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| 14. ABSTRACT Security and stabilization operations (SASO) will continue to confront Joint Task Force (JTF) Commanders with a unique set of challenges and concerns. Future joint forces will require new skill sets to meet the challenges of SASO. The current measures of effectiveness (MOEs) are not adequate and need to be adjusted. There are potentially many MOEs that could be used to evaluate SASO success. This paper will address three MOEs that JTF Commanders can employ in the future. These MOEs are military in nature and narrow in scope. They are based on a realistic expectation of what the JTF Commander can and should influence in his joint operations area (JOA). The MOEs are as follows: indigenous force participation in the mission, number of humanitarian operations, and quality/quantity of enemy attacks. This paper attempts to define the current issues and scopes the problem in the first section. Then historical examples are used to present and validate the MOEs. | | | | | |
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**SECURITY AND STABILITY OPERATIONS MEASURES OF
EFFECTIVENESS**

By

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A paper submitted to the faculty of the Naval War College in partial satisfaction of the requirements of the Department of Joint Military Operations.

The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the Naval War College or the Department of the Navy.

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Abstract

Security and stabilization operations (SASO) will continue to present Joint Task Force (JTF) Commanders with a unique set of challenges and concerns. Future joint forces must adapt new skill sets to meet the challenges of SASO. The current measures of effectiveness (MOEs) are not adequate and need to be modified. There are potentially many MOEs that could be used to evaluate SASO success. This paper will address three MOEs that JTF Commanders can employ in the future. These MOEs are military in nature and narrow in scope. They are based on a realistic expectation of what the JTF Commander can and should influence in his joint operations area (JOA). The MOEs are as follows: indigenous force participation in the mission, number of humanitarian operations, and quality/quantity of enemy attacks. This paper attempts to define the current issues and scopes the problem in the first section. Then historical examples are used to present and validate the MOEs. The paper concludes with some specific recommendations for immediate implementation.

Security and stabilization operations (SASO) will continue to present Joint Task Force (JTF) Commanders with a unique set of challenges and concerns. Future joint forces must adapt new skill sets to meet the challenges of SASO. The current measures of effectiveness (MOEs) are not adequate and need to be modified.¹ There are potentially many MOEs that could be used to evaluate SASO success. This paper will address three MOEs that JTF Commanders can employ in the future. These MOEs are military in nature and narrow in scope. They are based on a realistic expectation of what the JTF Commander can and should influence in his joint operations area (JOA). The MOEs are as follows: indigenous force participation in the mission, number of humanitarian operations, and quality/quantity of enemy attacks. These MOEs need to be considered in the JTF plan, and shaping operations for SASO needs to occur during all phases. When effectively synchronized and coordinated, the JTF Commander can bring to bear a “SASO Combined Arms” approach to SASO and increase the chances of success.

There are many factors that contribute to the difficulty in assessing SASO success. Whole research papers and books could be devoted to exploring just the challenges of SASO. There are some fundamental reasons that need to be identified in an effort to scope the problem as it relates to U.S. military forces: those issues involving U.S. military doctrine and training, those issues involving force structure and equipment, and those issues that involve deployment/employment of the forces tasked to conduct SASO. These three reasons represent only the tip of the iceberg given the complex and dynamic nature that categorizes

¹ MOEs currently being employed in Iraq are: Number of improvised explosive devices found and disabled, number of weapons caches discovered, number of enemy combatants killed, and number of humanitarian or community relations projects completed as listed in the Commanding General, 1st Marine Division, *Standard Operating Procedures for Stability and Support Operations* (Camp Pendleton: G-3 Training, 2003), enclosure 2.

SASO.

The focus of current doctrine and training does not prepare joint forces to achieve success in SASO. Conventional force doctrine is based on fighting mechanized combined arms decisive actions against symmetric forces. There are no formal schools or courses designed to teach SASO skills and techniques. Current training exercises are modeled and evaluated on the proper application of firepower and maneuver designed to defeat a conventional threat. Finally, Joint Publication 3-0, Doctrine for Joint Operations identifies the four phases of a Joint Campaign as (I) Deter/Engage Phase, (II) Seize Initiative Phase, (III) Decisive Operations Phase, and (IV) Transition Phase.² Realistically, SASO operations take place across Phases III and IV. A successful SASO effort must be implemented before a Joint Force can transition from Phase III, and continue into Phase IV. To be more operationally effective and highlight its importance, SASO should be considered a distinct and separate phase of a joint operation that bridges the decisive combat operations and transition phases. SASO is not found in the JP 1-02, DOD Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms.³ However, intuitively every member of the armed forces can define SASO and knows that there are U.S. forces currently executing SASO in Iraq.

U.S. military forces are outfitted with equipment designed to enable the force to defeat a symmetric enemy. Our combat formations are based on mechanized, combined arms teams and emphasize firepower and mobility. The bulk of our military inventory is conventional in nature. SASO requires a force that is equipped to focus on the principles of

² United States Joint Forces Command, *Joint Publication 3-0* (Suffolk: Doctrine Division, 2001), III-19.

³ United States Joint Forces Command, *Joint Publication 1-02* (Suffolk: Doctrine Division, 2001).

military operations other than war (MOOTW).⁴ Additionally, our forces are not structured to meet the current and future demands of SASO. Units that specialize in SASO type missions are not available in sufficient quantities to meet the demands of the SASO environment. The only units that receive any real SASO training in order to be prepared for SASO missions are Special Forces and civil affairs units. There simply is not enough of either of these types of units currently represented in U.S. force structure.

The last part of the problem deals with the types of units that are being deployed and employed to conduct SASO. Given the restraints listed above, it should be no surprise that conventional forces currently conducting SASO in Iraq are having difficulty achieving success. We simply have not provided these conventional forces with the training, equipment, experience, and focus needed to be successful in SASO. The fact that they are achieving any success at all is testament to the professionalism and flexibility that permeates the ranks of America's armed forces.

History has provided several examples of successful and unsuccessful Phase IV SASO. Three examples will be used to support the MOEs being presented in this paper. Indigenous participation will be illustrated in examining the United States Marine Corps Combined Action Platoon (CAP) efforts in Vietnam (1965-67). Humanitarian operations will be illustrated by United States Marine Corps SASO in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom (2003). Finally, quantity and quality of enemy attacks will be illustrated by the Soviet Union SASO efforts in Afghanistan (1979-1988). These examples provide the basis for the formulation of the recommended MOEs.

⁴ Principles of MOOTW are Security, Legitimacy, Unity of Effort, Restraint, Perseverance, and Objective per *Joint Pub 3-07, Joint Doctrine for Military Operations Other Than War* (Suffolk: Doctrine Division, 1995), II-2.

MOE ONE: INDIGENOUS PARTICIPATION

MOE ONE concerns how much local force involvement is occurring during SASO. This is an important measure of how much support a JTF has from the force to whom the operation will eventually be transitioned. The goal of SASO is to enable the transition of the fight from U.S. forces to either coalition or local forces. Insufficient participation from local forces indicates that the SASO effort is ineffective. Local forces need to be involved in the operations that increase stability and security within their own country. If they are unable to participate jointly in operations or not at all, the result will be that the JTF will continue to appear to be the defacto government in the country. Since successful SASO leads to transition and Phase IV completion, it is essential that the locals take the responsibility for completing SASO. This local force will be needed to protect any fledgling government that is emerging in the region. The local force will receive vital training and experience as it operates alongside the joint forces. This training will prove to be crucial for local force effectiveness.

History has also shown that a resident governing agency needs to be involved in the SASO effort. The local people need to be involved in developing the plan for rebuilding their country. The desires of the people for improvements to education, health care, infrastructure improvement, and economic growth need to be part of the overall plan for recovery. A legitimate local government should represent the popular desires and will facilitate completion of Phase IV operations. It must be an indigenous government that begins to take responsibility for the recovery effort from decisive combat operations. It is difficult for the local population to change their perception of U.S. forces that have just completed decisive operations in their country. An indigenous governing body must step forward and assume

responsibility for Phase IV. If a JTF is conducting actions that facilitate the establishment of a local government and a security force to protect it, then SASO is working. If these two conditions are not evident in SASO, then there is a problem that requires the JTF commander to reassess his efforts. The emergence of and involvement by a local government and security force in your SASO effort is a metric that a JTF commander can and should use in measuring success.

HISTORICAL EXAMPLE: VIETNAM

The Marine Corps CAP effort during the Vietnam Conflict demonstrates the importance of getting local support for your SASO efforts. Beginning in 1965, the Marine Corps employed CAP teams in several villages in South Vietnam. The teams consisted of a squad of Marines with an embedded medical capability.⁵ The purpose of these teams was to train and organize local village forces to counter the Vietcong (VC) threat that was attempting to expand the insurgency throughout the South. The Marines moved into the villages and lived alongside their South Vietnamese counterparts. They began to train and equip the local forces to defeat the VC forces.⁶ The Marines would conduct joint patrols with the South Vietnamese forces and eventually gained a level of trust with their hosts that led to a sharing of intelligence about enemy activity in their sectors. This intelligence was used to plan attacks against VC concentrations, staging areas and logistics sites. This allowed the Marine Corps to strike the forces and locations that needed to be hit and prevent collateral damage that would make the South Vietnamese resentful of our presence.

One fact clearly illustrates the viability of the Marine CAP program. During the 1968 TET Offensive, when so many of these villages were overrun by the VC or NVA, not a

⁵ Joseph, Alexander, *The Battle History of the United States Marines* (New York: Harper Collins Press, 1999), 326.

⁶*Ibid.*, 326.

single one reverted to Communist authority.⁷ This fact demonstrates the importance of getting the indigenous forces involved in the SASO effort. The training and confidence gained by the South Vietnamese forces trained by the CAP Marines was enough to promote lasting stability in the villages. The villagers did not see the Communists as a better option and were able to resist the enemy influence even after the CAP Marines were no longer present in the villages. This is important because it connects to the desired end state of SASO – leave the country better off than it was when operations began.

Another reason this is significant can be found in the fact that the CAP program denied the VC forces access to a critical requirement for their success. The insurgents needed the resources and sanctuaries in the villages to support their efforts in the South. The training and confidence that the South Vietnamese security forces gained from the CAP program enabled them to resist the VC and NVA forces. This action attacked the VC operational center of gravity and is a key component of successfully defeating an insurgency. Insurgent or guerilla forces will usually maintain the military initiative in SASO and their defeat is essential to achieve SASO success. The Marine Corps CAP program is a clear example of how a joint force can achieve SASO success.

MOE TWO: HUMANITARIAN OPERATIONS

The number of humanitarian operations that are being conducted in the JOA is another valuable metric for determining SASO success. Efforts to improve the quality of life for the local inhabitants are essential for achieving SASO success. The number of these operations tells the commander many things about his SASO effort. The number of operations aimed at improving quality of life provides the commander a good assessment of the security conditions in his area of operations. Humanitarian operations are best executed

⁷ Ibid., 326.

by civilian organizations or military forces whose primary purpose is not combat operations. Doctors without Borders, the International Committee of the Red Cross, the Red Crescent Society, and Amnesty International are good examples of organizations that have an important role to play in SASO. Military organizations such as the Navy Sea Bees, Army Corps of Engineers, Civil Affairs Battalions, and other Service Support Units can also be employed to conduct humanitarian operations.

If these types of units and organizations are able to execute missions that improve quality of life, then a secure environment must exist. This tells the commander that the locals accept the efforts of the JTF to improve their situation. Open hostility and attacks on the humanitarian forces is an indication that the efforts to promote security and stability are failing. Once again, the JTF commander needs to assess what needs to be done to provide the environment necessary to allow for quality of life projects to take place. Quality of life projects are an essential part of SASO because they are focused on the population of the country who will ultimately determine success or failure for the joint force.

Local humanitarian operations will lead to large scale stability and security. If the indigenous population's need for basic security and quality of life issues is addressed, they will be more inclined to support the overall improvement plan. If the local people are disappointed by the focus of SASO or feel their needs are not being met, they will be more inclined to join or support insurgent forces. One of the primary goals of SASO is to deny resources and sanctuary for insurgent forces. Increased quality of life at the local level will lead to support of the local government. The local government should be focused on long term stability and implementation of a plan that will produce necessary improvements that endure.

HISTORICAL EXAMPLE: OPERATION *IRAQI FREEDOM*

Another historical example of SASO is the USMC action during Phase IV of Operation Iraqi Freedom. Once major combat operations were declared over, the First Marine Expeditionary Force (MEF) began setting conditions for Phase IV. The Shia Muslims in Southern Iraq conducted the Arba'eeb religious pilgrimage in April of 2003.⁸ The Shias had not been able to make this journey in decades due to years of repression by Saddam Hussein. The MEF capitalized on this event by providing water, shelter from the heat, and medical care for the Muslims making the pilgrimage.⁹ More importantly the MEF went out of its way to provide a stable situation for the pilgrimage to take place and did nothing to interfere with the religious event. The respect and understanding displayed by the MEF facilitated the SASO efforts that would occur during the summer months in the 1st Marine Division (1st MarDiv) Phase IV zones.

Another important aspect of the MEF SASO effort was the establishment of the Civil Military Operations Center (CMOC) in Baghdad during April of 2003.¹⁰ The task and purpose of this organization was to bring together local secular, religious, and civil leaders in an effort to identify what needed to be accomplished to repair and rebuild Iraq.¹¹ This was an important step in promoting stability in the country. The CMOC would focus on the identification of what important tasks needed to be accomplished to improve the infrastructure of the country and positively impact the quality of life for the newly liberated population. Again, if the end state of SASO is the development of a more secure and stable environment once combat operations have concluded, quality of life and infrastructure

⁸ John F. Kelly, "Part II: Tikrit, South to Babylon" *Marine Corps Gazette* (Quantico), no.3 (March 2004): 37.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 37.

¹⁰ John F. Kelly, "Tikrit, South to Babylon" *Marine Corps Gazette* (Quantico), no.2 (February 2004): 17-19.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 18.

improvements must take place. The goal of the CMOC was to establish a reasonably secure environment that would facilitate the arrival of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) that are crucial in nation building efforts.¹²

During the rest of the summer, battalions from the 1st Marine Division occupied SASO zones focused on major population centers in Southern Iraq. The battalions were tasked with supporting the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) and its attempts to bring security and stability to the country.¹³ The battalions focused their efforts on the security and infrastructure of their assigned cities. They worked day and night providing electrical power, medical supplies, fresh water, food, natural gas, and other needed resources to the people of the cities.¹⁴ The engineers assigned to the battalions began to conduct repairs on local government buildings, schools, medical facilities and most importantly on police headquarters buildings. The goal was to demonstrate our commitment to improve the quality of life in those cities. In return, the local populations provided intelligence about malcontents and insurgents in the region that needed to be eliminated. What developed was a tenuous trust between the battalions and the local leadership that allowed a stable environment to exist in the Shia dominated Southern cities of Iraq. The Marines were able to turn a stable and secure battle space over to the coalition forces that were tasked with the remainder of Phase IV operations.¹⁵ As previously stated the goal of SASO is the creation of conditions that improve security and stability and allow the force to transition to the final phase of a joint operation. The efforts described above demonstrate how a force can move from Phase

¹² Ibid., 18.

¹³ John F. Kelly, "Part II: Tikrit, South to Babylon" *Marine Corps Gazette* (Quantico), no.3 (March 2004): 37.

¹⁴ Ibid., 37.

¹⁵ Based on personal experience while the author was assigned to Regimental Combat Team 7, 1st Marine Division, I MEF, from January 2003 to June 2004. During this time elements of the RCT (Battalions 1/7 and 3/7) were tasked with conducting SASO in the cities of Najaf and Karbala respectively.

III to Phase IV and facilitate the redeployment of forces.

MOE THREE: QUALITY/QUANTITY OF ATTACKS ON THE COALITION

The last measure of effectiveness is the quality and quantity of enemy attacks against joint forces conducting SASO. This is a very important measure of whether or not the SASO effort is working. This metric can tell the JTF commander many things about his efforts to promote stability and facilitate transition. The first thing it can tell the commander is how well his force understands the nature of the people and culture where his SASO effort is taking place. When a military force conducts operations in a manner that respects local customs, social norms, and cultural differences, the number of attacks from locals will decrease. This was the case in the Moro Province of the Philippines during the early 1900s. When General Pershing was acting as the Military Governor of the Province he was very aware of local customs and courtesies and made sure his policies and actions were based on mutual respect.¹⁶ This facilitated stability and security in that region and enabled the local forces to keep the insurgents out of the region which decreased the chance of attack.¹⁷

Conversely, hostilities and attacks will increase if a force operates without regard for local conditions. The Nationalist Chinese invasion of Manchuria during the Chinese Civil War illustrates this point. When Nationalist Forces invaded Manchuria they did so without regard for cultural differences between them and the Manchurian people.¹⁸ The Nationalist Army refused to recognize that there is a difference between them and the locals and refused to employ Manchuria leaders in their counter insurgent effort.¹⁹ This caused the local population to resent the Kuomintang (KMT) forces and drove them to support the

¹⁶ Sam Sarkesian, *America's Forgotten Wars* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1984), 179-180.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 180.

¹⁸ Steven I. Levine, *Anvil of Victory: The Communist Revolution in Manchuria, 1945-1948*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987), 87-106.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 87-106.

Communist Forces under Mao. The Communist Insurgents enjoyed freedom of movement and action throughout the Manchurian provinces and were able to strike at will against the KMT military.²⁰ This led to the eventual defeat and withdrawal of KMT forces and the eventual defeat of the Nationalists during the Chinese Civil War.²¹

It is important that the joint force be sufficiently educated and trained to conduct operations that will not violate local customs or norms and minimize the chances of offending the locals. It is equally important that the JTF work to ensure that a local force is trained and included in security operations so they can eventually take over the responsibility of conducting the SASO effort. If the local population sees the JTF working alongside the local forces, the chance of success increases for SASO. Putting a local face on the SASO is important for success and can lead to a decrease in the amount of attacks conducted against the JTF.

Another thing that a commander can surmise from the quantity and quality of attacks against his force is how much the local population is supporting any destabilizing forces in the region. Guerrillas, insurgents, terrorists, and common criminals who wish to conduct attacks against coalition military forces will require sanctuary, intelligence, and resources from the local population. If the JTF SASO efforts are unsuccessful, the locals will be more apt to provide the necessary support to the malcontents. However, if the force is successfully conducting quality of life operations, respecting cultural and social norms, and promoting security and stability, much can be gained from the locals. They can provide valuable intelligence about enemy movements and plans for attacks. More importantly the locals will withhold intelligence and sanctuary for the disruptive elements which will minimize the

²⁰ Ibid., 229-248.

²¹ Thomas A. Marks, *Counterrevolution in China* (Portland: Frank Cass Publishers, 1998) 29-30.

effectiveness of the attacks against the SASO force. This is a very important MOE for the commander and is one that should be monitored in detail and constantly used to reassess and adjust the SASO effort.

HISTORICAL EXAMPLE: SOVIET INVASION OF AFGHANISTAN

The Soviet Union conducted SASO in Afghanistan for almost ten years with less than desirable results. The Soviet Union attempted to employ conventional forces to defeat the Mujahideen forces in the country that were threatening the Afghan communist regime. The Soviet forces were constantly attacked by the Mujahideen fighters who often employed well coordinated actions based on highly actionable intelligence.²² The frequency and effectiveness of the attacks illustrated that the population was providing the rebels with good information about Soviet force disposition and action.²³ Instead of attempting to gain local popular support and information to counter the rebel forces, the Soviets continued to rely on firepower and brute force in their efforts to defeat the Mujahideen.²⁴ Eventually the Soviets would abandon their efforts in Afghanistan and terminate military operations in that country.

The Soviet Forces were under constant attack from the Mujahideen forces during their ten year occupation of Afghanistan. The frequency and effectiveness of the attacks against the Soviet Forces should have triggered a change in tactics for the occupiers. Instead the Soviets simply increased the number of forces on the ground in an attempt to neutralize the Mujahideen attacks.²⁵ The increase in Soviet forces merely provided the Mujahideen with more targets of opportunity. The Soviet military forces would garrison in urban areas where

²² Ali Ahmad, Jalali, *The Other Side of the Mountain* (Virginia: United States Marine Corps Studies and Analysis Division, 1995), 374.

²³ *Ibid.*, 381.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, xvii.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, xvii to xviii.

they could provide security for themselves.²⁶ This approach proved counterproductive in weakening the effectiveness of the Mujahideen. The Mujahideen forces were free to move and acquire intelligence and resources in all the areas outside Soviet control.²⁷ As previously stated, sanctuary and resource denial is crucial for counter insurgency success. The Soviet forces did not address this factor in their occupation and were under constant and effective attack from a highly motivated and supported unconventional force.

MOE EMPLOYMENT

At this point it is necessary to discuss how these MOEs should be synchronized into the overall JTF operations plan. The whole operation needs to be conducted with SASO success as an underlying and guiding element. Actions taken during the first three phases of an operation need to shape the conditions for success in Phase IV, particularly with respect to SASO. SASO operations are complex and can be lengthy compared with operations in the other phases. If a joint force conducts operations without regard to the MOEs for Phase IV SASO, the chance for success will be decreased when the force attempts to conduct SASO. The SASO themes need to be interwoven in the construct of all phases of the operation. Forces need to respect local people and customs, protect the infrastructure, support the local and legitimate security and government forces, and encourage those forces to participate in combined operations aimed at promoting stability. If the SASO effort is not synchronized from the beginning, a seamless transition from phase to phase will not happen and Phase IV success will be delayed or unachievable.

COUNTER ARGUMENT

It may be countered that these MOEs are not relevant in terms of SASO. One could

²⁶ Ibid., 380-381.

²⁷ Ibid., 381.

argue that SASO success can only be achieved through the ruthless and efficient application of firepower against the enemy.²⁸ Under this premise true SASO success can only be achieved once all enemy combatants are eliminated. This assumes the use of conventional forces executing combat operations is all that is needed to execute SASO. Once the enemy forces are eliminated it would be easy for the military to transition to the new government or nation building forces. Military force alone would be all that is needed for SASO success. One could further argue that cultural sensitivities are not necessary as long as the military executes good fire discipline and applies the principle of proportionality after a target has been properly identified.²⁹

I find this counter argument short sighted and contrary to the historical examples presented in this paper. History has proven that military force alone is not capable of achieving SASO success. A military force must execute a plan that does more than just defeat forces with military might. The force must concern itself with the social, political and environmental conditions that need to be manipulated in an effort to promote security and stability. The Joint Force must identify what conditions in the JOA are preventing security and stability from becoming the norm to successfully conduct SASO. If a JTF does not employ the MOEs presented in this paper, action will promote resistance, incite violence, prolong operations, and weaken the resolve of the U.S. population as American casualty totals grow. Current operations in Iraq support the fact that it will take more than conventional forces conducting offensive operations to defeat the insurgent forces.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The MOEs presented here are designed to aid a joint force commander in evaluating

²⁸ Commanding General, 1st Marine Division, *Standard Operating Procedures for Stability and Support Operations* (Camp Pendleton: G-3 Training, 2003), enclosure 3.

²⁹ Ibid, enclosure 3.

SASO success. There are many things that JTF commanders can do to increase the chances for SASO success. The first thing a JTF commander must do is ensure that all members of the force gain and maintain an appreciation for the complex social and cultural conditions that exist in the joint area of operations. This understanding needs to be reflected in the courses of action executed during all phases of joint operations. Commanders at all levels must demonstrate to the JTF commander that their forces have been educated about how individual actions during all phases can have a significant effect on SASO. Further, Combatant Commanders need to develop country experts for all the countries within their assigned areas of responsibilities. These country experts need to understand the political, social, ethnic, and religious elements of their countries and be able to articulate important themes to personnel assigned to a particular joint force. The information needs to be current, relevant, and easily understandable at the lowest levels so that it can be quickly disseminated once a JTF is formed. In addition, these country experts need to inject training objectives into all training that takes place within the Combatant Commander's AOR.

Another recommendation for a Combatant Commander is the establishment of a professional military education program for all officers and staff noncommissioned officers assigned to their command. The program should include readings that illustrate the MOEs and are specific to their areas of responsibility. An educated force is necessary to execute Phase IV SASO. History is full of examples of successful SASO and the time to learn about these examples is not en route to a crisis area. Learning about the history, culture and people of the area of responsibility is essential to SASO success. An appreciation for cultural sensitivities needs to be part of a combatant commander's theater security plan at all levels.

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