
SECURITY ASSISTANCE TRAINING: A TOTAL PROGRAM APPROACH

By

LT COL DAVID L. HAWLEY, USAF

A salient feature of the current Security Assistance Program is the willingness of recent administrations, beginning with President Nixon's, to sell foreign clients our most sophisticated weapon systems. Instead of the obsolescent but proven hardware provided friendly nations under grant programs in the past, the contemporary Foreign Military Sales (FMS) customer can sign up for systems still in production, and even under development. Most foreign Air Forces face formidable obstacles in entering the high-tech age mainly because of extremely limited pools of technically competent personnel. In the past, the Military Assistance Advisory Groups (MAAGs) provided this skilled manpower; but in many instances, various pressures to reduce the US military presence overseas have resulted in the replacement of MAAGs by security assistance organizations (SAOs). The sale of sophisticated weaponry and the erosion of the MAAGs have helped create an environment requiring the USAF to revise its approach to training foreign military personnel under the Security Assistance Training Program (SATP).

Using the example of an F-16 sale to an imaginary foreign country, a review of the typical training package developed to support such a sale reveals inadequacies in the current approach. A wide range of factors contribute to this situation, from a preoccupation with Continental United States (CONUS) training to the universal reluctance to devote adequate resources to military training programs. Although there are no quick fixes for the deeply ingrained causes of these problems, some relatively simple management actions would result in major SATP improvements. These topics constitute the four sections of this paper.

THE TRAINING EFFORT

In the context of a weapons system sale to a foreign customer, a "training package" request evokes a fairly stock response. The standard package includes CONUS training for operations and maintenance cadres, in-country USAF support in the form of Mobile Training Teams (MTTs) and Technical Assistance Field Teams (TAFTs), and interim support from the contractors. After completion of these activities during the acquisition phase, annual training programs are developed to account for attrition and permit program upgrade. A brief look at each of these elements permits an evaluation of this approach.

The cadre concept is the traditional USAF means of introducing a new system into the inventory, such as the replacement of A-7s with F-16s. It presupposes the existence of highly skilled personnel sufficiently experienced

on the system being replaced to become proficient on the new system after a brief checkout. After mastering the skills required to operate and maintain the replacement system, the cadres help install the new equipment and train the others required to staff the various work centers.

Applying this concept to the sale of F-16s to a foreign government normally results in a plan to send a total of 100 to 150 host country pilots and technicians to the United States for USAF and contractor training. The typical operations cadre consists of 6 to 12 experienced pilots. Their training includes English refresher training at the Defense Language Institute (DLI) at Lackland Air Force Base and conversion and instructor upgrade training conducted by Tactical Air Command (TAC).

Training for the maintenance cadre is designed to qualify host country personnel as lead technicians and on-the-job (OJT) instructors on the principal F-16 subsystems. Size of the cadre varies, but normally 100 technicians are trained in about 30 specialties to assist with the installation of the new equipment and provide hands-on training. The typical sequence of CONUS technician training includes English at DLI, system-oriented training conducted by a Field Training Detachment (FTD) or by the contractor, four to eight weeks of hands-on exposure at an operational unit or with the contractor and technical instructor training for the OJT trainers. Training for the maintenance and pilot cadres is scheduled to assure the students complete their programs shortly before the equipment arrives.

At the time of initial equipment delivery the cadres are augmented by USAF and contractor personnel who form MTTs, TAFTs and Contractor Engineering and Technical Services (CETS). MTTs consist of USAF personnel deployed on temporary duty for up to six months to provide training and help establish the training programs. In this hypothetical case, two F-16 Instructor Pilots (IPs) could be deployed to help the cadre set up local conversion training, and technical instructors could help develop an indigenous FTD capability. If the country requires long-term assistance, the support package would include a TAFT, PCS military personnel on one- or two-year tours. The mission of a TAFT is twofold: to provide technical assistance and to train host personnel. Contractor personnel on renewable one-year CETS contracts also provide long-term technical support. However, the contractor contribution to in-country training usually is negligible since CETS contracts frequently prohibit the contractor representatives from conducting formal training.[1]

These initial training efforts are defined at early planning conferences, based on the recommendations of various survey teams. The cadre training, MTTs, TAFTs and CETS identified in the FMS contract or Letter of Offer and Acceptance (LOA) represent a coordinated effort. This effort involves the Air Staff; the Foreign Military Training Affairs Group (FMTAG); Air Training Command (ATC); and, in the F-16 example, Tactical Air Command (TAC). In most cases, the intensity of training activity diminishes after delivery of the first aircraft, since there is no comprehensive plan identifying further training requirements. Based upon anticipated needs to account for attrition and upgrade the initial capabilities, the SAO Training Officer identifies follow-on CONUS training and in-country assistance for the F-16 operation and includes these requirements in the country's annual SATP input. At this point, the F-16 training begins losing its identity, since the typical yearly training

request includes Undergraduate Pilot Training (UPT), Professional Military Education (PME), and a representative sampling of the other courses the Air Force offers foreign students.

RESULTS

Analysis of the end products of the standard F-16 training package produces a mixed review. The training which the cadres receive in the US is the best in the world. Both the United States and the host benefit from having the students, many of whom are destined to fill key roles in their country's military establishment and government, visit this country for several weeks. This exchange fosters mutual understanding and encourages personal bonds which will affect future relationships between the two countries. However, the training is not cheap; the standard package has a multi-million-dollar price tag, driven primarily by the high cost items -- flying and contractor training. Furthermore, students from most countries return home from their CONUS training only partly proficient in the skills required to operate and maintain their new F-16s.

The pilots are well qualified to fly the aircraft and check out other members of their Air Force, but they require intensive continuation training to gain the experience and skill required to exploit the full capabilities of the F-16. The cadre training program focuses upon the pressing issue -- the need to qualify pilots to fly the F-16. There is considerably less emphasis on activities required to support the flying operation. These functions include curriculum development, standardization/evaluation, mission planning, scheduling, safety and other mundane tasks USAF pilots often perform as additional duties.

The members of the maintenance cadre require even more extensive follow-on effort to attain self-sufficiency in a system so sophisticated as the F-16. Students from many of the customer countries lack the academic backgrounds required to receive the full benefit of Air Force training which is developed for our high school graduates. These academic deficiencies prevail in the technical subjects. Furthermore, USAF courses are designed to award the student a specific Air Force Specialty Code (AFSC), but many countries lack the manpower base required to permit this same degree of specialization. For example, one F-16 purchaser has distributed F-16 maintenance responsibilities among eight specialty groupings, whereas the Air Force identifies 32 F-16 AFSCs. One alternative permitting the training to be tailored to the country's needs is contractor training, but this option can be prohibitively expensive.

These flaws in CONUS technician training are relatively minor, however. The greatest single defect in most foreign training programs is the lack of in-country OJT. After completing their cadre training, the technicians may be able to perform at the partly-proficient (5-) level. At this stage of development, they will encounter many situations requiring the assistance of the locally-assigned Air Force and contractor personnel. This situation will continue until host maintenance personnel become fully qualified (7-level). Without a structured upgrade training program, the host work force will peak out at this level, and may even suffer skill degradation.

In summary, the cadres emerge from their training programs partly proficient. They reach a plateau which is an excellent starting point, but their initial skills must be honed through additional training and job experience for them to become fully qualified. The effort is frequently neglected. Key factors contributing to this situation include a preoccupation with CONUS training, limited training dollars, poorly-defined programs, and restrictions on USAF field advisors.

CONTRIBUTING FACTORS

Resident training in the United States provides an excellent point of departure for a fledgling training program; but it is not the panacea envisioned by US and foreign military personnel, alike. USAF program managers turn to the familiar, off-the-shelf means of filling a training requirement because it is convenient and permits greater devotion of energies to hardware issues. The customer often insists on sending its people to the States both as a reward and so they will attend the same training as their USAF counterparts. Unfortunately, resident courses in most specialties are not available at key stages of a technician's development because of USAF's reliance on OJT. In some cases, resident training may even be inappropriate. For example, sending a foreign student to Lowry Air Force Base for supply training is a wasted effort if his Air Force has a manual supply system. This training could be better provided through an in-country program tailored to the indigenous logistics environment.

Reluctance to spend money on training is a universal trait among the world's military establishments. In the security assistance arena, training is in visible competition with hardware for dollar amounts in the FMS contract. Although the training lines account for a small percentage of the value of a major system sale, the tendency to economize on training is widespread. In this context, USAF CONUS training, which is reasonably priced, offers an attractive alternative to more costly contractor training. The economic factor also is a key constraint on long-term, in-country assistance from US military and contractor personnel. Members of the PCS military and contractor teams normally are primarily technicians whose contracts permit them to provide only limited OJT on a noninterference basis. With few exceptions, like Saudi Arabia, the funds are not made available for the extensive, long-term efforts needed to make the host personnel truly self-sufficient.

A good part of this dilemma is caused by the shift in US foreign policy resulting in the demise of the MAAGs. In the past, MAAG personnel provided a surrogate infrastructure to help the host forces with the total management of their US government-funded military assistance programs from inception through implementation. The traditional MAAG consisted of Army, Navy and Air Force sections, with a general officer in charge. The MAAG staff included experts tasked to provide their counterparts technical assistance and training. At present, SAOs under a variety of names, e.g., Office of Military Cooperation (OMC), Office of Defense Cooperation (ODC), have replaced MAAGs in most countries.[2] An SAO is limited by statute to a total of six military members to administer the Security Assistance Program for all three services. In addition to the manpower reductions, there are legal constraints on the duties the SAOs are supposed to perform. The current law reduces

the military personnel assigned to all SAOs, regardless of size, to administrators who are discouraged from serving as field advisors and providing training.[3]

The void left by the disappearance of these MAAG services, which were provided at little or no cost to the host country, now must be filled by TAFTs and contractor representatives at considerable expense under FMS contracts. It is difficult to convince the purchasing countries that they must now pay for services formerly provided gratis, and overall program management has fallen into neglect in many countries. Currently no agency is tasked to fill this management vacuum.

The lack of clearly-defined objectives, beyond the programs providing the F-16 cadre training and in-country support, further complicates program management in most countries. Without a MAAG, individual country training programs must be managed by a committee consisting of training representatives from the SAO, Unified Command, Air Staff, Foreign Military Training Affairs Group (FMTAG), and the Defense Security Assistance Agency (DSAA). Current conditions cause frustration across the management spectrum, since the managers of the various training programs are often relegated to the passive role of responding to the moment's crisis. Sound planning is difficult in the absence of definite goals, and it is impossible to measure a program's success or failure if there are no benchmarks permitting an evaluation. Establishing the requirement for each country to have a master training plan containing the elements needed for effective program management is one way out of this mode.

CORRECTIVE ACTIONS

Many of the flaws in the SATP stem from causes beyond the control of the Air Force and the Department of Defense. However, some basic management actions would help remedy the main weaknesses. Failure to invite training experts early in the development and negotiation of a sale and the resultant poor planning are the greatest failings in the current system. A comprehensive training plan for each country would promote planning and effective management of the program. Thus, from the outset, the country would be alerted to the training requirements and cost. The plan could be developed for each country and would contain three parts: a manning document for each organization; a time-phased projection of training requirements and, finally, a milestone chart depicting significant events.

The logical starting place in the development of a training plan is the preparation of a manning document for each work center. Under the current mode of operation, however, this step does not occur, and the training plan becomes the manning chart. In the F-16 case, training experts would develop the cadre programs using a basic model which identifies sequences of training for a few pilots and selected maintenance specialties. Thus the plan addresses only a limited part of the trained personnel requirements. It fails to identify the sources of training for the line pilots, apprentice technicians, and others needed to flesh out the work centers. Developing a Unit Manning Document (UMD) based on the findings of the site survey team would solve this problem by focusing on the total requirement for trained personnel in each work center. This task is difficult since the identification of attainable

manpower goals requires extensive knowledge of the available manpower base, the local education system, and cultural considerations, as well as familiarity with existing military training programs. However, it is vital to the success of the country training program.

The section addressing the training programs would constitute the heart of the document. It defines objectives and identifies the resources needed to attain these goals. The contents include future requirements for CONUS training and in-country assistance based on the estimated availability of personnel and funds for these programs, as well as the facilities and equipment needed to develop in-country capabilities. Although plan formats will vary because of the diversity of country programs, each will contain a core of common topics including English language training, operations training, and logistics training. Descriptions of special projects, like the development of a Field Training Detachment, will supplement the core subjects.

The section on English language training states the objectives and identifies the resources required to support the local program of English instruction. The statement of objectives indicates if the program serves only to provide English Comprehension Level (ECL) growth in preparation for CONUS training or if there are unique requirements such as a modified program permitting the technicians to attend school part time as part of their OJT program. The list of resources is a five-year forecast on the requirements for CONUS training at Defense Language Institute, English Language Center (DLI/ELC), MTTs, Language Training Detachments (LTDs), [4] language labs, course material, and examinations.

In the F-16 example, the write-up on operations provides a game plan for developing a self-sustaining flying operation. Identification of realistic future requirements for CONUS flying training, possibly including UPT, is a significant goal of the plan, but is not an end in itself. The role of CONUS training must be defined in terms of the total effort, which includes in-country training programs and the MTTs and TAFTs of USAF instructors required to assist with their development. This section also addresses the acquisition of training aids such as a learning center or simulator.

Devising effective training programs for the support personnel can be even more challenging than determining how to train the pilots. The training plan identifies the sources of initial qualifications for host personnel assigned to each of the work centers. However, determining the number of students to receive resident training in country, in the States and in third countries is only part of the effort. After completing these programs, the partly proficient trainees require OJT, and the write-up on the in-country OJT program is a critical portion of the training plan. Most foreign Air Forces are not organized to support a tightly structured OJT program and must hire outsiders, either US military or contractor personnel, to fill this void. The minimum requirement for these countries is to have an OJT trainer-supervisor in the following areas of responsibility: Airplane General (APG), Avionics, Engine, Supply, Munitions, Aerospace Ground Equipment (AGE), Armaments, and OJT. The OJT advisor is a frequently overlooked, but essential member of the OJT infrastructure. A key part of this section is a schedule showing the phasing-in of host personnel to replace the outsiders.

The local situation determines specific subjects identified in the plan in addition to the English/operations/logistics nucleus. The supplemental narratives may be on a wide range of topics, from the development of an in-country FTD to a scheme to make the Air Academy an accredited, degree granting institution. The possibilities for this section of the plan are limitless.

The final section of the training plan is a milestone chart summarizing the key events described in the narratives in Part 2. It functions as a master schedule by depicting the significant elements of the country's training project along a time line. This model provides management visibility to assist in planning and budgeting the resources required to attain the objectives of the various training programs.

Currently, security assistance training lacks organization, and the preparation of a comprehensive training plan for each country would be a significant improvement. A principal benefit of such a plan is the continuity it would provide the SAOs where short tours are the norm. Without a road map, each newly assigned Training Officer remains in a crisis management mode for most of the tour. The continuity and direction would reduce effort wasted on well-intended programs which never reach fruition because the inspiration and interest die when the original sponsor rotates. The plan also would permit the Air Force and DOD training agencies to manage the training programs more effectively by providing a vehicle for reviewing and evaluating each training activity. Furthermore, the scope of the plan would force training managers at all levels to focus on the total country program with emphasis on the in-country activities, as well as CONUS training.

To develop an effective plan, the SAO Training Officer must obtain the coordination and approval of his counterparts. This situation forces interaction between host and SAO personnel, and participation in the planning-programming activities provides the host personnel valuable management exposure. Finally, the development of a logical, time-phased program would reduce the number of revisions, forfeitures and lost courses caused by operating in the crisis reaction mode.

In concept, the requirement for a training plan is obvious to the point of sounding simplistic, but implementation of the scheme will be difficult. Inertia will pose a formidable obstacle since this requirement has not existed in the past and will cause additional effort. Other barriers include limited SAO manpower and the additional cost of the expanded in-country programs to the customer.

The SAOs are so undermanned that much of each individual's time is spent on administrative duties and embassy tasks, with little time remaining for assisting the host force. Furthermore, officers with limited job experience frequently fill the Air Force Training Officer slots. In most countries the Training Officer is a Captain or Major with an Education and Training background (AFSC 75XX). It is not unusual for an officer who has spent most of his career as an instructor at Air University or the Air Force Academy to receive a Training Officer assignment. The individual has never worked directly with OJT or been close to air operations, and the main preparation for the demanding new assignment is a four-week course at the Defense Institute of Security Assistance Management (DISAM) to familiarize

him with security assistance procedures. A person with this background will require extensive assistance to prepare an effective country training plan. An officer with operations or logistics experience would be a better choice. He has the technical background and can learn the administrative procedures through DISAM and the in-theater training programs. A maintenance officer (AFSC 40XX) who has served as a commander of a Field Training Detachment makes an excellent candidate. This person has been intimately involved with formal training and OJT and can also provide valuable assistance in the logistics areas. This type of expertise is needed to prepare the country training plan.

Selling their counterparts on the total program approach will require a concerted effort from the SAO. Planning is a concept alien to the cultural biases in many of the SATP countries. Convincing the counterparts of the need for and teaching them to prepare accurate planning data will pose major challenges to the SAOs. The requirement for additional funds for the expanded in-country activities will be a source of even greater resistance. During the early stages of a major system sale, the need for in-country support lacks urgency, since the initial equipment delivery is several years in the future. In this context, the high costs of TAFT and contractor personnel make them prime targets for economizing. Members of the host force must be convinced that the implementation of the programs in the training plan requires a costly, long-term effort. The key to success is a change in current thinking which will be effected with difficulty in some cases.

These proposals are modest steps toward improving the quality of the SATP. Each is within the realm of possibility and can be implemented by the Air Force with the cooperation of DSAA, the unified commands, SAOs, and the host military establishments. The major step forward, the preparation of the country training plan will require particularly close cooperation among the training community, staff agencies, and SAOs during the initial development phase. The training community is the source of subject matter experts to assist in designing the training programs. Agencies like the Air Staff Directorate of International Program (PRI), the Foreign Military Training Affairs Group (FMTAG), and the unified commands must assist in administering and managing the programs until they become self-sustaining. The SAOs must recognize the need for improvement and exert the considerable effort required to prepare their plans and keep them current by continual revision. Finally, the SAOs are responsible for infusing their counterparts with the spirit of the effort by emphasizing that they, the customers, will reap the greatest benefit from the change.

REFERENCES

1. Saudi Arabia has extensive contractor training programs in the Kingdom, making it a notable exception to the rule.
2. The Foreign Assistance Act (FAA) of 1961, as amended, Section 515, paragraph (c)(1), lists 12 exceptions.
3. See FAA of 1961, as amended, Section 515, paragraphs (a) and (b).

4. A Language Training Detachment consists of permanently assigned linguists, supervisors and language lab technicians from the Defense Language Institute.

Lt Col David L. Hawley is Commander, Foreign Military Training Affairs Group (FMTAG) Operating Location A (OL A), Washington DC. His security assistance assignments include: Training Advisor, MACV, Dalat, Republic of Viet Nam (1971-72); training instructor for the Military Assistance Advisory Course and Foreign Training Officer, USAF Special Operations School, Hurlburt Field, FL (1972-75); Branch Chief, Implementation Division, FMTAG, Randolph AFB, TX (1975-79); and Training Advisor, Yemen Arab Republic Air Force, Sanaa (1980-81). Colonel Hawley was a student in Arabic and Middle East Area Studies at the Foreign Service Institute, 1979-80, and has completed Squadron Officer School and the Air Command and Staff College. He holds two degrees in English Literature -- a Bachelor of Arts degree from Colgate University (1963) and a Master of Arts degree from the University of Rochester (1966).