

Training Pipeline for SAO Personnel

By

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The first phase of a major revamping of the training pipeline for SAO-bound personnel will go into effect with the DISAM Overseas Course (SAM-0-1-89) commencing 17 October 1988. The basic changes to the course include a reduction from four to three weeks duration, the incorporation of specialized or "tracked" training, and the addition of entirely new, SAO management/survival subjects. The second phase will include the initiation of a more structured training sequence in which requisite orientations and briefings by the military departments, DSAA, the unified commands, and other USG organizations will be better defined not only in content but in who should be receiving the training.

The changes being made to the Overseas Course are a reflection of those that have taken place in the complexion of security assistance (SA) and the role of the SAO in recent years. Lieutenant General Brown, USA, Director, DSAA, has expressed his concern that the training effort has not kept abreast. The following is quoted from a DSAA message (date-time group 110126Z May 88) to all organizations involved in security assistance:

The entire SA community recognizes the fact that major changes have occurred in the environment in which the SA program must operate. On the one hand, in some countries SA has evolved beyond solely FMS/IMET management to cooperation in the development and production of arms. On the other hand, there has been a significant increase in small MAP/Credit Programs (primarily of a logistics nature) in other countries. Further, reduced defense budgets, both at home and abroad, are requiring more innovative approaches to meeting our foreign and defense policy objectives. SA personnel are becoming increasingly more involved in additional initiatives beyond FMS/IMET designed to improve our security relationship with friends and allies around the world.

The scope and diversity of these myriad operational changes have been difficult to define and quantify and they vary considerably from country to country. DISAM is seeking ways, means, and suggestions to improve its responsiveness to these changing requirements. The Overseas Course has evolved over the years as a direct result of student critiques, visits by the faculty to the field, conference attendance, and an ongoing dialogue with all levels of security assistance management. But these past changes have been minor compared to what is now indicated. Again, quoting from the 11 May message from DSAA:

With thoughts towards improving its contribution to overseas training, in November 1987 DISAM proposed a major revision to the Overseas (SAM-O) Course in preparation for its annual curriculum review in March 1988. Comments and recommendation were solicited from OSD, the MILDEPS, OJCS, and the Unified Commands (who, in turn, consolidated SAO inputs) concerning a proposed three-week, streamlined SAM-O course. The response to the SAM-O initiative fell into two major categories. The first centered around DISAM's primary role to teach FMS and IMET management. It has indicated that SAO personnel are receiving too much detailed instruction in some areas and not enough in others, depending on the duties of their billets, with the attendant need for some degree of modularized instruction. The second concern is that insufficient training is received to prepare SAO personnel to address the myriad of non-SA

(FMS/IMET) related activities in support of the unified commands, MILDEPS, DOD agencies, State Dept., etc.

In view of the need to fully discuss these substantive issues, the DISAM Curriculum Review, held 16-17 March, was preceded by a subcommittee meeting attended by DSAA, DISAM, and representatives of the Unified Commands. During this meeting, the subcommittee developed a framework for restructuring the SAM-O Course, reducing it from 20 to 15 class days, consisting of "core" subjects for all students, followed by specialized "tracks" (i.e., materiel management, training, and combined materiel/training) tailored to different student groups' needs. The revised course format was favorably received by the full curriculum review committee and was subsequently approved for implementation beginning in FY1989 by the Director, DSAA and the DISAM Policy and Advisory Council members during a 19 April 88 meeting.

Obviously, such sweeping changes cannot take place overnight. The new curriculum must be developed and the administrative wheels set into motion to change the length of the course. However, we are well on our way. We anticipate many changes to the new curriculum throughout the first year as training requirements are better defined. As of this printing, it is anticipated that the Overseas Course will be structured as described below.

The first phase (or core) will consist of twelve days of common instruction for all students. This phase is designed to familiarize students with all aspects of the security assistance program as well as the day-to-day management and operation of an SAO. Core subjects will consist of an introduction to the following areas:

1. SA Background
2. FMS Process
3. Logistics
4. Financial Management
5. Security Assistance Training
6. SAO Operations

As indicated, the core is essentially an executive overview and is not designed to fully train an action officer in his or her primary SAO duties such as, for example, IMET Training. Further detailed instruction, designed for the action officer, will take place during the track portion of the course. For example, during the core phase, all students will receive four hours of instruction on the security assistance training program. This is in contrast to the 15 hours which all students presently receive in the current four week curriculum. However, during the three day tracked phase, those students who will be serving as Training Officers in their SAO assignments will receive an additional eighteen hours of instruction. Thus, those personnel who will not be Training Officers will receive a total of four hours (vice the current sixteen hours) of instruction in the subject, while those designated as Training Officers receive a total of twenty-two hours vice the current sixteen. Similar changes will occur in the other subject areas.

The three days of specialized, or tracked, studies will consist of classroom lectures as well as extensive practical exercises to give the student an opportunity not only to learn the details of his or her specific job but to apply management principles to real-world situations. It is anticipated there will be three tracks of instruction available, one of which each student will take depending on the requirements of his or her billet. These three tracks will include:

1. Materiel Management;
2. Training Management; and
3. A "Dual Track" covering both Materiel and Training Management.

Further, individualized instruction will be programmed for those students being assigned to unique billets requiring very extensive, detailed knowledge of one particular aspect of security assistance such as, for example, MAP funds management.

Additionally, as a result of SAO feedback, several new subjects will be added to the core portion of the curriculum. These include:

1. OTHER U.S. ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS. This lesson will provide an overview of other major U.S. Government assistance programs available to our friends and allies, such as PL 480 ("Food for Peace"), Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA), and Agency for International Development (AID) programs.

2. DEFENSE COOPERATION IN ARMAMENTS (DCA). This lesson will provide an overview of the various DCA programs currently in effect or being contemplated in many countries. Discussions will include topics such as the coproduction of U.S. designed equipment, co-development programs, U.S. procurement of non U.S.-origin equipment, and offset arrangements. [NOTE: For those personnel going to a DCA billet, additional training will be required beyond DISAM].

3. SAO ADMINISTRATION OF IN-COUNTRY PERSONNEL. This lesson will examine general procedures for the management of SAO local hire personnel to include awards and decorations, security clearances, and salaries. Also to be discussed will be administrative procedures associated with the oversight of Personnel Exchange Program (PEP) participants, Foreign Area Officers (FAO), and service academy exchange students.

4. OTHER SAO COLLATERAL DUTIES. This lesson will examine non-SA responsibilities which are often assigned to the SAO. Topics of interest include U.S. ship and aircraft visits, VIP visits, joint exercises, and participation in Joint Military Commissions.

5. SAO EMERGENCY OPERATIONS. This lesson will consist of a general discussion of emergency and contingency plans of concern to SAO. Topics will include such subjects as disaster relief, non-combatant evacuation, increased threats of terrorism, and medical evacuations.

6. LONG RANGE PLANNING AND SUSTAINING ONGOING PROGRAMS. This lesson will center around the need for realistic, long range planning with the host country, particularly during fiscally austere times. The AIASA and other planning tools will be reviewed. Program sustaining alternatives such as debt restructuring, cash flow, and product improvement vs new procurement will be examined.

Many other changes from the current four week course will be found in the new three week curriculum, though they are too numerous and detailed to mention here. However, this is just the beginning or Phase I of the restructuring of the SAO training program. Again, allow me to quote from the 11 May DSAA message.

The above changes to the SAM-O course should enhance the quality and relevance of instruction as well as shorten the Training Pipeline at DISAM by one week. Notwithstanding these interim enhancements, DISAM has been tasked by Director, DSAA to conduct a comprehensive study and make recommendations as to further long-range improvements relative to the training and orientation of SAO personnel. This study will examine such questions as:

A. What level of knowledge does a SAO member needs in various functional areas (e.g., Logistics, Financial Management, Armaments Cooperation, Basic SAO Management) in order to perform his job?

B. Where should such training/orientation be conducted--at DISAM or at other schools/activities?

C. What types of orientation should SAO personnel receive during visits to the military departments, unified commands, etc.?

D. What are the expectation of CONUS activities and the unified commands relative to SAO involvement in various SA and non-SA related functions?

E. The successful performance of the above mentioned study necessitates DISAM access to and cooperation from both CONUS and overseas SA organizations. . . . DISAM has distributed a survey . . . to all SAOs. Additionally, separate questionnaires have been sent to the military departments, Unified Commands, and other activities. It is desired that all concerned give this data-gathering effort the high priority that it deserves in order that any future initiatives can be implemented based on a solid understanding of the SA community's training/orientation needs and capabilities.

Only those of you actually in a SAO job can accurately identify the training requirements for your billet. The purpose of the survey is to determine those requirements. It should be stressed that the effort is in no way a manpower time and task audit. DISAM is not interested in, nor are we asking, how much time you spend on a given task; we are asking what your tasks are and what you need to know to perform them. For example, some FMS management actions occupy a large percentage of your time but require minimal training, while other tasks, in support of a unified command initiative for example, may be performed only intermittently but require considerable preparatory training.

The time for change is now. We need your help. When critiquing the Overseas Course most of you have indicated that too much detail is taught in some areas, and not enough in others. You have indicated that additional SAO management and survival topics need to be taught. It is now time to rectify these problems.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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