Interview 6, November 2016; and three DoD officials involved in SSA planning, interview with the authors, Interview 11, November 2016.

ning for training or other SSA events.[20] This limited analysis challenges DoD SSA programs' prospects for sustainability, according to others who stressed the notion that SSA programs will fail if economic support is not concurrently integrated with security-sector initiatives.[21]

In part, these assessment shortcomings derive from personnel challenges. The personnel assigned to conduct SSA planning, assessments, and on-the-ground execution are generally sourced based on being available rather than on having deep understanding of a specific partner nation. Without this relevant experience in partner-nation history, cultures, demographics, local customs, and military and civilian government structures, critical opportunities to engage in optimal ways can be missed.

Analyzing a partner nation's local institutions and incentives also requires personnel, time, and resources, which tend to be focused more on program design and implementation. For instance, sending a desk officer from COCOM headquarters on an assessment trip can leave several critical functions unstaffed or understaffed for days. Alternatively, SSA programs can use a contractor to conduct assessments, but its products will prove useful only if care is taken when selecting the contractor, the assessment requirements are clear to the contractor team, and the resulting products are widely disseminated to all stakeholders.

Finally, the U.S. SSA community does not currently have a common, centralized knowledge management system to link the insights of all stakeholders. In many cases, the expertise required for these broader assessments resides in other U.S. interagency partners. While all of these partners may share critical information within a country team, that same breadth of knowledge does not necessarily get transmitted to the COCOM headquarters or Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) planners responsible for much of the plan-

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[20] State Department personnel involved in SSA program implementation, interview with the authors, Interview 31, July 2016; former State Department official involved in SSA policy, interview with the authors, Interview 37, July 2016; and Treasury Department official involved in SSA programming, interview with the authors, Interview 27, July 2016.

[21] DoD member of a U.S. country team in Africa, interview with the authors, Interview 16, June 2016; and Treasury Department official involved in SSA programming, interview with the authors, Interview 27, July 2016.

ning and coordination of disparate SSA programs. As we discuss later, AFRICOM has developed a knowledge management platform that might be used for this purpose, but a variety of organizational and technical challenges remain to be resolved before it could truly integrate the various streams of information necessary for more-comprehensive assessments to inform SSA planning.

Identify and Support Critical Enablers

As in development programs, enablers play a critical role in the success and sustainability of SSA efforts. SSA partner nations routinely prefer assistance packages to focus on developing a tactical unit's capabilities. However, comprehensively building an effective combat unit does not mean just training a company of soldiers to operate tactically as a team; it also means giving them the required transportation, intelligence support, unit maintenance, personnel managers, and other enablers to go into the field and accomplish their mission.

Often, though, programs do not focus on these and other critical enablers. One former DoD official with AFRICOM experience pointed to a lack of logistics support as a key reason that programs fail, citing such basic elements as training on facility maintenance and pay systems as critical.[22] Although U.S. planners are aware of the importance of such enablers, appropriate integration of enablers into SSA programming can fail to occur for several reasons.

In some cases, this lack of focus on enablers can be attributed to the preferences of partner nations that may be more interested in executing impressive one-off training events than sustainable development. Our interview subjects noted examples of such training events, including amphibious assaults with U.S. Navy SEALs (or sea, air, and land teams) and airborne insertions, the latter occurring even though the partner nation had no mission-capable aircraft for delivering parachutists.[23]

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[22] Former DoD official involved in SSA policy, interview with the authors, Interview 2, July 2016.

[23] Former DoD official involved in SSA program implementation, interview with the authors, Interview 18, July 2016; and DoD member of a U.S. country team in Africa, interview with the authors, Interview 23, August 2016.

In other cases, inadequate focus on relevant enablers derives from weaknesses of the U.S. systems for SSA. Because long-term tracking of U.S. SSA engagements remains a challenge and military personnel rotate out of their SSA roles frequently, planners may not know what enabler capabilities are required in a particular country, what enabler capabilities are already resident, and what has or has not worked in the past. Often, it is easier and faster for SSA planners with little time or experience to defer to a standard model of SSA programs that has been used before, resulting in repetitive tactical programs.[24]

Moreover, while the COCOM and service staffs have skills in many military functions, the deeper expertise in enabler capability development is spread out within the services, particularly in DoD "schoolhouses" and training commands. To access such expertise for assessments or activities, a COCOM needs to reach out through its service components or the Joint Chiefs of Staff, a time-consuming and often cumbersome process. Even within AFRICOM, this good practice is challenging to implement because different staff sections have the authority to promote separate projects, which may inhibit the construction of comprehensive packages that include proper enablers.[25]

Long procurement timelines also make it difficult to identify and support critical enablers. If the United States determines that a partner nation requires certain enabler support in conjunction with an existing engagement, it may take up to 12–18 months to receive support because of the coordination processes and procurement lag times.[26] By then, conditions and needs may have changed, and the materiel and equipment may no longer meet a partner nation's requirements. Even if the general requirement still exists, the enablers may arrive too late to be used to support a planned training event or other complementary activity.

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[24] Four DoD officials involved in SSA program management, interview with the authors, Interview 1, March 2016.

[25] Two DoD officials involved in SSA program planning, interview with the authors, Interview 25, February 2016.

[26] DoD member of a U.S. country team in Africa, interview with the authors, Interview 16, June 2016.

Support Complementary Capacity-Building at the Institutional Level

Compared with the number of tactical- and operational-level SSA engagements, DoD has few programs focused on building defense institutions. One recent analysis of DIB programs for Africa found 47 programs that could be leveraged to provide some degree of support to institution-building goals in Africa.[27] Of these, however, only five were directly focused on institution-building: the Defense Governance Management Team, the Wales Initiative Fund–DIB, the Defense Institute of International Legal Studies, the Ministry of Defense Advisors program, and the SGI.[28] Moreover, most of these are small programs with limited budgets and affect only a handful of African partners.

Instead, DoD SSA, particularly in the counterterrorism realm, concentrates on building tactical capabilities and is not always tied to building institutional capabilities that are required to manage, sustain, and provide oversight of the units that partner with the United States.[29] This is particularly problematic in Africa, where several nations have very weak civilian sectors. One SSA expert with a background in State Department programs noted that if efforts concentrate only on building military capacity and not on improving the civilian security institutions that provide oversight of the military, "you run the risk of having a strong military with no civilian leadership whatsoever."[30] Another interviewee with experience in political-military affairs at the State Department emphasized that SSA must be intertwined with other efforts to enable progress.[31]

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[27] See Appendix A for details. Note that SSA programming is currently in a state of flux because of the changes in the FY 2017 NDAA.

[28] Descriptions of these programs are provided in Appendix A. The SGI is particularly noteworthy as an Africa-specific program started in 2014 that is designed to improve security-sector governance in Ghana, Kenya, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, and Tunisia.

[29] Former DoD official involved in SSA policy, interview with the authors, Interview 2, July 2016.

[30] Former State Department official involved in SSA policy, interview with the authors, Interview 37, July 2016.

[31] Former State Department official involved in SSA policy, interview with the authors, Interview 29, July 2016.

Similar to the challenges posed in identifying and supporting critical enablers, pursuing complementary programs at the institutional level is challenged by frequent turnover in SSA planning staff. With no formalized system across all U.S. stakeholders to share knowledge of a country's strengths, requirements, or lessons learned, consistent knowledge of a particular country's institutional needs is uneven. Further, institutional-level capacity-building takes significant time to achieve sustainable effects, and progress can be difficult to measure and demonstrate.[32] These timelines may not coincide with the development of tactical-level capabilities, and they require patience and long-term investment from U.S. policymakers.

Finally, as with the development of enablers, DIB can be challenging because partner nations are frequently more interested in developing tactical capabilities and receiving high-end equipment rather than focusing on budgeting, personnel management, and other institutional functions.[33]

Evaluate a Wide Range of Potential Effects over an Extended Period

Overall, U.S. SSA programs tend to be more episodic and shorter termed, and they have historically lacked robust evaluation phases to determine progress, sustainability, and second- and third-order effects on other institutions, stakeholders, and processes in a partner nation. Metrics to gauge SSA program success have commonly been measures of performance, such as counting numbers of students that completed a training event, rather than measures that describe program effectiveness over the long term. Further, many COCOMs, including AFRICOM, have been hobbled by limited resources and personnel and have not prioritized performing long-term evaluations on program outcomes. One former DoD security cooperation official noted about

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[32] Marquis et al., 2016, pp. 46–52; McNerney, Johnson, et al., 2016, pp. 101–102.

[33] Former U.S. Congressional Appropriations Committee staff member involved in SSA, interview with the authors, Interview 38, July 2016.

SSA, "We don't really do longitudinal analysis. We define success as 'we showed up, we trained, came home.'"[34]

All of this is beginning to change, however. In January 2017, DoD published guidance requiring "accurate and transparent reporting to key stakeholders on the outcomes and sustainability of security cooperation and [efforts to] track, understand, and improve returns on DoD security cooperation investments." A central component of this guidance is "centralized independent and rigorous evaluations of significant security cooperation initiatives to examine their relevance, effectiveness, and sustainability."[35]

Implementing this guidance, however, will require considerable change in practices throughout DoD, along with the requisite resources to implement the new practices. DoD evaluations of SSA have often been based on the impressions of DoD subject-matter experts who have been integrally involved in planning or executing the department's SSA programs. Moreover, few of these evaluations have used rigorous methods to determine whether observed changes in a partner's capabilities were the result of U.S. assistance rather than some other cause.[36]

Instituting a culture of rigorous evaluation, similar to changes implemented at USAID over the past several years, is not just a technical matter; it will also require changes in the way that senior decisionmakers approach SSA. Many DoD SSA programs, particularly those in the counterterrorism field, focus on short-term operational requirements. This emphasis shifts focus away from the long-term effects of

[34] Former DoD official involved in SSA program management, interview with the authors, Interview 3, July 2016.

[35] Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, *Assessment, Monitoring, and Evaluation Policy for the Security Cooperation Enterprise*, DoD Instruction 5132.14, Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Defense, January 13, 2017, p. 3.

[36] Marquis et al., 2016; Jennifer D. P. Moroney, Jefferson P. Marquis, Cathryn Quantic Thurston, and Gregory F. Treverton, *A Framework to Assess Programs for Building Partnerships*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, MG-863-OSD, 2009; and Stephen Watts, Christopher M. Schnaubelt, Sean Mann, Angela O'Mahony, and Michael Schwille, *Pacific Engagement: Forging Tighter Connections Between Tactical Security Cooperation Activities and U.S. Strategic Goals in the Asia-Pacific Region*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, RR-1920-A, forthcoming.

SSA programs, which are often key to durable counterterrorism success. Moreover, it can be difficult to maintain both U.S. and partner-nation support for or interest in long-term evaluation of impacts when senior-level attention has shifted to new crises.[37]

Selectivity

In an SSA context, selectivity concerns directing support to the right partners and the right type of engagement to best augment the capabilities of those partners. This principle also requires that the United States staff its SSA efforts with personnel who have appropriate experience, cultural understanding, and skills sets to engage U.S. partners effectively. Embracing selectivity challenges planners to think critically across a range of complex solutions. However, several aspects of the SSA process hinder the community's ability to embrace fully the development community's good practices relating to selectivity.

Carefully Select Partners

Selecting partner countries is a complex task that requires balancing competing U.S. strategic-level priorities, current threats, likelihood of sustainability, and limited resources. A nation with committed leadership and forces that have substantial ability to receive and learn from more-advanced training may not be facing a critical threat. Conversely, a nation challenged by serious terrorist activity within or near its borders may not have the institutional support or basic training required to absorb SSA. Frequently, SSA planners are limited to focusing proposals on command priorities, which are likely to be based on a command's threat-based primary lines of effort. These priorities may not take into account the likelihood that gains in security capacity financed by the United States will not be sustained over long periods.

Many of our interviewees noted that, for a variety of circumstances, SSA programs often lack creativity and tailoring to U.S. goals and partner-nation requirements. Proposals for some SSA programs are

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[37] Former DoD official involved in SSA program management, interview with the authors, Interview 3, July 2016.

instead created using a standard framework for each country or unit, regardless of a partner nation's characteristics, need, and fitness for the program.[38] This practice may be due, in part, to the fact that some SSA planning sections are often understaffed, and many personnel do not have deep experience in SSA program management. The use of standardized or cookie-cutter planning may also occur because SSA programs are frequently subject to national-level direction under tight timelines; high-level pressure to achieve rapid results can often inhibit careful, reflective programming.[39]

Further, as described earlier in this chapter, military SSA planners rotate out of positions frequently and often must produce proposals quickly despite limited experience and resources. As a consequence, they can default to selecting countries and types of engagements that have been conducted in the past.[40] Without comprehensive assessments of strengths, gaps, and analyses on what has worked well in the past, it is difficult for planners to consistently determine optimal SSA partners.

Clear goals should guide prioritization of SSA recipients and should also drive development of expectations—and associated metrics—for engagements. Frequently, however, SSA engagements are only loosely associated with multiple and often ill-defined objectives, without any prioritization among them. For instance, a single program might seek to build capabilities to counter a specific threat, to develop access for U.S. forces in a region, and to generate positive military-to-military relationships. Moreover, the partner nation may not have conducted sufficient internal assessments to know what its genuine needs are.[41] Vague and conflicting goals make it difficult to prioritize rigor-

[38] Four DoD officials involved in SSA program management, interview with the authors, Interview 1, March 2016.

[39] Four DoD officials involved in SSA program management, interview with the authors, Interview 1, March 2016; and DoD official involved in SSA program management, interview with the authors, Interview 4, July 2016.

[40] Four DoD officials involved in SSA program management, interview with the authors, Interview 1, March 2016.

[41] DoD official involved in SSA program management, interview with the authors, Interview 4, July 2016; and former State Department official involved in SSA policy, interview with the authors, Interview 37, July 2016.

ously among potential partners, and many of those we interviewed also noted that this lack of clarity may generate expectations that the program will be challenged to meet.[42]

The same selectivity should characterize the selection of a unit once a partner nation has been chosen as an SSA recipient. One State Department employee working on SSA noted that this decision often is driven by "guessing if partners will be good partners, if they will work toward our goals, but we don't really know."[43] Frequently, SSA engagements occur with a partner-nation unit simply because it is available or because it has received training in the past, which may not be adequate indicators of best fit for the engagement.[44]

Focus on Enduring Gains

According to PPD 23, "It is essential to be selective and to focus where targeted assistance can be effective, in line with broader [U.S.] foreign policy and national security objectives."[45] However, DoD SSA resources are typically apportioned primarily based on which threats are perceived to be greatest rather than which partners are most likely to build sustainable capacity consonant with U.S. interests and values.[46] These programs tend to focus narrowly on providing capabilities and access to disrupt threats as quickly as possible, and the programs are typically short term, ending sometimes just a year after inception and receiving no follow-on support.[47]

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[42] DoD member of a U.S. country team in Africa, interview with the authors, Interview 21, July 2016.

[43] State Department personnel involved in SSA program implementation, interview with the authors, Interview 31, July 2016.

[44] Former DoD official involved in SSA program management, interview with the authors, Interview 3, July 2016.

[45] White House, 2013.

[46] Phillip Carter, former U.S. ambassador to Côte d'Ivoire and former deputy to the commander for civil-military engagement at AFRICOM, interview with the authors, Interview 12, June 2016.

[47] DoD member of a U.S. country team in Africa, interview with the authors, Interview 17, June 2016.

Several interviewees noted that to sustain SSA gains, institutional development must occur in concert with tactical-level engagements. As an example, one SSA practitioner observed that this dual development is critical because

> we find out that certain nations who have boats we provided them don't take boats out because they don't have gas. Why not? Because the head officers use them for their own personal use. We need to focus on long-term institutional approaches where you have repeat engagements.[48]

The U.S. government encounters further difficulty in focusing on enduring gains because its personnel, whether DoD or State Department, are largely assigned only temporarily to SSA engagements in the partner nation. Because personnel are rewarded for successes that are visible during their assignments, short assignments tend to reinforce a focus on short-term gains rather than enduring outcomes. This tendency is further reinforced by the historical lack of sustained longitudinal analyses (discussed earlier), which might show major trade-offs between short-term and long-term success. The focus on the near horizon is, of course, just a tendency; several practitioners interviewed were proud that they had set their successors up for success.[49] But they did so by consciously going against the institutional incentives to focus on the short term.

In Chapter Three, our discussion of good practices from the development community highlighted two types of programs that were particularly likely to foster enduring gains: (1) intensive training of key units and personnel in partner nations and (2) long-term, inten-

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[48] Former DoD official involved in SSA program management, interview with the authors, Interview 3, July 2016.

[49] One practitioner noted that he initiated a creative expansion of a capability using unexpended foreign military financing money from old cases. It took two years for his successor to obtain all of the necessary approvals, and it was not until the tour of the successor's successor that the equipment actually arrived—five years later. Our interviewee went on to note that he was back in Africa at the time and was invited to the dedication ceremony; in our research, we found this to be a rare example of continuity. (DoD member of a U.S. country team in Africa, interview with the authors, Interview 20, July 2016)

sive mentoring relationships. Such programs as the Africa Center for Strategic Studies' African Military Education Program are intended to have lasting effects by improving partners' own education and training institutions. Unfortunately, such programs typically receive only a small fraction of SSA funding.

Both within and outside DoD, interviewees pointed to the International Military Education and Training (IMET) program, which is regarded highly by U.S. SSA practitioners. Under the program, foreign military officers serve as exchange students in U.S. institutions as a tool to imbue and sustain U.S. values over the long term. According to two DoD country team members in Africa, IMET is among the most successful SSA programs because young leaders come to the United States and establish long-term relationships, benefit from Western education and values, improve leadership skills, and transfer those lessons and vision for how a military should function.[50] However, the potential gains from IMET and similar programs are unlikely to be realized in the short term, which makes it difficult to measure the utility of the program and argue for increased resources in that vein. Also, despite IMET's positive attributes, one interviewee noted that the program is still limited in its utility if its foreign participants are not continually engaged and mentored after program conclusion.[51]

Mentoring can similarly have long-lasting effects; several interviewees from across the DoD enterprise pointed to mentorship as the key method to ingrain capabilities and values over the long term.[52] To date, U.S. efforts to provide long-term, embedded mentoring for African security partners have been confined to a handful of mentors operating at the executive-direction level through the Ministry of Defense Advisors program and the SGI. AFRICOM and the State Department have just begun using additional programs—including the Global Peace

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[50] DoD member of a U.S. country team in Africa, interview with the authors, Interview 16, June 2016.

[51] U.S. government contractor involved in SSA program implementation, interview with the authors, Interview 24, September 2016.

[52] U.S. government contractor involved in SSA program implementation, interview with the authors, Interview 24, September 2016.

Operations Initiative, the Africa Contingency Operations Training and Assistance program, and the African Peacekeeping Rapid Response Partnership—to embed mentors with African partners' generating-force institutions. These latter efforts have started out small, with approximately a half-dozen mentors expected to be deployed by summer 2017. If these initial efforts prove successful, they might be expanded.[53]

Carefully Select Assistance That Builds Incrementally on Existing Partner Capacity

As noted earlier, the principle of selectivity also demands that the U.S. government carefully choose the appropriate type of program and training to engage a unit or partner nation most effectively. Practitioners interviewed for this report noted two recurring problems in particular: (1) failure to provide materiel appropriate for African partners and (2) the provision of training that is easy for the United States to provide but poorly adapted to partners' critical needs.

Many interviewees noted that, in some cases, the United States provides equipment that may not take into account the utility or sustainability of the equipment for that particular partner nation. Reasons for this lack of tailoring vary from program to program. In some cases, planners are constrained by the Buy American Act, which places restrictions on the foreign-manufactured items the U.S. government can buy.[54] In many cases, U.S. equipment may be more readily available for faster delivery, be easier to control for follow-on sustainment packages and spare parts, and facilitate greater interoperability between U.S. forces and the partner nations the United States supplies. However, the benefits of U.S.-manufactured equipment do not always outweigh the drawbacks.

Several interviewees recalled that equipment can be ineffective when there is a lack of adequate training, maintenance facilities, or spare parts.[55] Others noted that even if the U.S.-standard equipment

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[53] Four DoD officials involved in SSA planning, interview with the authors, Interview 5, November 2016.

[54] United States Code, Title 41, Chapter 83, Buy American.

[55] DoD member of a U.S. country team in Africa, electronic communication with the authors, January 2017.

is sustainable, it might not be the right equipment.[56] For example, the size and weight of the equipment might not be suited for the partner nation's envisioned missions, or the technology may be too dissimilar to equipment that a partner-nation unit is used to using and may exceed the unit's absorptive capacity.

In other cases, the United States simply retrains what partners already know instead of targeting related capabilities that are more in need of development. As noted previously, many SSA programs are designed from standard training models rather than rigorous needs assessments because there is not enough time or expertise to tailor the programs. These default programs might focus on developing skills (such as tactical infantry skills) that a unit already retains instead of enabler capabilities (such as mobility, logistics, and intelligence) that are requisites for sustainability. As one interviewee outside DoD noted about tailoring SSA programs in particularly problematic countries in Africa, "The key is not to help them know how to kill people better. They already know how to do that. If that were the issue, the problem would be solved by now."[57]

Harmonization

Harmonization requires all stakeholders to share information, ensuring complementary rather than conflicting or duplicative efforts; collaborate to streamline processes and capitalize on lessons learned from prior efforts; and use the right personnel and resources to implement a program. Although harmonization is considered critical in progressing toward the U.S. security sector's common goals, in practice, it has been very difficult to attain as a result of unclear and differing objectives among agencies and offices engaged in SSA; multiple authorities,

[56] U.S. government policy analyst, interview with the authors, Interview 34, March 2016; and DoD personnel involved in SSA program implementation, interview with the authors, Interview 13, June 2016.

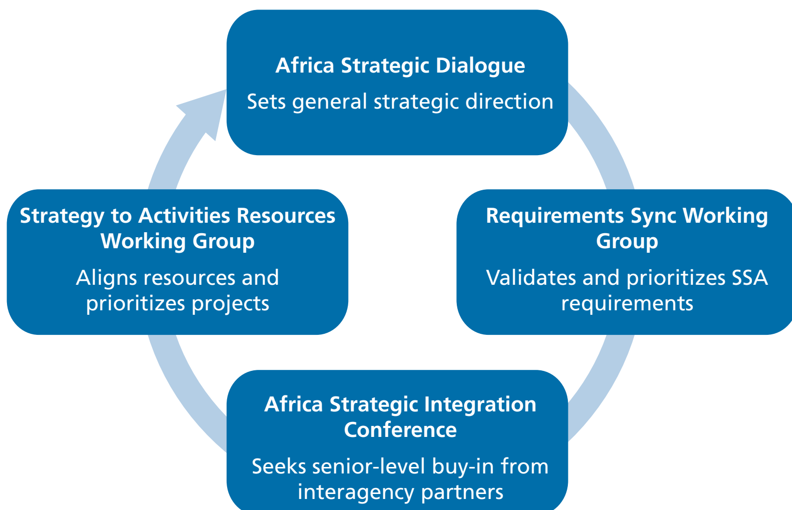
[57] NGO personnel involved in SSA, interview with the authors, Interview 40, September 2016.

funding sources, and associated timelines that govern SSA programs; and limited communication among relevant donors.

Coordinate More Effectively with Other U.S. Agencies and Donors

In many ways, the SSA community has already embraced the practice of extensive coordination. AFRICOM and other COCOMs, for example, have created several mechanisms to better coordinate SSA activities across U.S. agencies and with partner nations. In particular, they have instituted synchronization conferences to which State Department and USAID personnel, in addition to a range of DoD staff, are invited. These conferences—as illustrated in Figure 4.1 for AFRICOM—attempt to harmonize different agencies' perspectives for various activities, including setting overall strategic direction, determining SSA requirements, and negotiating over funding priorities for SSA requirements, among others.

Figure 4.1
AFRICOM Theater Synchronization Framework



SOURCE: Adapted from AFRICOM, "Security Force Assistance Planning and Programming: Executive Overview," briefing slides, November 9, 2016. Only events involving interagency partners are included here.

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While coordination among the many SSA stakeholders in the U.S. system is clearly necessary, the return on investment from existing practices is not always clear. The number of individuals representing multiple offices and agencies involved in planning, approving, executing, and assessing a single SSA program can, in some cases, reach into the hundreds. Such coordination is laborious, time-intensive, and not always effective. Several factors hinder effective communication among SSA stakeholders.

First, although a "whole-of-government" approach is commonly advocated in U.S. government documents—such as PPD 23, senior-level posture statements to Congress, and agency websites[58]—each entity with equities in the SSA process has its own culture, processes, timelines, and value set and focuses on meeting the demands of its own leadership. While interviewees noted that coordination is often effective at the country team level, where agencies work closely together daily, these relationships are harder to maintain in higher levels of policymaking. One former congressional staff member noted that although the SSA community in the U.S. government seems to agree that a whole-of-government approach is preferable, actual coordination and collaboration practices at the national level often do not reflect this consensus. Further, the former staff member noted that emphasis on U.S. interagency collaboration tends to focus on joint funding efforts rather than joint program planning efforts.[59]

Several interviewees also noted that National Security Council demands for information, policy, and intelligence products, sometimes

[58] See White House, 2013, pp. 1, 3, 7–10; and Joseph L. Votel, "Posture of U.S. Central Command," statement before the Senate Armed Services Committee, Washington, D.C., March 9, 2017. See also Lloyd J. Austin III, "Posture of U.S. Central Command," statement before the Senate Armed Services Committee, Washington, D.C., March 8, 2016; Joseph L. Votel, "Posture of U.S. Special Operations Command," statement before the House Armed Services Committee, Subcommittee on Emerging Threats and Capabilities, Washington, D.C., March 18, 2015; U.S. Africa Command, "Security Cooperation," web page, undated; and Bureau of Counterterrorism and Countering Violent Extremism, "Who We Are," U.S. Department of State, February 7, 2017.

[59] Former U.S. Congressional Appropriations Committee staff member involved in SSA, interview with the authors, Interview 38, July 2016.

tasked to the tactical level, exhaust the executive agencies and take valuable time that could otherwise be spent in coordination.[60]

An SSA expert in OSD noted that agencies have no incentive to share information on SSA efforts within the U.S. government. The interviewee stated that, because SSA programs are largely planned outside of the intelligence staff, practitioners cannot easily share knowledge about how to effectively train intelligence-related skills, for example.[61] In contrast, Congress has designated certain programs to be jointly formulated, which requires DoD and the State Department to both coordinate and approve the programs, with one agency in the lead. The Global Train and Equip program and the Global Security Contingency Fund are two examples of these authorities. Although joint formulation ensures some level of coordination, a common complaint is that the processes are cumbersome and difficult to manage.[62]

Further, senior-level attention on SSA tends to center on addressing short-term crises, a practice that tends to emphasize quick-response solutions that make robust coordination difficult. According to one DoD SSA official, the U.S. government lacks patience: "We want things better, faster, quicker, but these things take time."[63] Examples include U.S. efforts to counter al-Qaeda in the Maghreb in countries with low absorptive capacity, such as Mali, Mauritania, and Niger.

Comprehensive planning discussions about long-term goals among U.S. agencies rarely occur, despite PPD 23 directing exactly that type of interaction.[64] Until the 2014 creation of the Counter-Terrorism Partnership Fund, AFRICOM did not receive a substan-

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[60] Treasury Department official involved in SSA programming, interview with the authors, Interview 27, July 2016; and State Department official involved in SSA policy, interview with the authors, Interview 28, February 2016.

[61] Former DoD official involved in SSA policy, interview with the authors, Interview 2, July 2016.

[62] Moroney, Thaler, and Hogler, 2013, p. 27.

[63] Former DoD official involved in SSA policy, interview with the authors, Interview 2, July 2016.

[64] Former State Department official involved in SSA policy, interview with the authors, Interview 37, July 2016; and former DoD official involved in SSA program management, interview with the authors, Interview 3, July 2016.

tial portion of global SSA funding, which interviewees said preempted strategic planning.[65] Instead, and further driven by increased focus on terrorist activity in Africa, emphasis has historically been placed on tactical programs, tied not to overall strategy but rather "pressure just to get programs approved and money spent."[66] One subject observed that the Malian government had asked for help building a SOF schoolhouse for years, but the United States remained focused on conducting training instead, to the detriment of long-term sustainability.[67] When SSA funds are lacking, one path is to use Title 10 money for a combined training event, which requires U.S. personnel to constitute the majority of participants. Details provided by our interviewees suggest that, in addition to reducing the percentage of African participants, these combined training events center on activities at the low end of U.S. capabilities yet are both a stretch and a rare requirement for the African partner. One interviewee gave an example of an airborne training event with an army that lacked the organic airlift for the training event to be a core task.[68]

Another key hurdle to effective communication is mismatched timelines. Several interviewees mentioned that they struggle with trying to coordinate the multiple timelines across programs—for development, approval, implementation, and equipment delivery—that characterize the SSA process.[69] Although the FY 2017 NDAA changes to SSA meaningfully focus on many of these timeline-related challenges, the major agencies involved in SSA still operate on different planning timelines and budget cycles that "hinder coordination and concepts

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[65] Treasury Department official involved in SSA programming, interview with the authors, Interview 27, July 2016.

[66] State Department official involved in SSA policy, interview with the authors, Interview 28, February 2016.

[67] DoD member of a U.S. country team in Africa, interview with the authors, Interview 20, July 2016.

[68] DoD member of a U.S. country team in Africa, interview with the authors, Interview 23, August 2016.

[69] Former State Department official involved in SSA policy, interview with the authors, Interview 37, July 2016.

of when projects can be accomplished."[70] One interviewee highlighted these challenges with an example of a military commander in Iraq who sought to coordinate with USAID to bring electricity to a region on a short timeline to facilitate more-effective military operations against al-Qaeda, but the commander was unable to obtain generators from USAID because they were not budgeted in the program's three-year cycle.[71] These varying timelines are generated in large part by all the different programs available to the U.S. government to execute SSA, whose patchwork nature has been well documented.[72] Several interviewees expressed substantial frustration with the various streams that SSA practitioners need to understand and manage in order to piece together comprehensive and effective programs.[73] By creating the Security Cooperation Enhancement Fund in the FY 2017 NDAA, Congress consolidated more than $2 billion of authorities into one fund, intending to alleviate some of these challenges and simplify coordination. This effort will likely address many of these patchwork frustrations, but at time of publication, the fund was still in its infancy, preventing analysis.[74]

Historically, inadequate knowledge management systems have also hindered effective communication among various SSA stakeholders. According to several interviewees throughout the U.S. government, holistic planning has occurred only infrequently among U.S. interagency actors and foreign donors, partly because no comprehensive analyses that depict partner-nation strengths, weaknesses, gaps, and needs have existed. Specifically, one State Department official told

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[70] Former U.S. Congressional Appropriations Committee staff member involved in SSA, interview with the authors, Interview 38, July 2016.

[71] Former U.S. Congressional Appropriations Committee staff member involved in SSA, interview with the authors, Interview 38, July 2016.

[72] Thaler et al., 2016.

[73] DoD member of a U.S. country team in Africa, interview with the authors, Interview 16, June 2016.

[74] For a summary of the bill changes, see U.S. Senate Armed Services Committee, *National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2017: Executive Summary*, Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2016.

us that "every proposal you receive you look at for its own individual merits, not compared to last year or the year before."[75] Most knowledge management has been shared informally between or among agencies, but even within DoD, frequent personnel turnover interrupts the relationships required to facilitate informal information-sharing networks. Commands and embassies often point to a lack of funding to conduct assessments, monitoring, and evaluation that could inform more-comprehensive and shareable products.[76]

The U.S. government has taken steps to begin to rectify these shortfalls in AME and knowledge management. As discussed previously, DoD recently released guidance on AME, which called for improved dissemination of AME products. Moreover, DoD has taken important steps to improve its knowledge management practices. The Global Theater Security Cooperation Management Information System (G-TSCMIS) has been designated as the DoD system of record for SSA, and it provides widespread visibility for certain types of information (although it has historically been underutilized, limiting its utility in practice). AFRICOM has developed a knowledge management platform—the Integrated AFRICOM Theater Synchronization System (IATTS)—with much more-robust capabilities, enabling the COCOM to tie together assessments, planning, budgeting, and evaluation all in one system. Unfortunately, technical and organizational barriers have thus far prevented widespread access to IATTS; at this point, it remains a tool for the AFRICOM headquarters staff. In the future, however, it and platforms like it may make coordination in the U.S. government considerably easier.[77]

For all of the coordination challenges in the U.S. government, robust coordination with other donor nations that the United States works with in Africa, such as the United Kingdom and France, is more difficult still, even though PPD 23 calls for such coordination. SSA plans need to be coordinated within the U.S. government before

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[75] State Department official involved in SSA policy, interview with the authors, Interview 28, February 2016.

[76] Marquis et al., 2016.

[77] Two DoD officials involved in SSA program monitoring, interview with the authors, Interview 41, February 2016.

garnering buy-in from other donors, a balance that requires careful timing. Differences in training styles and budget cycles and a lack of formal international knowledge management systems also inhibit international coordination.

Build on and Learn from Others' Efforts

Besides the synchronization conferences discussed earlier, DoD is undertaking other measures to learn from past efforts. The DoD Instruction on AME (DoD Instruction 5132.14), for instance, directs relevant DoD stakeholders to "[i]dentify and disseminate best practices and lessons learned for security cooperation implementation to inform decisions about security cooperation policy, plans, programs, program management, resources, and the security cooperation workforce."[78]

It will require considerable work, however, to implement this instruction; historically, the recording and dissemination of detailed after-action reports and lessons learned for SSA have been largely neglected.[79] SSA programs are often conducted independently of previous SSA engagements with a partner unit or nation. Causes for this "stovepiped" planning have been addressed throughout this chapter, but in particular, lack of formal knowledge management systems and high turnover among military personnel who work in the SSA system have presented some of the greatest challenges to building on others' efforts. One former official with experience in both the military and the Africa Contingency Operations Training and Assistance program noted,

> There is no knowledge management system. Unless the same person is there and has been from the last deployment, there is no way to do it. No after-action reports, no information-sharing. Nothing that says here's what we taught, here's what they screwed up, here's how to or how not to approach these guys. . . . I've never seen any mechanisms to show "here's where we left off, and here's the training plan for the next year."[80]

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[78] Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, 2017.

[79] See, for instance, Watts et al., 2017.

[80] Former DoD official involved in SSA program implementation, interview with the authors, Interview 19, July 2016.

Lack of formal knowledge management systems in SSA has hindered trainers' ability to start where another unit or agency ended its last engagement with a unit. And lack of continuity between trainers may result in uncoordinated and even contradictory methods.[81]

Continuity is particularly problematic when multiple donor nations are involved in SSA provision with a nation or unit. Naturally, each country has its own values, operational doctrine, equipment, and administrative practices, which may be dissimilar to those of other donor countries that have engaged a unit in the past.[82] For example, military training programs in the Democratic Republic of the Congo were "marked by a fragmentation of assistance and multiple ad hoc donor initiatives," as each foreign military provided training separately and according to its own doctrinal approach. Not only did this hinder formation of a unified partner military, but it "routinely allowed the Congolese politicians and military to play [various donors] against each other."[83] Similarly, in Somalia, "failures to coordinate within [AMISOM] have led each troop-contributing country to train and equip its own Somali security force according to its own needs and norms, raising serious concerns about the ability of the Somali National Armed Forces to eventually act jointly."[84]

Again, AFRICOM's IATTS system has the potential to improve information-sharing. But both technical and organizational issues will have to be overcome before it can live up to its potential. First, as discussed earlier, technical hurdles to interconnectivity and access will have to be dealt with to make information-sharing seamless among AFRICOM headquarters, country teams, and other interagency play-

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[81] Former DoD official involved in SSA program implementation, interview with the authors, Interview 19, July 2016.

[82] DoD official involved in SSA program management, interview with the authors, Interview 4, July 2016.

[83] Nicola Dahrendorf, "MONUC and the Relevance of Coherent Mandates: The Case of the DRC," in Heiner Hänggi and Vincenza Scherrer, eds., *Security Sector Reform and UN Integrated Missions: Experience from Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Haiti, and Kosovo*, Geneva: Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces, 2007.

[84] Sarah Detzner, "Modern Post-Conflict Security Sector Reform in Africa: Patterns of Success and Failure," *African Security Review*, Vol. 26, No. 2, 2017, p. 122.

ers. Perhaps more challenging still are cultural differences. Those involved in executing most SSA activities are not used to widely sharing after-action reports or lessons learned or sometimes even producing such documents. Even more problematic, SSA practitioners often feel pressure to report positive progress rather than realistic assessments of SSA programs.[85] Assessments and evaluations that do not accurately reflect a unit's capabilities, its progress, and its vulnerabilities render additional engagements far more difficult to execute effectively. These pressures to report progress might be partially alleviated by conducting external evaluations, as required by DoD Instruction 5132.14 on AME. Even then, however, appropriate mechanisms will be required to ensure that third-party evaluators are not themselves pressured to show positive results.

Long-Term, Iterative Adaptation

Another critical element of success in development programs is the ability to practice long-term, iterative adaptation. Preserving the flexibility to adapt programs and methods as engagements progress and mature would provide substantial value to the SSA community. However, the current processes and attributes that define SSA impede full adoption of many good practices that would support long-term, iterative adaptation.

Target Assistance to Address Specific Local Problems

Designing a program without attention to specific local challenges and neglecting to adapt to local requirements once the program has begun can lead to program failures or wasted resources. As described earlier, SSA programs are frequently planned in a standardized model regardless of a unit's needs or capabilities. This lack of tailoring to local concerns can create a mismatch between the partner nation's needs or ability to absorb training and the capabilities the U.S. program is

[85] Former State Department official involved in SSA policy, interview with the authors, Interview 37, July 2016.

designed to develop. One U.S. government SSA practitioner noted, "We approach SSA at too high of a level and often without a needs assessment, without identifying and defining the problem correctly. We pick a cookie-cutter program type and try to apply it anyway."[86]

This tendency can lead planners to default to the same program model or capability focus that has been implemented in the past, such as establishing an intelligence fusion cell or providing small aircraft, even if a partner would benefit from other types of support instead.[87] One official familiar with special operations SSA programs stated that SOF programs tend to focus repeatedly on developing tactical capabilities to directly engage enemy actors rather than on developing complementary skills to identify, locate, and track an adversary or analyze the intelligence that is recovered after an operation is complete.[88]

Poor knowledge management systems exacerbate this issue because planners may be unaware of specific capabilities and gaps that characterize a nation or unit. Without the ability to leverage comprehensive knowledge of prior, existing, and planned efforts in a country, long-term planning toward a region's security goals may suffer.

Build Flexibility and Responsiveness into Program Design

The SSA system as a whole is largely inflexible. Once programs are approved, they are executed according to the plan that was designed months, and sometimes years, prior. DoD planners and practitioners are afforded little leeway in adapting programs to local needs and changing conditions once they have been approved, particularly those that include equipment that requires long acquisition lead times. Part of this rigidity is by design: DoD officials and congressional committees that oversee the provision of SSA rightfully want to retain control over how authorities are executed and how associated funding is spent.

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[86] Treasury Department official involved in SSA programming, interview with the authors, Interview 30, July 2016.

[87] Four DoD officials involved in SSA program management, interview with the authors, Interview 1, March 2016.

[88] DoD official involved in SSA program management, interview with the authors, Interview 4, July 2016.

However, the process does not allow practitioners to adapt nimbly to changing conditions on the ground or to recalibrate assistance easily when a partner nation is not responding to the engagement as envisioned. As described earlier, several interviewees noted the lengthy and involved coordination processes that are required to initiate a program; in most cases, that process would have to be restarted if a command sees a need to change the focus or recipient of an SSA program.[89] This characteristic means that adapting programs to changing conditions might mean that the window of opportunity to create lasting change could close as a result of process rather than substance.

Secure Long-Term Funding and Personnel Commitments

Long-term funding and personnel commitments help ensure continuity in SSA programs and enable trainers to oversee progression of capabilities over time. Our interview subjects noted that long-term commitments are particularly important to institutional-level programs, which typically take years to come to fruition. One interviewee, a current DoD employee working in Africa, noted, "You can't just fire ammo and do convoys and see them off. Operating force stuff is easy—you can always teach them to shoot straight, or drive straight. . . . Getting them the assistance to do supply chain management, to not always be asking for donor support, requires persistent presence."[90] Long-term adaptation requires a knowledge base among U.S. personnel executing a program, which is difficult to achieve with high turnover rates, but many SSA programs are short term and are executed by frequently rotating personnel on brief deployments. Many SSA authorities are also funded by appropriations that last one year, which hinders iterative planning by creating uncertainty about funding beyond 12 months.

Among U.S. uniformed personnel, SOF sometimes enjoy longer-term engagements with repeat contact, but even those relationships are

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[89] Former State Department official involved in SSA policy, interview with the authors, Interview 37, July 2016; and former U.S. Congressional Appropriations Committee staff member involved in SSA, interview with the authors, Interview 38, July 2016.

[90] DoD member of a U.S. country team in Africa, interview with the authors, Interview 20, July 2016.

not as persistent as some in SOF would like.[91] As described earlier, U.S. military personnel assignments are part of a larger, complex system, which hinders flexibility in tour lengths and continuous engagements. The U.S. approach to security cooperation assignment is more ad hoc and contrasts with the approaches of the United Kingdom and especially France, both of which have units that are permanently aligned to specific regions in Africa to foster more-continuous engagement.[92]

One interview subject also noted that sustained partnership is a key element in managing later political risk. There have been cases, such as in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, in which partner-nation units received extensive U.S. training and were fairly effective and professional in initial operations, but once the mentoring relationship ended and the units were employed, they committed human rights violations.[93]

Adopt an Experimental Mindset

In the development sphere, pilot programs are often used before launching large-scale development efforts to test the effectiveness and local buy-in of new initiatives and to learn what modalities should be adapted for greatest impact. The SSA community employs pilot programs much less frequently, for a variety of reasons.

First, most SSA authorities require detailed descriptions of all phases of a complete program before it has been tested and are thus not designed to support pilot programs. The SSA process affords little opportunity for adaptation, requiring practitioners to execute a pro-

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[91] Powelson, 2013.

[92] Angela O'Mahony, Thomas S. Szayna, Michael J. McNerney, Derek Eaton, Joel Vernetti, Michael Schwille, Stephanie Pezard, Tim Oliver, and Paul S. Steinberg, *Assessing the Value of Regionally Aligned Forces in Army Security Cooperation: An Overview*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, RR-1341/1-A, 2017, pp. 8–9.

[93] Former U.S. Congressional Appropriations Committee staff member involved in SSA, interview with the authors, Interview 38, July 2016; and DoD member of a U.S. country team in Africa, interview with the authors, Interview 23, August 2016. The Democratic Republic of the Congo case was widely covered in the international media, including in Craig Whitlock, "U.S.-Trained Congolese Troops Committed Rapes and Other Atrocities, U.N. Says," *Washington Post*, May 13, 2013.

gram as originally planned even if circumstances change or new information is gained about optimal training, equipment, or personnel with whom to engage. Of course, the executing agency can generally resubmit a proposal, but as described earlier, coordination and approval of these proposals can take many months, which may exceed the length of an authorized engagement or disrupt personnel sourcing.

Additionally, Congress has emphasized a preference for comprehensive SSA programs, as reflected in the FY 2017 NDAA reforms on security assistance. If not properly messaged and understood, pilot programs may be viewed as piecemeal efforts that run counter to comprehensive SSA packages that emphasize long-term goals.

Finally, the SSA community tends to be risk-averse. It therefore seldom embraces experimentation, often preferring to avoid failures even when doing so also limits the likelihood and extent of success. As described earlier, evaluations generally focus on positive program progress rather than objective assessments of efforts that have not worked or that could be improved.[94] Further, policymakers and other SSA stakeholders tend to regard partner-nation failures as U.S. failures.

Use Repeated Evaluations to Adapt Program Implementation

Development programs rely in large part on the feedback and insights that repeated evaluations provide to their implementers. However, many SSA programs are not subject to repeated ongoing evaluations. Instead, many SSA program evaluations focus on assessing a program's utility upon completion, and even then, the U.S. government does not monitor SSA programs well to ensure that the partner nation is fulfilling its commitments. [95] This sequencing prevents program implementers from learning and adapting the program while it is occurring, either to reinforce progress and increase investment in methods or training that is working well or, conversely, to change course if an

[94] Evaluations within the G-TSCMIS system, for example, are viewed as "unreliable because results are consistently positive and not verified by an outside party" (Marquis et al., 2016, p. 102).

[95] Former State Department official involved in SSA policy, interview with the authors, Interview 37, July 2016.

engagement design is proving to be ineffective for the partner's needs. One interviewee with nongovernment SSA experience noted that an iterative assessment model is critical for SSA success but that the U.S. government system currently cannot support that type of evaluation. The interviewee noted that adaptability is particularly constrained in programs that require annual authorizations, because a unit cannot assume that its planned activities will be authorized or funded after expiration.[96]

SSA resources have not historically concentrated on the evaluation phase of a program; generally, the bulk of resources are reserved for program implementation. The evaluations that are conducted have generally focused on the wrong measures; as discussed previously, most are measures of performance rather than more-insightful measures of effectiveness, and they are not grounded in an accepted theory of change. Finally, the historical lack of a formalized and connected knowledge management system for SSA has prevented practitioners from leveraging repeated evaluations to adapt programs—again, an issue that IATTS and similar platforms may rectify in the future, but only if technical and organizational issues are overcome.

Conclusion

The SSA community faces significant challenges in trying to adopt good practices from the development community. Some are related to U.S. SSA planning, implementation, and evaluation processes, while others derive from the inherent difficulty of aligning a partner nation's goals with those of the United States.

Stakeholders in the SSA process have identified many of these challenges and are working to deal with them in various ways, including legislative remedies (especially the reforms in the FY 2017 NDAA), high-level executive branch guidance (such as PPD 23 and DoD Instruction 5132.14), and various improvements in planning practices

[96] U.S. government contractor involved in SSA program implementation, interview with the authors, Interview 24, September 2016.

(e.g., AFRICOM's full-spectrum capability development model) and knowledge management (especially G-TSCMIS and AFRICOM's IATTS). Despite this progress, many opportunities remain for DoD to draw on good practices from the development community to improve the sustainability of capabilities developed through SSA. These opportunities are the subject of the final chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE

Conclusion and Policy Implications

Can the United States help key partners in Africa build *sustainable* security capacity for counterterrorism and other goals? The evidence presented in Chapter Two of this report did not paint a particularly encouraging picture. Anecdotally, many partner nations have had trouble sustaining the capabilities that the United States has sought to help them build. Breakdowns typically occur because of weaknesses in security-sector institutions at the levels of generating forces and executive direction. Although the quantitative evidence on this question is sparse, what evidence does exist suggests that economically underdeveloped countries with weak governance have difficulty making effective use of U.S. SSA for more than short-term, operational purposes.

Less clear is whether these limitations of SSA are inevitable or whether they are the consequence of program design and implementation that do not emphasize sustainability. Particularly for counterterrorism missions, the United States has not emphasized sustainability as a goal of its SSA until very recently. One former senior U.S. official laid a considerable portion of the blame on the U.S. approach to SSA. "The system," he said, "is designed for failure."[1] Another echoed the same point. Owing to the U.S. focus on immediate operational objectives, "The whole model is upside-down. We train and equip our part-

[1] Phillip Carter, former U.S. ambassador to Côte d'Ivoire and former deputy to the commander for civil-military engagement at AFRICOM, interview with the authors, Interview 12, June 2016.

ners first, then worry about institution-building."[2] Might U.S. partners be able to achieve higher levels of sustainability if the United States built more of its programming around this goal? If so, what should the United States do differently?

Because DoD has relatively little experience in emphasizing sustainable capacity-building among partners in the developing world, we examined the experience of the development community for insights. We grouped the lessons that the development community has learned in decades of trial and error into five principles and more than a dozen good practices. The applicability of many of these practices to the security sector, and the drawbacks of not taking them into account, were attested to in our dozens of interviews of SSA practitioners.

Unfortunately, the practices we outlined in Chapter Three cannot simply be imported whole-cloth into the security sector. The sector differs in key ways from civil sectors, as discussed in Chapter Four. Consequently, lessons learned from the development community must be adapted to the requirements of SSA. In the past couple of years, Congress, OSD, and AFRICOM have all taken important steps consistent with a more developmental approach, including legislation to provide DoD more flexibility in the SSA authorities it uses, more-holistic planning processes, improved monitoring and evaluation initiatives (originating both from OSD and AFRICOM), and initial steps toward workforce improvements. But much work remains to be done.

In this chapter, we offer suggestions for ways in which U.S. SSA professionals might change current practices to emphasize sustainability, drawing on lessons identified from the development community but adapting them to the needs of security specialists. Because we did not undertake a systematic analysis of the costs and benefits of each possible measure, the suggestions represent merely options for consideration. Policymakers should review the record of some programs that have already been designed around many of these development principles (such as the SGI) to see what practices could be introduced in

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[2] Three DoD officials involved in SSA planning, interview with the authors, Interview 7, November 2016.

other programs, and they should experiment, perhaps at first on a small scale, with many of the other options suggested here.

Following the development principles outlined in this report, we summarize our recommendations as follows:

- *Local ownership*. Pull priority partners deeper into SSA processes through collaborative assessments, collaborative planning, collaborative setting of benchmarks, and so on. In current practice, the United States engages partners frequently through DoD staff at embassies (such as security cooperation officers and defense attachés). But much more could be done with willing partners to elicit their active participation.
- *Comprehensive approach*. Pay more attention to the longer-term and broader effects of SSA, including on the political dynamics of partners. Although DoD collaborates with the State Department at multiple levels in the SSA process, DoD's goals and its frequent personnel turnover tend to foster an emphasis on short-term, operational goals.
- *Selectivity*. Focus on priority nations and carefully choose partners and design engagements using tools that will be most likely to produce sustainable results. Strive for continuity in engagements, and tailor programs to meet the needs of the United States and of the partner nation rather than executing programs ad hoc. Doing so will help foster the focus and follow-through necessary for building sustainable capacity.
- *Harmonization*. Where possible, streamline processes and synchronize timelines for approval, management, and evaluation of U.S. SSA efforts, and increase collaboration between and among U.S. government, NGO, and private-sector stakeholders and other contributing nations.
- *Long-term, iterative adaptation*. The United States should be willing to commit to working over the long term with its partners through this process. Further, the United States should employ pilot programs to determine whether longer-term funding will result in a return on investment. The United States should also emphasize the need for patience from policymakers to allow

capabilities to develop and root. Allow for some flexibility in U.S. programs to refocus on alternate modalities, capabilities, units, and missions when conditions dictate. The United States and its partners should use failure as a mechanism for learning and adaptation. If programs consistently fail to motivate reforms over multiple iterations, then the United States should look to other partners.

We organize our more-specific recommendations first by issue area (objectives, resources, and processes). And within each issue area, we organize the recommendations by the level (national, DoD, and AFRICOM) of the policy actor primarily responsible for implementing the proposed actions. Note that although we categorize these recommendations by the level of the primary actor, all three levels may need to take mutually supportive action to address each of the proposed changes effectively.

Objectives

The first step in any strategic planning effort is to set focused, obtainable objectives derived from relevant interests of both the United States and its partners. However, two challenges often prevent the U.S. government from making sustainability one of the objectives it considers during planning.

First, other objectives frequently displace an emphasis on sustainability. At the broadest level, planners can prioritize SSA engagements on the basis of threat (the danger that a group or region poses to the United States), opportunity (the alignment of existing programs, resources, and plans with a willing partner), or sustainability (the durability of any gains achieved). Ideally, planners balance all three. In practice, threats and opportunities tend to dominate.

Prioritization on the basis of threat tends to predominate at the strategic level. The lines of effort in AFRICOM's theater campaign plan, for instance, are organized around threats, and so are the AFRICOM working groups created to manage SSA efforts. Much

SSA funding—for example, Section 2282, previously known as Section 1206, funding in the NDAA—is tied specifically to terrorist threats. DoD in particular is prone to emphasize threats as the primary driver of its planning, both because warfighting more directly corresponds to DoD's primary mission and the training provided to its personnel and because the success of capacity-building initiatives typically takes much longer to appear than the short-term assignments held by uniformed military personnel.[3]

At the operational level, however, planners often find it easiest to allocate SSA on the basis of specific opportunities. Whenever opportunities are available to engage with a partner nation or unit, planners have a tendency to advocate for SSA activities. Opportunity-based engagements are particularly likely to occur when nations or partners that might be ideal to the United States from a strategic perspective are not willing or available, and so planners turn to whatever unit is available or with whom the executing unit already has a relationship.[4] A desire to execute funding before it expires may account for some opportunity-based engagements, while for others, the impetus may be to secure resources for a planner's assigned country and maintain and improve relations with his or her foreign interlocutors.

In either case, the sustainability of SSA tends to garner less emphasis. At the strategic level, for instance, no funding lines are tied to sustainability the way many are tied to threats. At the operational level, planners under pressure to execute budgets find it easy to elevate threat- and opportunity-based considerations over sustainability. Even if everyone believes in principle in the goal of sustainability, few institutional incentives are in place to make it a priority.

Second, decisionmakers often find it difficult to make the long-term commitments necessary to achieve sustainable gains in capacity and capability. They frequently concentrate their attention and U.S.

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[3] Phillip Carter, former U.S. ambassador to Côte d'Ivoire and former deputy to the commander for civil-military engagement at AFRICOM, interview with the authors, Interview 12, June 2016.

[4] Former DoD official involved in SSA program implementation, interview with the authors, Interview 19, July 2016.

resources on highly visible and immediate threats, but sustainable capability gains typically require persistent engagement over many years. A loss of high-level attention or resources can cripple a program that had been making advances with a willing partner. The shifting attention of high-level decisionmakers is also reflected in the allocation of staff and resources, also with negative effects on sustainability. Relatively few U.S. personnel have in-depth SSA expertise, and there are very few programs related to DIB. When these scarce resources shift from one priority to another, DoD's and AFRICOM's ability to develop cohesive, long-term plans for sustainable capacity development suffers. Moreover, partners may not engage in reforms that are often domestically unpopular—either within the military or more broadly—if they cannot count on long-term support.

Stakeholders at all levels of SSA planning processes play important roles in clarifying U.S. objectives and ensuring that sustainability receives appropriate emphasis. The following recommendations touch on how stakeholders at each level can support this effort.

National-Level Recommendations

Clarify U.S. Government Goals for SSA

The U.S. government should clarify its goals for SSA. While country-level planning and goal-setting frequently occur at the COCOM or country team level, this planning is heavily informed and directed by broader DoD policies and the strategic priorities established at the highest levels of U.S. policy, including from the White House and senior interagency officials. This national-level policy extends beyond regional and threat-based direction and includes broad guidance on SSA that directly affects the lower echelons in planning goals, programs, and metrics by which to measure those efforts. According to one country team official interviewed for this report, "Each embassy is currently coming up with its own answers about how to balance priorities."[5] Appropriate higher-level guidance is an important prerequisite for successful country-level planning at AFRICOM and elsewhere. If sustain-

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[5] Four DoD officials involved in SSA planning, interview with the authors, Interview 10, November 2016.

ability is not consistently emphasized in high-level guidance, it will tend to receive less planning attention.

Emphasize Continuity

Without long-term commitments, sustainable capacity-building is difficult, or even impossible, to achieve. Several interviewees noted that sustained, substantive institutional change takes many years.[6] Too often, decisionmakers reallocate resources to current crises, paying insufficient attention to the long-term consequences for current programming. National-level policymakers should clearly and consistently advocate for and approve SSA programs that enable continuity from engagement to engagement. These efforts must be collaborative and iterative across government agencies and based on continuous assessment efforts.

DoD-Level Recommendations

Set Realistic Expectations Among Decisionmakers

DoD needs to cultivate realistic understanding, among both partner nations and senior U.S. policymakers, that development and sustainment of SSA capabilities take a long time. Often, pressure exists in DoD to accomplish a mission under unrealistic expectations, so in its program proposals and congressional engagements, DoD (including AFRICOM) must consistently emphasize that achieving SSA goals requires patience.

Dedicate Funds for Institution-Building and Sustainability

DoD, together with the State Department as needed, should set aside portions of SSA funding and dedicate them specifically to long-term investments in institution-building. Precedent exists for fencing off portions of SSA authorities for specific purposes without requiring congressional action. For example, in 2012, the National Security Council Deputies Committee decided to set aside $25 million of the Global Security Contingency Fund for U.S. Special Operations Command to use for security force assistance activities.

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[6] Former State Department official involved in SSA policy, interview with the authors, Interview 37, July 2016.

Prioritize Sustainability in Oversight Roles

Senior DoD decisionmakers must prioritize their own SSA efforts among partners and commit to sustained engagements intended to reinforce the capabilities developed in previous years. Senior DoD officials should exercise increased oversight over subordinate levels to ensure that all proposals for new programs include a sustainment provision, even if they are in reaction to an emerging threat.

AFRICOM-Level Recommendation

Organize in Ways That Prioritize Sustainability

In many ways, the prioritization of threats over sustainability is reflected in how AFRICOM is organized: As noted, the lines of effort in AFRICOM's theater campaign plan are organized around threats, and so are the AFRICOM working groups created to manage SSA efforts. In contrast, a focus on sustainability would tend to emphasize organization around priority partners, because the politics and social context of specific countries, rather than the characteristics of transnational threats, shape sustainability.

Organizing SSA efforts around threats has multiple consequences for sustainability at the AFRICOM level. Because most threats in Africa are transnational, the attention of many key AFRICOM SSA personnel spreads across entire regions. Consequently, these staff members do not gain a deep understanding of a country's security sector, a problem that is only exacerbated by the rapid turnover of uniformed military personnel in headquarters billets. Organizing U.S. efforts by threat within COCOMs also tends to drive performance measures that are built around short-term, operational successes rather than measures that emphasize the sustained capability of partners to combat future threats. To deal with these issues, AFRICOM should consider building working groups or security cooperation staff sections around particularly promising partner nations rather than by line of effort, and it should emphasize sustainability in its performance metrics.

Resources

Translating high-level objectives into the desired outcomes requires appropriate resourcing. However, both the allocation of U.S. SSA resources and the procedures governing them pose challenges to implementing developmental principles. In particular, the current system makes it difficult to implement a truly comprehensive approach, because funding is disproportionately oriented toward military issues and, within the military sphere, toward operational over institutional-level programming. Moreover, funding is typically allocated over short-term budget cycles, making it difficult to engage in iterative adaptation with partners over extended periods. Some fixes to these challenges depend on congressional action. Others can be handled, at least in part, within the existing SSA authorities and funding mechanisms.

National-Level Recommendations

Provide Additional Resources for Defense Institution–Building

The shortage of funding for DIB in Africa remains a major impediment to improving the sustainability of capacity gains supported by U.S. SSA.[7] Although several dozen programs might contribute to DIB and thus the ultimate goal of more-sustainable capacity development, only five programs relevant to Africa focus specifically on DIB: the Defense Governance Management Teams, the Wales Initiative Fund–DIB, the Defense Institute of International Legal Studies program, the Ministry of Defense Advisors program, and the SGI.[8] The African Military Education Program also represents an important investment in African institutions. Most of these DIB-specific programs (with the notable exception of the SGI) have small budgets and limited scope in Africa. If Congress wants to emphasize the sustainability of the capac-

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7 U.S. funding for DIB in Africa is relatively small, although exact numbers are difficult to determine because of definitional issues and the multiple functions that a single effort can support. One recent study found that an internal measure of spending on DIB included “miscellaneous” activities, such as pandemic response, HIV/AIDS support, and humanitarian demining: “Simply by removing HIV/AIDS programs, AFRICOM’s resources aligned with DIB dropped from 29 percent to 5 percent” (McNerney, Johnson, et al., 2016, pp. 28–29).

8 See Appendix A for a full list of programs relevant to DIB.

ity gains built through U.S. assistance, it should consider working with the executive branch to provide more funding specifically for DIB programs.

Invest in the Right People

DoD faces challenges in using personnel with the right skill sets to conduct its SSA activities. Although DoD can take steps to rectify this issue, some of the human resource requirements for improving SSA sustainability may simply not be possible without changes in broader personnel practices at the national level, potentially including changes in military promotion processes or authorizations for additional civilian billets in SSA planning offices.

Further, one former OSD official familiar with AFRICOM programs noted that "DoD ends up doing work that is not necessarily DoD's role—civilian policing, narcotics, state fragility—because State doesn't have the resources."[9] Much of this imbalance may be a result of congressional preferences; according to one former congressional staff member who managed DoD appropriations, "Congress is always more willing to do it if DoD is executing it."[10] Congress might work with DoD and the State Department to review suitability for SSA missions; the results of such consultations might suggest alternative allocations of resources.

Improve Resources for Monitoring and Evaluation

Rigorous evaluations conducted by external, objective analysts can provide critical feedback for any program. Many practitioners, however, complain about the costs of such evaluations and report that they do not have the budgetary support to conduct them. It is true that rigorous evaluations are not cheap, but nor are they exorbitantly expensive if they have been incorporated into a program's budget and into the design of the program. USAID recommends that program budgets

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[9] Former DoD official involved in SSA policy, interview with the authors, Interview 2, July 2016.

[10] Former U.S. Congressional Appropriations Committee staff member involved in SSA, interview with the authors, Interview 38, July 2016.

dedicate an average of 3 percent to external evaluations.[11] At that cost, the evaluations need only improve a program's performance by a small margin to pay for themselves.

Moreover, a portion—potentially a substantial portion—of that cost could be covered by improved efficiencies. Currently, monitoring and evaluation efforts are dispersed among all SSA stakeholders, with many organizations at least partially duplicating the efforts of others. In many cases, better coordination could both reduce costs and improve the quality of evaluations. The opinion polling that such organizations as U.S. Special Operations Command and the State Department's Bureau of Intelligence and Research conduct, for instance, could include questions about public perceptions of the security sector in at least certain partner countries. If these questions were asked in the same way over extended periods, the results could, in turn, be used in impact evaluations.

If Congress chooses to facilitate such evaluations, our research suggests that it should consider providing specific, adequate funding for relevant U.S. agencies to conduct AME activities and should authorize multiyear funding rather than the single-year funding that hamstrings the planning and evaluation process. Multiyear funding authorization would enable AFRICOM and other SSA entities to plan evaluations into their SSA programs more effectively and predictably and to shift focus to sustainability.

DoD-Level Recommendation

Invest in the Right People

Even without any changes to congressional appropriations, DoD can take many steps at its level to cope with its critical shortage of appropriate personnel for SSA planning. DoD personnel requirements can be grouped into three categories: personnel for U.S. country teams at embassies, personnel for COCOM and component command headquarters, and uniformed personnel implementing many SSA activities. At the country team level, defense attachés and security cooperation officers often have deep expertise in their region, but these personnel

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[11] USAID, 2011, p. 4.

are "stretched thin by operational requirements."[12] At the COCOM and component command headquarters level, many planners have very little background or training in SSA, a problem exacerbated by short tour lengths and concomitant personnel churn. And the uniformed personnel responsible for implementing many SSA activities often have little preparation for partnering with units of developing countries and conversely have many incentives to emphasize the readiness of their home units over the accomplishment of SSA goals with foreign partners.[13]

DoD has recognized these shortcomings and is implementing initiatives to alleviate its personnel challenges. To correct shortcomings at the implementation level, the U.S. Army is creating six security force assistance brigades designed to implement SSA activities.[14] These brigades should permit better preparation of uniformed personnel implementing SSA activities and reduce the readiness challenges created by certain types of security cooperation. To expand the pool of expertise available to the headquarters level, DoD is pressing forward with its Security Cooperation Workforce initiative. And to forge better connections between existing human resources and requirements at all levels, DoD has issued an instruction requiring better tracking of knowledge, skills, and abilities related to SSA.[15] All of these are very welcome steps, and DoD should continue to dedicate resources to implement all three initiatives fully.

However, as discussed earlier, DoD in limited in the steps it can take to rectify this issue. Many of the human resources requirements for SSA rightly fall outside of what DoD can provide, and DoD should

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[12] Four DoD officials involved in SSA planning, interview with the authors, Interview 10, November 2016.

[13] Four DoD officials involved in SSA planning, interview with the authors, Interview 5, November 2016; and DoD official involved in SSA planning, interview with the authors, Interview 6, November 2016.

[14] See, for instance, Charlsy Panzino, "Fort Benning to Stand Up Security Force Brigades, Training Academy," *Army Times*, February 16, 2017.

[15] Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, *Management of DoD Irregular Warfare (IW) and Security Force Assistance (SFA) Capabilities*, DoD Instruction 3000.11, Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Defense, May 3, 2016.

clarify these requirements to the White House and Congress so that the demand is recognized and can be addressed at those levels.

AFRICOM-Level Recommendations

Invest in Advisors

The United States should invest in long-term advisory and education programs where possible. Several practitioners we interviewed noted that the most effective type of engagement involves side-by-side mentorship and embedded engagement programs.[16] Unfortunately, few resources are currently allocated to such long-term mentorship; for instance, in all of Africa, there is only one advisor from the Ministry of Defense Advisors program.

AFRICOM has dedicated resources to try to correct this shortcoming. As of summer 2017, AFRICOM embedded approximately a half dozen mentors at the generating-force level on the continent. Such mentoring is a good practice that should be expanded as feasible. Contracts for mentors should include a requirement for them to report to country teams whenever possible, and contracts should be written in ways that facilitate information-sharing and ensure that they support broader strategic goals. AFRICOM might also investigate the possibility of funding senior personnel (retired general or flag officers) to serve as senior advisors with select countries, similar to the ambassadorial-level "heads of delegation" funded by the SGI.

Resource Repeated Engagements

Persistent engagement is often a prerequisite for sustainable change.[17] Wherever possible, AFRICOM should fund repeated engagements with the same partners and work to maintain capabilities developed in prior engagements. Given resource constraints, not all follow-on events need be as large or lengthy as the original ones.

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[16] U.S. government contractor involved in SSA program implementation, interview with the authors, Interview 24, September 2016; and former DoD official involved in SSA program implementation, interview with the authors, Interview 19, July 2016.

[17] Powelson, 2013.

Processes

SSA processes informed by developmental principles should emphasize collaborative planning with partner nations, iterative adaptation of SSA programming over extended periods, and efforts to harmonize the initiatives of the many stakeholders involved in the U.S. SSA enterprise. Although certain programs, such as the SGI, emphasize these principles, congressional notification processes, interagency coordination schedules, and other procedural hurdles pose major challenges to the principles' full implementation in other programs. To the extent that intensive collaborative planning and experimentation take place, they often occur at the tactical level for a single program in a particular country rather than as a process involving multiple implementing bodies across many programs and longer periods.[18]

The FY 2017 NDAA will help DoD alleviate those challenges, at least in part. While the patchwork of authorities, programs, and funding will not be replaced by a cohesive system, it will at least become substantially easier to manage. But SSA stakeholders at all levels could do many other things to incorporate developmental principles more fully.

National-Level Recommendations

Alter Legislation and Funding to Facilitate Iterative Adaptation

If Congress wants to emphasize the sustainability of capacity gains realized through SSA, it should consider altering legislation and funding in ways that provide additional flexibility in how resources can be used. One example in this vein recommended by a former State Department official is a pooled reserve of standard equipment that could be withheld until a unit demonstrates that its responsibilities and capabilities are sufficient to receive the equipment.[19] Another possibility is to

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[18] The SGI allows for significant flexibility in goal-setting and program design in the initial stages of engagement with a country; as a result, implementation looks different in each country. The program also includes a built-in periodic review process for determining whether to modify the program's goals and approach during implementation (Bureau of African Affairs, 2016).

[19] Former State Department official involved in SSA policy, interview with the authors, Interview 29, July 2016.

establish a small reserve of funds in certain programs for needs that are determined after the engagement begins. One NGO interviewee noted that his organization derived considerable goodwill and commitment from the minor refurbishment of a training and capability demonstration facility in East Africa.[20]

Adapt Approaches to Partnerships

Throughout this report, we stress the importance of collaboration with recipient nations to improve prospects for sustainability. At the national policy level, part of this collaboration could include the requirement for some level of financial investment by the partner nation, consistent with the partner's overall fiscal constraints. Several interviewees mentioned the Millennium Challenge Corporation as a model to elicit greater partner-nation buy-in and commitment to reform.[21] This approach, which asks the partner nation to provide a portion of its own funding to secure U.S. support, has been exercised in Uganda. Officials with experience overseeing this program assessed that this investment has contributed to greater success with Ugandan forces, to the point that Ugandan instructors are taking on increased training responsibilities.[22]

DoD-Level Recommendations

Continue to Align Interagency Efforts

The reforms in the FY 2017 NDAA will assist DoD in aligning timelines and processes. DoD should work to align similarly with other SSA authorities not included in the new law. Part of this alignment could involve the development of clear memoranda of understanding between DoD and the State Department to establish roles and responsibilities in SSA program development and coordination.

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[20] U.S. government contractor involved in SSA program implementation, interview with the authors, Interview 24, September 2016.

[21] Former U.S. Congressional Appropriations Committee staff member involved in SSA, interview with the authors, Interview 38, July 2016; and State Department official involved in SSA policy, interview with the authors, Interview 28, February 2016.

[22] DoD member of a U.S. country team in Africa, interview with the authors, Interview 16, June 2016.

DoD should also drive collaboration among its own offices and interagency partners to develop clear and cohesive articulations of each government program's goals in particular countries. Not only would this collaboration allow all stakeholders to understand the breadth of activities occurring in a region and help eliminate gaps and redundancies in the provision of SSA, but it would also appeal to congressional oversight committees and potentially increase the likelihood of congressional support for the proposals. One interviewee with appropriations committee experience noted, "if a COCOM could package this together and bring it to Congress via State, OSD, the Joint Staff, [and] the White House and demonstrate clear planning and inclusiveness of democracy, human rights, and other critical factors, that could be very helpful and would likely go over well."[23]

The interviewee also noted that such a comprehensive package could include benchmarks that DoD and the State Department use to determine advancement, or discontinuation, of a program. This could increase congressional confidence that DoD and the State Department are not only collaborating effectively but also policing resources.

The Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, which oversees many DoD security assistance programs and resources, has begun to develop comprehensive proposal packages for congressional review that include a range of SSA programs and show how the efforts are mutually supportive. The COCOMs and component commands that assist in planning and executing these programs should contribute to this process and look for ways to support this comprehensive approach by increasing collaboration and knowledge-sharing across relevant planning and operations staffs. While the changes to the SSA process determined in the FY 2017 NDAA will assist in developing this more comprehensive approach, DoD should continue to work as closely as it can with the State Department, USAID, and other relevant partners to prepare and present SSA packages that reflect all complementary efforts ongoing in one country.

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[23] Former U.S. Congressional Appropriations Committee staff member involved in SSA, interview with the authors, Interview 38, July 2016.

Develop Two-Track Monitoring and Evaluation Processes

Evaluations can play a critical role in iterative adaptation, but only if they are designed appropriately. Evaluations usually have two purposes that can work against each other: accountability and learning.[24] If we accept that DIB and sustainability are difficult to achieve, and that no one knows exactly what methods work, then we should similarly accept that failures in some programs will occur, even when the partner is on a path to eventual success. Consequently, DoD should develop a two-track approach to evaluation: (1) quick-turn, informal evaluations focused on rapid learning and adaptation and (2) much longer-term, rigorous evaluations focused on accountability.

As recommended in the development literature on problem-driven, iterative adaptation, most evaluations should be frequent and inexpensive, with the goal of providing rapid feedback to facilitate learning and adaptation.[25] To maximize the learning function, they should be conducted in cooperation with partner-nation personnel to the extent possible, and they should be easily accessible to all U.S. personnel with related responsibilities.[26] Although these evaluations should be systematic, they will lack the rigor of more-expensive and time-consuming impact evaluations.[27] Where such short-turn evaluations reveal problems, DoD should either modify its current approach or redirect funds to more-productive uses in the security sphere of the same partner nation.

Institution-building takes time, and the United States cannot expect to achieve strategic effects quickly; however, DoD should eventually hold itself and its partners accountable for results. DoD should

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[24] USAID, *Evaluation: Learning from Experience*, USAID Evaluation Policy, Washington, D.C., January 2011, p. 3.

[25] Andrews, Pritchett, and Woolcock, 2013.

[26] After-action reviews related to specific events can be uploaded to the G-TSCMIS. Broader evaluations can and should be uploaded to online repositories, such as the IATTS, that are easily accessible to all stakeholders. See the discussion in the later section on improving knowledge management.

[27] For examples of frameworks that can improve the quality of after-action reviews and similar rapid feedback mechanisms, see Watts et al., 2017.

collaboratively set long-term goals with its partners and periodically measure intermediate progress toward those overarching goals. Precise indicators will vary from case to case but might include demonstrated capacity to handle tactical-level sustainment functions while deployed in peace operations and improved public perceptions of security forces while at home station. Such evaluations require systematic data-gathering on a consistent set of indicators over extended periods. In many cases, partner sensitivities may make systematic data collection infeasible. But without increased efforts to collect data systematically, DoD will have difficulty demonstrating the value of the SSA it manages and will have little rigorous basis for reallocating it to more-effective uses.

If a partner's progress is lagging, DoD can review whether it should be adjusted, provided additional support, or terminated. Several interviewees suggested that this approach would help the U.S. government focus its efforts on engagements most likely to foster sustainability.[28] One interviewee noted that these types of benchmarks could be used to encourage a partner nation to invest in civilian institution–building efforts as well.[29] One method that could be used to reinforce the iterative nature of these commitments is a memorandum of understanding between the United States and the partner nation that delineates clear expectations and a timeline of expected progression, similar to the joint country action plans used in the SGI.

Such an iterative approach to planning, program execution, and evaluation will require close coordination among DoD, AFRICOM, and country teams. At the DoD level, such iterative adaptation could be fostered by offering clear guidance that focuses on multiple approaches to monitoring and evaluation, on shorter-term learning adaptation, and on longer-term accountability. OSD should consider reviewing its guidance on AME to highlight more directly the use of monitoring as part of an adaptive implementation process. The offices within OSD

[28] Treasury Department official involved in SSA programming, interview with the authors, Interview 30, July 2016; and former State Department official involved in SSA policy, interview with the authors, Interview 37, July 2016.

[29] Former U.S. Congressional Appropriations Committee staff member involved in SSA, interview with the authors, Interview 38, July 2016.

that have program management responsibilities (such as the office for Special Operations and Low-Intensity Conflict) should also review their monitoring and evaluation practices.

Focus on Interconnections Among Programs

Both observers and practitioners have recognized the need to tie train-and-equip efforts (focused at the operating-force level) to DIB efforts (focused at the generating-force and executive-direction levels) in a comprehensive approach to SSA.[30] But planners have trouble in practice connecting these programs. DoD provides direction to coordinate, but its components, such as AFRICOM, have little guidance on how meaningful coordination should occur on a routine basis. For example, AFRICOM's Full-Spectrum Capability Development Model describes the elements a military must include to build a sustainable capability. However, the model does not provide detail on how to align programs that may be managed by different offices at different levels. While some forums, such as the Regional Synchronization Working Group, have been established to try to manage this issue, DoD should provide actionable, sustainable direction for its SSA entities to implement and institutionalize over time and should seek to model these procedures and policies at senior levels to foster adoption. Further, DoD can identify templates of good practices in SSA programs that can inspire creativity and be tailored to specific circumstances but that also showcase approaches that have demonstrated success.

Conduct Political Risk Assessments and Develop Risk Mitigation Strategies

This report focuses on sustaining improvements in partners' security capabilities, not minimizing the risk that partners could use these capabilities in ways that harm U.S. interests. Even with this narrow focus, however, it is important for U.S. planners to consider political risk, in keeping with the principle of adopting a comprehensive approach to assistance. In Mali, for instance, it was prolonged insurgency and a coup that posed the greatest challenge to the U.S. SSA investment in that country. Similarly, much of the progress Burundi made in its

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[30] McNerney, Johnson, et al., 2016.

security sector has been placed at risk by recent political instability. DoD should require political risk assessments for all high-priority or high-risk programs.[31]

All major stakeholders appear to accept the importance, in principle, of such analyses. In practice, however, these analyses are difficult; the longer-term political consequences of SSA programs can be hard for even experienced professionals to anticipate.[32] Nevertheless, DoD could take several steps to develop its capacity for risk analysis, and it has already begun. For instance, DoD's ongoing initiative to create a Security Cooperation Workforce should help the department develop personnel better able to conduct such assessments. In addition to this step, DoD could develop templates that help guide political risk assessments. It could work with various DoD entities (such as U.S. Special Operations Command) and other U.S. departments to develop guidance on data collection that might inform risk assessments and ensure that such data are widely shared. And OSD could help resource fact-finding missions and long-term tracking of data and trends.

AFRICOM-Level Recommendations

Improve Collaboration with Priority Partners

Consistent with the principle of local ownership, AFRICOM should draw partner nations more deeply into planning efforts. Partners should be intimately involved in gauging their own weaknesses and developing plans to correct them. They should work with U.S. personnel to identify appropriate benchmarks to be achieved by agreed-upon timelines, and both the United States and its partners should be clear that failure to achieve these benchmarks should prompt in-depth discussions about what changes are required by both sides to achieve the desired goals. Once both sides agree on the plans and benchmarks, the United States and its partner should formally commit to these initiatives.

Various U.S. government programs—both within and outside DoD—have begun to emphasize these deeper levels of collaboration.

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[31] Watts, 2015.

[32] Five State Department officials involved in SSA policy, interview with the authors, Interview 33, September 2016.

The SGI's joint country action plans are a model in this regard. They are jointly developed with partners and require the partner's signature as an indication of commitment to the plan. Developing these plans was a lengthy process with the initial six SGI partner nations, but it proved that gaining a deeper level of local ownership prior to program implementation is feasible. Similarly, some COCOMs are experimenting with close collaborations with partner nations in assessing their SSA requirements. These and similar initiatives should be examined for lessons learned and applied where possible to other SSA programs.

Tailor SSA to the Local Context

SSA programs should be carefully tailored to the local context. The first step in this process is a careful assessment of a partner's needs, but many of those interviewed for this report believed that the current U.S. assessment process does not facilitate such tailoring. One official observed, "We're great at figuring out where partner nations are in their capabilities but not great at identifying why and how to fix it."[33] Often, the default in the U.S. SSA planning process, and in partner-nation requests, is for tactical counterterrorism capabilities.[34] But those capabilities might not necessarily be the most appropriate for the nation in question. Improved assessments by knowledgeable personnel are essential.

Whenever possible, AFRICOM should plan to use the equipment, processes, and mechanisms that are most familiar and conducive to sustainability in a given partner nation. Many interviewees indicated that sustainability in SSA is often challenged by a lack of continuity and support in providing sustainment packages (e.g., replacement parts, maintenance training, replenished materiel, refresher training) to complement initial SSA engagements. Where possible, AFRICOM should provide equipment that is compatible with other equipment used by a partner nation and that can be sustained beyond the duration of the program. Furthermore, when simpler models to maintain and

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[33] Three DoD officials involved in SSA planning, interview with the authors, Interview 11, November 2016. This point was echoed in other interviews as well—for instance, DoD official involved in SSA planning, interview with the authors, Interview 8, November 2016.

[34] Former DoD official involved in SSA policy, interview with the authors, Interview 2, July 2016.

replace equipment can be implemented, AFRICOM should prioritize them. Not only does this promote the probability of sustainment, but it also may shorten delivery timelines.[35] AFRICOM should also provide robust sustainment packages that the partner nation is equipped to use, which will increase the life of the provided equipment.[36]

Beyond equipment considerations, AFRICOM should factor partner-nation processes and local needs into SSA program design. How money is typically transferred, the local work week, and religious observances are all factors that should help shape certain elements of an SSA program. For example, one NGO found that pay-by-text was far more effective in one African country than any other method in ensuring that the program's trainees were not absent for extended periods, because the trainees did not need to travel to provide funds to their families.[37]

Finally, AFRICOM should examine processes to better understand corruption challenges. For example, in Nigeria, U.S. program officials found that every agency had its own budget from which its leaders were stealing. To increase transparency, the SSA team helped Nigeria collapse its various agency budgets into one and helped the Nigerians change to an electronic payment system to create verifiable records of the individuals who received payment.[38]

Experiment with Different Approaches

Several of the practitioners we interviewed expressed skepticism about the principle of local ownership, fearing that it would encourage partners to solicit U.S. funds for doomed initiatives (in particular, acquisi-

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[35] DoD member of a U.S. country team in Africa, interview with the authors, Interview 16, June 2016.

[36] U.S. government contractor involved in SSA program implementation, interview with the authors, Interview 24, September 2016.

[37] U.S. government contractor involved in SSA program implementation, interview with the authors, Interview 24, September 2016.

[38] Treasury Department official involved in SSA programming, interview with the authors, Interview 27, July 2016. On changing levels of corruption in Nigeria, see, for instance, Robyn Dixon, "The Aftermath of Nigeria's Fight Against Corruption: Officials Have Luxury Cars, but Can't Afford Gas," *Los Angeles Times*, December 27, 2016.

tion of sophisticated equipment that the partner could not maintain).[39] The United States cannot simply accept poor-quality proposals from its partners, but it can accept small-scale initiatives that are not expected to yield successful outcomes if these initiatives can be used to promote learning and adaptation.

Learning and adaptation become more likely if the following three conditions are met:

1. The partner strongly desires a capability (which should be the case when planning is conducted collaboratively).
2. The partner fails to develop the capability it wants using the approach that it initially thought would be successful.
3. The United States refuses to provide more money to fund the same failed approach but is willing to fund alternatives if the partner can make a strong case for why a reformed approach would work.

The program that is developed for the partnered unit should also be iterative in nature. Not only was this iterative approach a good practice recognized by the development community, it was a principle emphasized by many of the practitioners we interviewed. Many of these interviewees had applied such approaches and found them indispensable to developing sustainable improvements in capabilities.[40] A practitioner explained one NGO's model that relies on continuous learning based on ground conditions that are "not hypothetical, not academic, but based on real circumstances. It is flexible and iterative."[41] In the model, the executing personnel focus on building trust through incremental actions. They pay the partner unit small amounts on a routine basis instead of holding payments for several months. This NGO

[39] Four DoD officials involved in SSA planning, interview with the authors, Interview 10, November 2016.

[40] Treasury Department official involved in SSA programming, interview with the authors, Interview 30, July 2016.

[41] Treasury Department official involved in SSA programming, interview with the authors, Interview 30, July 2016.

adopts the same approach to provide inexpensive equipment (such as flashlights) to start and then slowly begins to entrust items of greater value to the unit as trust builds over time.

Many observers of security force assistance programs in Iraq and Afghanistan similarly emphasized the need for U.S. personnel to let their partners fail if necessary.[42] In those two countries, success of the mission has typically taken precedence over encouraging learning through trial and error, owing to the scale of U.S. commitments and the need to support partner forces as a means of limiting U.S. losses. In Africa, however, none of the U.S. interests is so pressing that the United States must privilege immediate operational outcomes over long-term processes of learning and adaptation.[43]

Focus on Interconnections Among Programs

Making long-term commitments in SSA requires deliberate understanding of how engagements at multiple levels relate to each other. To foster mutually enforcing and sustained capabilities across all levels, AFRICOM should entrench and make routine coordination mechanisms that enable its personnel to understand the breadth of all engagements focused on a particular country's national security apparatus. For example, to support institution-building goals, programs directly focused on institution-building could be supplemented by adapting other programming that is more operationally focused; these actions would require cross-program understanding across multiple

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[42] Todd Helmus, *Advising the Command: Best Practices from the Special Operations Advisory Experience in Afghanistan*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, RR-949-OSD, 2015, p. 33.

[43] Even in the lower-priority theater of Africa, there are limits to how much the United States can afford to engage in such processes of trial and error. If a partner's forces are engaged in combat, for instance, failures can quickly undermine morale. Even in times of peace, highly visible failures can weaken the standing of reformers and thus undermine the appetite for reform. And if failures are sustained, the partner may blame the United States and potentially turn to other patrons in the future (four DoD officials involved in SSA planning, interview with the authors, Interview 10, November 2016). While these caveats are important to bear in mind, none of them invalidates the need to take chances if future SSA initiatives are to be any better sustained than past ones.

AFRICOM components.[44] AFRICOM should carefully determine which levels of engagement (that is, operating force, generating force, or executive direction) would have the greatest influence and how to ensure that efforts at each level are coordinated and mutually supportive so that they have the greatest chance of long-term sustainability.

Also, AFRICOM and DoD could develop dozens of modular options in a menu of ways that train-and-equip programs could be used to support DIB as part of an integrated country plan. Such options would not be considered best practices but rather illustrative examples to help spur creative adaptations to particular contexts. Further, AFRICOM and other SSA stakeholders could continue to invest in improvements to their knowledge management software platforms (such as IATTS) and the ability of all key stakeholders to access these platforms. These improvements would help all stakeholders understand the goals and concepts behind bundling together train-and-equip and DIB programs and would help track over time the interconnections among programs aimed at similar goals. Linking disparate programs, however, would require careful coordination because such complex, intensive planning is difficult to manage.

Improve SSA Training for Headquarters Staff and Implementers

At the AFRICOM headquarters level, standardized training for certain SSA positions would help create a baseline understanding across the SSA enterprise on authorities, funding mechanisms, and interagency coordination. Such training could help shorten incoming staff members' learning curves, ultimately freeing up staff time to focus on more-holistic, long-term planning, which would help even operational-level SSA be designed in ways to support institutional reform and development. AFRICOM should develop and implement a standardized, repeatable course to train and test its planners and program managers on SSA authorities, programs, lines of funding, coordination and approval processes, interagency equities, knowledge management systems, lessons learned, and more. This curriculum should be validated with OSD, the Joint Staff, and the State Department for accuracy and

[44] McNerney, Johnson, et al., 2016.

buy-in, and it should be coordinated to mesh with existing security cooperation courses taught by the services and the Defense Institute of Security Cooperation Studies.

Additional training should also be provided to those implementing SSA on the ground. One practitioner with DoD and State Department SSA program execution experience told us that the extent of direction received before beginning a partner-nation engagement was simply, "Come here and teach a course on tactics."[45] The security force assistance brigades should help to correct these shortcomings, but they are only one mechanism in one service to address a DoD-wide problem.

Improve Knowledge Management

At various points in this report, we have emphasized the need to learn and adapt. However, learning and adaptation are impossible unless stakeholders share knowledge of good practices (and failed practices), which is now required by DoD Instruction 5132.14 on AME.[46] One former official interviewed for this report emphasized this point: "We keep forgetting lessons of previous efforts; we have no historical memory."[47] Improved knowledge management will require both process and technical solutions.

For AME systems to be useful, they must be easily accessible by all major stakeholders and must prove themselves useful to those stakeholders. When these conditions are met, stakeholders are typically willing to invest the time and effort to provide data because they see how data can help. Strengthening accountability mechanisms to ensure that data of sufficient quality are entered into these systems will also help. DoD Instruction 5132.14 on AME is an important step forward in this regard, but it will require high-level attention to make sure it is implemented.[48]

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[45] Former DoD official involved in SSA program implementation, interview with the authors, Interview 19, July 2016.

[46] Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, 2017.

[47] Phillip Carter, former U.S. ambassador to Côte d'Ivoire and former deputy to the commander for civil-military engagement at AFRICOM, interview with the authors, Interview 12, June 2016.

[48] Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, 2017.

AFRICOM has made technical improvements in its knowledge management systems, but work remains to be done. IATTS, in particular, represents a major advance in data-sharing and visualization. IATTS is a software platform for linking individual programs to strategic goals, with links permitting visibility into funding information and evaluations. Unfortunately, connectivity issues outside of the AFRICOM headquarters plague IATTS, a problem frequently encountered across DoD information technology systems. Moreover, automation of data-sharing across platforms is incomplete (e.g., among IATTS, G-TSCMIS, and various accounting systems), and manual data entry is often slow and incomplete because of these connectivity problems and the lack of full stakeholder commitment to providing the necessary data. AFRICOM recognizes the lack of automation and connectivity and is trying to fix the associated problems. This issue is sufficiently important that necessary resources should be dedicated to resolving the network and software issues. If feasible, AFRICOM could consider contracting with an outside company that has experience in this field in order to bring this effort to fruition more quickly.

None of these recommendations, either singly or together, guarantees that partner capacity gains will be sustained. The more of them that can be implemented, however, the greater the likelihood that the United States will realize enduring changes through its assistance.

APPENDIX A

U.S. Programs Relevant to Defense Institution–Building in Africa

In this appendix, we outline the U.S. programs relevant to DIB in Africa. Compiled from a database developed as part of a previous RAND study, Table A.1 shows all 47 programs circa 2016, when that study was published.[1] These programs are divided into three categories: defense management, defense familiarization, and defense professionalization. Each category is, in turn, divided into two or more program subtypes.

The FY 2017 NDAA seeks to curb the proliferation of U.S. security cooperation programs. The act "consolidates security cooperation authorities . . . into a single chapter of U.S. code" (Title 10, Chapter 16), creates a new $2 billion Security Cooperation Enhancement Fund from several formerly disparate funds, and replaces several train-and-equip authorities with a single streamlined authority for building partner capacity.[2] DIB programs, such as the Ministry of Defense Advisors program, have been retained. Moreover, the new streamlined train-and-equip authority requires that all capacity-building programs be accompanied by complementary DIB efforts.[3]

[1] McNerney, Johnson, et al., 2016, pp. 34–48.

[2] U.S. Senate Armed Services Committee, 2016, p. 14.

[3] Public Law 114-328, Section 1241, S. 2943, National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2017, December 23, 2016.

Table A.1
Summary of Security Sector Assistance Programs Related to Defense Institution–Building

Program	Description and Type of Activities
Defense Management	
DIB-focused programs	
Defense Governance Management Team	Organizational assessments and roadmaps to address issues identified.
Wales Initiative Fund–DIB	Assessments of partner nations' defense institutions, development of education activities, and military-to-military engagement to address organizational gaps.
Defense Institute of International Legal Studies	Resident and mobile courses on legal matters for foreign military officers, legal advisors, and related civilians; assistance in setting up or reforming military justice systems, as well as improving accountability and transparency of legal systems.
Ministry of Defense Advisors	Deployment of senior DoD civilian employees to advise foreign officials from ministries involved with national security.
SGI	Assessments of partner nations' security sectors, with a focus on processes and institutions; development of strategies and programs to address institutional gaps; and regular monitoring and adjustment (when needed) of these programs.
Additional programs that could directly support DIB	
Center for Army Lessons Learned International Engagements	Lessons-learned seminars, courses, and briefings; assistance to partner nations in setting up their own lessons-learned centers.
State Partnership Program	Partnering of U.S. states with other nations in support of COCOM objectives. Activities vary according to partnership.
Defense Education Enhancement Program	Peer-to-peer mentoring, curriculum revision, and workshops for professional military education institutions.
African Military Education Program	Peer-to-peer mentoring, curriculum revision, and workshops for professional military education institutions.

Table A.1—Continued

Program	Description and Type of Activities
Defense Familiarization	
Episodic engagements	
African Land Forces Summit	"Annual, weeklong summit bringing together land force chiefs of staff from throughout the African continent to discuss mutual threats and challenges from a regional perspective."[a]
Army-to-Army Staff Talks	Bilateral army-to-army contacts.
Operator Engagement Talks	"Air Force operational engagement program with senior leaders of partner nation air forces."[b]
U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command training and doctrine conferences	Multilateral and bilateral exchanges of "information within mutually compatible core functions in order to enhance interoperability."[c]
Distinguished Visitors Orientation Tours	Program for foreign flag officers, general officers, and civilian leaders to visit U.S. military training and education institutions.[d]
Orientation Tours, Service Chief Counterpart Visit Program	Visits by chiefs of foreign military services, hosted by their U.S. counterparts.[e]
U.S. Army Distinguished Foreign Visits	"Visits by senior foreign officials to U.S. Army counterparts, commands, and agencies."[f]
U.S. Army International Visitors Program	Army program that enables large numbers of official visits in support of Army security cooperation activities.[g]
Imagery Intelligence and Geospatial Information, Transfer of Technical Data	National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency program "to provide foreign countries with imagery intelligence and geospatial information support."[h]
Global Research Watch Program	Supports "international cooperative research and analysis activities of each of the armed forces and Defense agencies."[i]
U.S. Army Center of Military History International History Program	Army program to "establish, maintain, and expand contacts between U.S. and international official military history institutions."[j]

Table A.1—Continued

Program	Description and Type of Activities
More-prolonged engagement	
Defense Personnel Exchange Program	"Reciprocal exchange of defense establishment civilians such as intelligence analysts, scientists and engineers, medical personnel, and administrative and planning specialists."[k]
Foreign Liaison Officer Program	Assignment of foreign liaison officers to DoD component or DoD contractor facilities.[l]
Non-reciprocal exchange of defense personnel	"Non-reciprocal international defense personnel exchange agreements with an ally of the United States or another friendly foreign state."[m]
School of Other Nations	Assignment of U.S. military officers to foreign military schools.[n]
Defense Professionalization	
General education	
Center for Civil-Military Relations	Courses, workshops, visits, seminars, research and publications, exercises, and distance learning, all focusing on promoting good civil-military relations, supporting DIB, supporting peace-building, and combating violent extremism.
Distribution to Certain Personnel of Education and Training Materials and Information Technology to Enhance Military Interoperability with the Armed Forces	Education and training of foreign military and civilian personnel through electronic educational material to improve interoperability.
Foreign military sales (training and advice component)	Sales of defense articles and services (including training) from the U.S. government to foreign governments.
Foreign officer admission to the Naval Postgraduate School	Advanced education for active-duty military officers or civilian government employees of partner nations.
Foreign participation in the Senior Reserve Officers' Training Corps	Participation of foreign students in basic course, basic camp, or advanced courses.

Table A.1—Continued

Program	Description and Type of Activities
Foreign service academy semester abroad exchanges	Participation of up to 24 students from the U.S. Military Academy, Naval Academy, and Air Force Academy in an exchange with cadets from foreign military academies to spend a semester abroad.
Foreign student attendance at the service academies	Four-year fellowship for a foreigner to attend service academies.
International Military Education and Training	Grant military education and training for foreign military and defense-related civilian personnel.
Professional military education exchanges	Attendance of foreign military personnel at U.S. professional military education institutions (other than service academies).
Regional centers for security studies	DoD institutions studying security issues relating to a specific region of the world, involving military and civilian participants and acting as forums for research and exchange of ideas.
Sergeants Major Academy International Fellows Program	Program in which foreign equivalents of master sergeants and sergeant majors attend the Sergeants Major Academy courses with their U.S. counterparts to prepare for positions of responsibility within their defense and military institutions.
U.S. Army Security Cooperation Training Teams	Army or joint training and technical assistance teams deployed to partner nations in support of foreign military sales cases, providing advice, training, and support on equipment, technology, doctrine, tactics, and weapon systems.
Niche expertise	
Assignments to Improve Education and Training in Information Security	Temporary assignment of a member of a foreign military force to DoD to learn about information security threats, management, and response.
Civil-military emergency preparedness	Assistance to partner countries or regions to increase their civil and military disaster preparedness capabilities.
Combating Terrorism Fellowship Program	Education and training events aimed at mid- and senior-level foreign defense and security officials, to increase counterterrorism capabilities and build a global network of counterterrorism experts.
Defense Resource Management Institute	Resident and mobile courses on effective allocation of resources in defense organizations.

Table A.1—Continued

Program	Description and Type of Activities
Foreign participation in the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences	Attendance at one of the three schools for military officers at the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences.
International Defense Acquisition Resource Management	Defense acquisition courses for foreign military officers and senior civilian officials.
Research	
DoD Senior Military College International Student Program	Opportunities for senior foreign military officers to study and conduct research on security-related topics.
U.S. Army Center of Military History Intern Program	Internship for one or more officers or cadets, who receive mentoring and are allocated a workspace at the Center for Military History.
Cultural activities/education	
Field studies program for international military and civilian students and military-sponsored visitors	Opportunity for international military students to become familiar with U.S. values, history, and way of life.
Service academy foreign and cultural exchange activities	Cultural immersion experience for U.S. Military Academy and foreign cadets.

SOURCE: All program titles and descriptions are taken from McNerney, Johnson, et al. (2016, pp. 34–48), except descriptions for which we provide alternative citations.

[a] Jason Welch, "U.S. Army Africa Planners Pave the Way for African Land Forces Summit 2016," U.S. Army Africa Public Affairs, 2015.

[b] Department of the Air Force, *Operator Engagement Talks (OET)*, Air Force Instruction 16-117, Washington, D.C., April 1, 2013.

[c] Department of the Army, *Army Security Cooperation Handbook*, DA PAM 11-31, Washington, D.C., March 5, 2013, p. 48.

[d] National Defense University, *Distinguished Visitor Orientation Tour Program: Desk Top Reference*, Fort McNair, Washington, D.C., 2016.

[e] Department of the Army, 2013, p. 41.

[f] Department of the Army, 2013, p. 41.

[g] Department of the Army, 2013, p. 22.

[h] Bolko J. Skorupski and Nina M. Serafino, *DoD Security Cooperation: An Overview of Authorities and Issues*, Washington, D.C.: Congressional Research Service, R44602, August 23, 2016, p. 28.

Table A.1—Continued

[i] United States Code, Title 10, Section 2365, Armed Forces.

[j] Department of the Army, 2013, p. 28.

[k] Office of the Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Policy Integration and Chief of Staff, *International Programs Security Handbook*, Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Defense, April 2010, pp. 7–18.

[l] Office of the Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Policy Integration and Chief of Staff, 2010, pp. 7–6.

[m] Skorupski and Serafino, 2016, p. 45.

[n] Christa Mary Mack, "Army Exchange Program Flourishes at MPEP Conference," U.S. Army, October 3, 2016.

APPENDIX B

Research Interviews

Number	Description of Interviewee(s)	Date
1	Four DoD officials involved in SSA program management	March 2016
2	Former DoD official involved in SSA policy	July 2016
3	Former DoD official involved in SSA program management	July 2016
4	DoD official involved in SSA program management	July 2016
5	Four DoD officials involved in SSA planning	November 2016
6	DoD official involved in SSA planning	November 2016
7	Three DoD officials involved in SSA planning	November 2016
8	DoD official involved in SSA planning	November 2016
9	DoD official involved in SSA policy	November 2016
10	Four DoD officials involved in SSA planning	November 2016
11	Three DoD officials involved in SSA planning	November 2016
12	Phillip Carter, former U.S. ambassador to Côte d'Ivoire and former deputy to the commander for civil-military engagement at AFRICOM	June 2016
13	DoD personnel involved in SSA program implementation	June 2016
14	DoD personnel involved in SSA program implementation	May 2016
15	DoD member of a U.S. country team in Africa	August 2016

Number	Description of Interviewee(s)	Date
16	DoD member of a U.S. country team in Africa	June 2016
17	DoD member of a U.S. country team in Africa	June 2016
18	Former DoD official involved in SSA program implementation	July 2016
19	Former DoD official involved in SSA program implementation	July 2016
20	DoD member of a U.S. country team in Africa	July 2016
21	DoD member of a U.S. country team in Africa	July 2016
22	DoD member of a U.S. country team in Africa	August 2016
23	DoD member of a U.S. country team in Africa	August 2016
24	U.S. government contractor involved in SSA program implementation	September 2016
25	Two DoD officials involved in SSA program planning	February 2016
26	Former DoD member of a U.S. country team in Africa	February 2017
27	Treasury Department official involved in SSA programming	July 2016
28	State Department official involved in SSA policy	February 2016
29	Former State Department official involved in SSA policy	July 2016
30	Treasury Department official involved in SSA programming	July 2016
31	State Department personnel involved in SSA program implementation	July 2016
32	State Department official involved in SSA policy	January 2016
33	Five State Department officials involved in SSA policy	September 2016
34	U.S. government policy analyst	March 2016
35	Academic researcher at a U.S. university	June 2016
36	Three U.S. government policy researchers	June 2016
37	Former State Department official involved in SSA policy	July 2016

Number	Description of Interviewee(s)	Date
38	Former U.S. Congressional Appropriations Committee staff member involved in SSA	July 2016
39	NGO personnel involved in SSA	August 2016
40	NGO personnel involved in SSA	September 2016
41	Two DoD officials involved in SSA program monitoring	February 2016

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