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# Strengthening Our Allies, One Soldier at a Time

By

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Victory in the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT) will require firm resolve on the part of the United States alone with capable partners who share our interests. These partners must be willing to fight with us. They must be strong militarily, and have interoperable equipment and doctrine. They must offer us their bases, their roads and airfields, and their national airspace.

Security cooperation provides the “tools” that enable the United States to engage foreign countries. Security cooperation goals and programs are included in the Secretary of Defense Security Cooperation Guidance, Army Security Cooperation Strategy, Unified Commands Theater Security Cooperation Strategies and the U.S. Ambassadors’ Mission Performance Plans. The security assistance training program is a critical tool used by the U.S. Army to train foreign soldiers both in continental United States (CONUS) and outside of the continental United States (OCONUS).



MTT instructors demonstrate MOUT clearing procedures.



A Counterterrorism MTT trains a CT Philippine Reaction Team at the pistol range.



Joint training being conducted in Colombia with U.S. aviation forces and Colombian aviation.



TAFT trains Ecuadorian Quick Reaction Force.



(Left) Colombian Aviation TAFB teams with the Fast Rope Insertion and Extraction System.

Center top) Colombian Aviation TAFB train with Colombian Quick Reaction Forces rehearsing target insertion.

(Center below). A U.S. Contractor (far right) instructs future instructors for the Georgian Company Commander's Course during a recent MTT. Currently, the Georgian Company Commander's Course is being instructed by the Georgian military leaders.

(Right) During a recent MTT in the Dominican Republic, West Point Cadets provide Dominican Republic Cadets training on room clearing techniques.

This is where Security Assistance Training Management Organization (SATMO) comes in. SATMO's mission is to plan, form, prepare, deploy and sustain CONUS-based security assistance teams (SATs) in support of the Secretary of Defense Security Cooperation Guidance, Army Security Cooperation Strategy, Unified Combatant Commands Theater Cooperation Strategies, U.S. Ambassadors' Mission Performance Plans and the Global War on Terrorism.

SATMO trains any Army, on any skill, at any level, on their turf and under any conditions short of combat. In 2006 alone, SATMO deployed teams to 26 different countries; with over 314 U.S. personnel training over 2,500 foreign personnel. Since 1985, SATMO deployed personnel have spent almost two million man-days on foreign soil in this pursuit. In coordination with the host nation, the combatant command (and in concert with U.S. security assistance officers (SAOs) in the foreign countries request specific Army training and technical assistance from SATMO.

As SATMO develops, coordinates and executes these missions, it assures our allies and partners of the U.S. resolve to fulfill our defense commitments to their countries. Training and technical assistance make our allies stronger. Army teams train and help them to employ U.S. systems we have sold or given to them. They fight better, giving the enemy more to worry about. Our allies understand and may even adopt our procedures and doctrine. While our teams are working with an ally, their presence deters aggression from opposing countries.

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SATMO handpicks warrior-diplomats from Army Active Duty, National Guard and Reserve personnel, federal civilians and defense contractors. SATMO can even “tap” the Air Force, Navy, Marines, and DoD for expert personnel. The services send their best to SATMO, certifying each as a soldier-diplomat, able to create the good will that encourages our allies to stick with us through thick and thin.

### **Cradle to Grave Coverage**

- **Planning.** SATMO’s desk officers start at the earliest stages of mission development in the planning process to help the SAO determine mission and funding requirements while meeting policy guidance at all levels.
- **Preparing.** Before deploying, teams attend a five-day course called Security Assistance Training Team Orientation Course (SATTOC). Each SAO member undergoes training in anti-terrorist and force protection, counter-surveillance, special driving skills and cross-cultural communications. They receive threat, intelligence and medical briefings, get their immunizations up-to-date, and spend time team-building. Key to their success is a clear understanding of the overall mission, goals, objectives, and end state. Each team chief demonstrates this understanding in a personal session with the SATMO Commander. During this week, team members also in-process, updating personnel and financial records. Finally, if the SAO wants the team to be specially equipped, SATMO’s logistics section outfits them individually and as a team, and arranges for shipment of the items to the host country.
- **Deploying.** SATMO makes all travel arrangements, gets country and theater clearances, pays for tickets and per diem, notifies the SAO of planned arrival dates, and sends the team on its mission.
- **Sustaining.** SAT managers act as an umbilical cord between the team and the U.S. This connection ensures that each team receives all the support necessary to accomplish their mission. SATMO even operates and active family resource group to “keep the home fires burning.”
- **Re-deploying.** SATMO plans and executes all parts of the team’s return to CONUS. Even after their return, SATMO budget and logistics personnel spend up to three years closing out financial files and property records. This mission is extensive, but SAOs and other embassy representatives help SATMO to develop the very best Army training and technical assistance mission for each country.



Georgian Maintenance MTT discuss proper maintenance procedures for a UH-1.



Bahrain MLRS TAFT technical expert discuss electrical testing equipment.

### **Security Assistance Teams**

SATMO fields both permanent change of station (PCS) teams for one or two years or temporary duty (TDY) teams for under 180 days. Teams perform both training and technical assistance to

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our allies. A key function for teams is to survey a country to determine the best use of U.S. foreign military air. Expert teams assess the foreign army's status and needs, and recommend materiel, training, and technical assistance solutions.

### **What Kind of Training?**

In two words: almost anything. Restricted only by foreign disclosure and release requirements, SATMO trains everything from basic rifle marksmanship to "how to be a minister of defense." As an example, SATMO assisted and prepared Latvia to enter into the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. SATMO trains joint and service staffs, service chiefs, brigade and battalion commanders and staff, and provincial commanders. SATMO has established training courses for foreign governments to include an Ethiopian Command and General Staff College and numerous company leader schools. A SAT in the Ukraine planned and executed a non-commissioned corps center and school. In the Philippines SATMO teams enhanced the ability of their Light Infantry Battalions, and Light Reaction Companies to conduct sustained operations against insurgency while providing training on U.S. government procured equipment.

In Colombia, a one man psychological operations team developed and trained portions of the Colombian Army (COLAR) on a repatriation and reindoctrination program focused on counter-guerilla and insurgency groups operating in Colombia. This program persuaded 10,000 "bad guys" to desert and become functional members of society, while the COLAR recovered ammunition and numerous weapons from the deserters. The COLAR also seized two military aircraft which were assisting guerilla and insurgency groups, and destroyed several illegal operating drug laboratories. Finally, the COLAR received invaluable intelligence gathered from the deserters on other elements of the guerilla and insurgent operations.

When our allies acquire U.S. government equipment, it increasingly enhances our interoperability. SATMO teams train their personnel in operations, maintenance, and tactical employment of that equipment. This builds a stronger ally that can work with us more readily.

Returning team members see that security assistance missions are among the most rewarding jobs in the military today. However, these missions can be very frustrating because of cultural differences and language barriers that make their own challenge. In team preparation, SATMO stresses awareness of these challenges and strives to condition deploying teams to counter the cultural "friction." SAT members learn the following:

- Keep frustrations in perspective
- Meet the people
- Learn their language
- Understand their culture
- Eat their food
- Become familiar with their religion
- Participate in cultural events

SATMO prepares us for the next war by developing our allies' ability and willingness to fight with us. SATMO trains the world, one soldier at a time.

### **About the Authors**

Having completed his command at SATMO, Colonel Richard N. Helfer has chosen to culminate his career with a final assignment in Afghanistan.

Jon D. Jones is the security assistance team manager for the Pacific region at the United States Army Security Assistance Training Management Organization, Fort Bragg, North Carolina. He is a retired U.S. Army Special Forces officer.