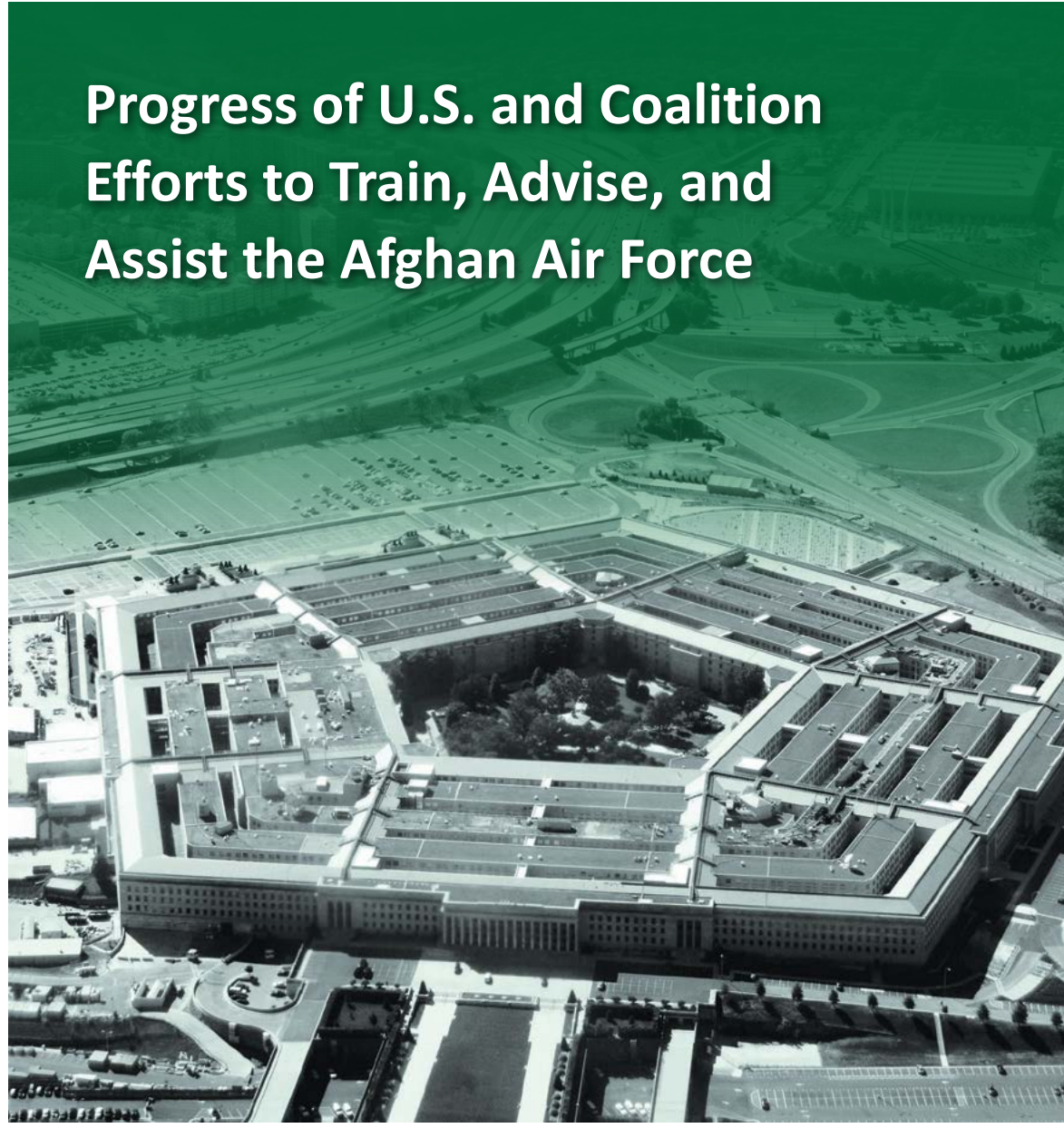


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INSPECTOR GENERAL

U.S. Department of Defense

JANUARY 4, 2018



Progress of U.S. and Coalition Efforts to Train, Advise, and Assist the Afghan Air Force

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Results in Brief

Progress of U.S. and Coalition Efforts to Train, Advise, and Assist the Afghan Air Force

January 4, 2018

Objective

We evaluated U.S. and Coalition progress towards accomplishing the Train, Advise, Assist Command-Air (TAAC-Air) mission to develop the Afghan Air Force into a professional, capable, and sustainable force.

Findings

TAAC-Air's efforts to train, advise, and assist the Afghan Air Force have resulted in notable accomplishments in three broad areas: A-29 aircraft mission performance, night vision capability, and air-ground integration between the Afghan Air Force and Afghan National Army.

However, TAAC-Air does not have a plan defining the terms of its mission statement to develop the Afghan Air Force into a "professional, capable, and sustainable" force. TAAC-Air cannot track the Afghan Air Force's progress because they have not defined the intended end state and related metrics for determining the capabilities and capacities of the Afghan Air Force.

Furthermore, TAAC-Air did not fully integrate its planning with NAC-A's defined end state or Resolute Support campaign plans. Continued train, advise, and assist efforts without a plan integrated with Resolute Support campaign plans could result in the inefficient and ineffective use of U.S. and Coalition advisor train, advise, and assist efforts.

The Coalition administers Contractor Logistic Support agreements for Afghan Air Force aircraft. These contracts limit

Findings (cont'd)

the progression and transfer of maintenance responsibilities to Afghan Air Force maintainers. Although it is one of NATO's goals for the Afghan Air Force, these contracts do not contain either a plan or a timeline to transition maintenance operations to the Afghans. Additionally, neither Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan, NATO Air Command-Afghanistan, nor TAAC-Air has identified the long-term maintenance and logistics workload distribution between the contractors and the Afghan Air Force. The design of the existing contracts reduces the maintenance training opportunities for Afghan Air Force mechanics and delays the Afghan Air Force from establishing their own maintenance capability.

In addition, Afghan Air Force mission support and aircraft maintenance personnel do not receive standardized or consistent training from the Afghan National Army schools. Furthermore, the Afghan Air Force did not leverage the training opportunities that did exist at Afghan National Army functional schools. Additionally, the Coalition has not helped the Afghan Air Force develop the institutional training capability to augment existing Afghan National Army training by incorporating Air Force-specific requirements. The lack of standardized and consistent training limits the development of the Afghan Air Force into a professional, capable, and sustainable Air Force.

Afghan National Army corps commanders exceeded programmed monthly flying hours for Mi-17 helicopters. This happened because Afghan Ministry of Defense and General Staff policy allows Afghan National Army corps commanders to use Mi-17s in direct support of ground forces. This policy let the commanders directly task assigned helicopters without properly regarding the aircraft's condition and available flying hours. Operating aircraft beyond scheduled flying hours, and without the required supporting maintenance and inspections, will accelerate the Mi-17 fleet's deterioration and reduce available aircraft for operational use. Coalition advisors identified this problem and, in coordination with their Afghan counterparts, proposed a solution.



Results in Brief

Progress of U.S. and Coalition Efforts to Train, Advise, and Assist the Afghan Air Force

Findings (cont'd)

U.S. air advisors received training on general advising skills and cultural aspects needed for a generic train, advise, and assist mission. However, they were not fully prepared to perform their Afghan Air Force specific advising mission upon arriving in country. Air advisors did not receive training on the Afghan Air Force and its relationship to the Afghan National Army, nor did the advisors receive training about the Afghan military staffing processes and terminology peculiar to Afghanistan. As a consequence, assigned personnel are less effective and less efficient as advisors until they acquire the requisite knowledge and develop the skills necessary for their mission in Afghanistan.

Recommendations

We recommend that the Commander of Train, Advise, Assist Command-Air:

- Complete and formalize (publish) its strategic plan that includes a set goals and metrics to measure the development of the Afghan Air Force's capabilities and capacities. (Recommendation B.1)
- Coordinate with the Commander of NATO Air Command-Afghanistan, to ensure that the Train, Advise, and Assist Command-Air plan, and its supporting lines of effort, meet the requirements listed in the Headquarters Resolute Support campaign plans. (Recommendation B.2)
- Coordinate with Combined Security Transition Assistance Command-Afghanistan to modify aircraft Contractor Logistics Support agreements to put more emphasis on building the Afghan aircraft maintenance capability, increasing the Afghan responsibility for daily aircraft maintenance, and identifying the transition criteria for Afghan-led maintenance within the Afghan Air Force. (Recommendation C)

We recommend that Commander of Resolute Support:

- Coordinate with the Afghan Ministry Of Defense and General Staff to identify and create the follow-on institutional aviation-specific and mission support training capability necessary to support future Afghan Air Force training requirements. (Recommendation D.1)
- ~~(FOUO)~~ Closely monitor the implementation of the recently signed Afghan directive, [REDACTED] and provide additional advice and assistance to the Afghan Ministry of Defense as required. (Recommendation E)

We recommend that the Commander of Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan compare potential in-country training costs to the current out-of-country approach to ascertain potential savings or benefits. (Recommendation D.2)

We recommend that the Commander of NATO Air Command-Afghanistan provide relevant and Afghan Air Force-specific training and information to incoming advisors. (Recommendation F.1)

We recommend that the Air Education and Training Command, Lead Major Command for General Purpose Forces Air Advisor Education and Training oversight, policy, and guidance, periodically assess the school's training curriculum and incorporate graduate feedback into the training syllabus to support the Train, Advise, and Assist Command-Air mission. (Recommendation F.2)

Management Comments

The Chief of Staff, 9th Air Expeditionary Task Force-Afghanistan, responding for the Commander, NATO Air Command-Afghanistan and the Commander, TAAC-Air,



Results in Brief

Progress of U.S. and Coalition Efforts to Train, Advise, and Assist the Afghan Air Force

Management Comments (cont'd)

agreed with four of our findings and recommendations. Specifically:

- In response to Recommendation B.1, he stated that TAAC-Air agrees and has plans that include lines of effort and a set of metrics that measure the development of the Afghan Air Force's capabilities and capacities.
- In response to Recommendation B.2, he stated TAAC-Air agrees and ensures its lines of effort support Headquarters Resolute Support campaign plans. He added that this coordination occurs on a weekly, and often daily basis, when needed.
- In response to Recommendation C, he stated that TAAC-Air agrees to identify requirements and modify aircraft Contractor Logistics Support contracts as appropriate to increase emphasis on building the Afghan Air Force maintenance capability. Furthermore, he stated that TAAC-Air is working with Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan to identify transition criteria for Afghan-led maintenance and necessary contract modifications.
- In response to Recommendation F.1, he stated NATO Air Command-Afghanistan already provides the recommended relevant Afghan-specific information to incoming advisors during pre-deployment training and during the newly established 'in-country Key Leader Training.'

Recommendations B.1, B.2, C, and F.1 are resolved, but will remain open. We will close these recommendations when the following actions are completed:

- Recommendation B.1 - when we receive an approved copy of TAAC-Air's plan and its associated lines of effort.
- Recommendation B.2 - when we receive evidence showing that TAAC-Air's lines of effort support Resolute Support plans.

- Recommendation C - when we receive documentation of the approved transition criteria for Afghan-led maintenance and a list of the identified contract modifications to be implemented.
- Recommendation F.1 - when we receive evidence showing that all incoming air advisors are receiving the Afghan specific information necessary to accomplish their mission. Particularly, we request evidence showing air advisors are receiving information on the structure of the Afghan Air Force, staffing processes within the Afghan Air Force, and the administrative processes associated with the Afghan Ministry of Defense Form 14. This evidence can be in the form of email distribution lists, attendance rosters, or advisor acknowledgement of training.

Because the Chief of Staff, 9th Air Expeditionary Task Force-Afghanistan, stated that they have already completed actions for Recommendations B.1, B.2, and F.1, we request receipt of the identified documentation or evidence by February 4, 2018.

The Audits Director, United States Forces-Afghanistan, answering on behalf of the Commander of Resolute Support, agreed with two of our recommendations. Specifically:

- In response to Recommendation D.1, she stated that Headquarters Resolute Support agrees with the recommendation to coordinate with the Afghan Ministry of Defense and General Staff to identify and create the follow-on institutional, aviation-specific, and mission-support training capability necessary to support future requirements of the Afghan Air Force.



Results in Brief

Progress of U.S. and Coalition Efforts to Train, Advise, and Assist the Afghan Air Force

Management Comments (cont'd)

- (FOUO) In response to Recommendation E, she stated that Headquarters, Resolute Support agreed to monitor the implementation of the Afghan directive, [REDACTED] and provide additional advice and assistance to the Afghan Minister of Defense as required.

Comments from the Audit Director, responding for Resolute Support, address all specifics of these recommendations; therefore, these recommendations are resolved, but will remain open. We will close Recommendations D.1 and E once we verify Resolute Support has implemented the planned corrective actions.

The Deputy Chief of Staff for Security Assistance, Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan agreed with our finding, but proposed a revised recommendation. Specifically:

- In response to Recommendation D.2, he stated that Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan does possess the capability to compare training costs as recommended. However, in order for Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan to conduct this comparative analysis, TAAC-Air, as the requirements owner, must provide the appropriate level of detail necessary to support the cost analysis. He proposed reassigning Recommendation D.2 to TAAC-Air instead of to Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan.

We concur with his proposal and, as a result, are introducing a revised recommendation D.2 directed to the Commander, TAAC-Air and renumbering the draft Recommendation D.2 to Recommendation D.3.

The revised Recommendation D.2 is: We recommend that the Commander, Train, Advise, Assist Command-Air provide Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan detailed training requirements to support a comparison of in-country to out-of-country costs and benefits.

Recommendation D.2 is unresolved and will remain open. We request that the Chief of Staff, 9th Air Expeditionary Task Force-Afghanistan, address this revised Recommendation D.2 and provide details about the actions planned or actions taken to resolve this recommendation by February 4, 2018.

Recommendation D.3 is unresolved and will remain open. We request that the Deputy Chief of Staff for Security Assistance, Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan, provide details about actions planned or actions taken to resolve Recommendation D.3 by February 4, 2018.

The Chief, Special Missions Division, U.S. Air Force Air Education and Training Command agreed with Recommendation F.2. Specifically, he stated the U.S. Air Force Air Expeditionary Operations School will:

- update the Air Education and Training Command curriculum taught at the Air Advisor course;
- update Air Force Tactics, Technique, and Procedures publication AFTTP 3-4.5, "Air Advising"; and
- collect air advisor observations, best practices, and lessons learned from air advisors operating in Afghanistan.

Comments from Air Education and Training Command addressed all specifics of the recommendation. The recommendation is resolved, but will remain open. We will close Recommendation F.2 once we verify the actions described in the response are completed.

Recommendations Table

Management	Recommendations Unresolved	Recommendations Resolved	Recommendations Closed
Commander, Resolute Support	None	D.1, E	
Commander, NATO Air Command	None	F.1	
Commander, Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan	D.3	None	
Commander, Train, Advise, Assist, Command-Air	D.2	B.1, B.2, C	
Air Education and Training Command	None	F.2	

Please provide Management Comments by February 4, 2018.

Note: The following categories are used to describe agency management’s comments to individual recommendations.

- **Unresolved** – Management has not agreed to implement the recommendation or has not proposed actions that will address the recommendation.
- **Resolved** – Management agreed to implement the recommendation or has proposed actions that will address the underlying finding that generated the recommendation.
- **Closed** – OIG verified that the agreed upon corrective actions were implemented.





**INSPECTOR GENERAL
DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
4800 MARK CENTER DRIVE
ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA 22350-1500**

January 4, 2018

MEMORANDUM FOR COMMANDER, RESOLUTE SUPPORT
COMMANDER, COMBINED SECURITY TRANSITION
COMMAND-AFGHANISTAN
COMMANDER, NATO AIR COMMAND-AFGHANISTAN
COMMANDER, TRAIN, ADVISE, ASSIST COMMAND-AIR
COMMANDER, U.S. AIR FORCE AIR EDUCATION AND
TRAINING COMMAND

SUBJECT: Progress of U.S. and Coalition Efforts to Train, Advise, and Assist the Afghan Air Force (Report No. DODIG-2018-058)

We are providing this report for action and comment, as requested below. The report relates to operation Resolute Support.

We conducted this evaluation from March to August 2017 in accordance with the "Quality Standards for Inspections and Evaluations," published by the Council of Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency in January 2012.

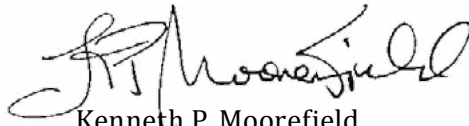
We considered management comments in response to a draft of this report when preparing the final report. DoD Instruction 7650.03 requires that all recommendations be resolved promptly. Comments on Recommendations B.1, B.2, C, and F.1 from the Chief of Staff, 9th Air Expeditionary Task Force-Afghanistan, were responsive. However, we will keep these recommendations open until we receive the requested supporting evidence that demonstrates completion of the recommendation actions. We request documentary evidence of completed actions for Recommendations, B.1, B.2, and F.1 no later than February 4, 2018.

As a result of management comments from Commander, Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan, we developed and directed a revised Recommendation D.2 to the Commander Train, Advise, Assist Command-Air. This revised recommendation clarified our intent that the Train, Advise, Assist Command-Air provide detailed training requirements for the Afghan Air Force to the Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan for a cost and benefit analysis comparison. Furthermore, we renumbered the existing Recommendation D.2 to Recommendation D.3, and assigned this recommendation to Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan.

Recommendations D.2 and D.3 are unresolved. We request management comments on Recommendations D.2, and D.3 no later than February 4, 2018.

Please send a PDF file containing your comments to SPO@dodig.mil. Copies of your comments must have the actual signature of the authorizing official for your organization. We cannot accept the /Signed/ symbol in place of the actual signature. If you arrange to send classified comments electronically, you must send them over the SECRET Internet Protocol Router Network (SIPRNET).

We appreciate the courtesies extended to the staff. Please direct questions to [REDACTED]



Kenneth P. Moorefield
Deputy Inspector General
Special Plans and Operations

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Introduction

This report is the latest in an ongoing series of DoD Office of Inspector General (OIG) evaluations concerning U.S. and Coalition support to the Afghan National Defense and Security Force (ANDSF) as a part of NATO's Resolute Support mission. This particular evaluation examines Train, Advise, Assist Command-Air's (TAAC-Air) progress towards developing the Afghan Air Force.

Objective

This project evaluated U.S. and Coalition progress towards, and accomplishment of, TAAC-Air's mission to develop the Afghan Air Force into a professional, capable, and sustainable force.

Background

Afghan Air Force

The Afghan Air Force is a subordinate entity of the Afghan National Army within the larger ANDSF. The Afghan Air Force organizes and stations its aircraft in three primary locations: Kabul, Kandahar, and Shindand, Afghanistan. In addition to these full-time locations, the Afghan Air Force also conducts seasonal operations out of several other remote locations within the country.

As of July 2017, the Afghan Air Force inventory was a mix of U.S. and non-U.S. rotary-wing (helicopters) and fixed-wing airplanes. The inventory included:

- A-29 light attack airplanes,
- C-130 medium lift cargo airplanes
- C-208 light transport airplanes,
- MD-530 light attack helicopter, and
- Mi-17 transport helicopters.¹

Appendix C lists the general specifications and capabilities of these aircraft.

Resolute Support

NATO ended its combat operations under the International Security Assistance Force on December 31, 2014, and began a purely train, advise, and assist mission under Resolute Support on January 1, 2015. During 2014 and the ending of the International Security Force Assistance mission, the United States and other

¹ In addition to these aircraft, the Afghan Air Force owns Mi-35 and Cheetah helicopters, donated by India. None of the Coalition countries (including the United States) provide the Afghan Air Force with training, advising, or assistance with the operation or maintenance on either of these aircraft; therefore, we did not include them in our evaluation.

contributing nations decreased their military force strength and consolidated into strategic locations and bases identified in the Status of Forces Agreement and Resolute Support plan.

With the transition from NATO's International Security Assistance Force mission to its Resolute Support mission, NATO reorganized its subordinate Regional Commands and renamed them as Train, Advise, Assist Commands or TAACs. The Resolute Support structure includes five geographically oriented TAACs (North, South, East, West, and Central). These geographically oriented TAACs advise and support identified Afghan National Army units.

Similar to the re-designation and renaming of its Regional Commands, NATO designated the Commander, U.S. 9th Air Expeditionary Task Force-Afghanistan as the Commander, NATO Air Command-Afghanistan (NAC-A) for Resolute Support. As both the senior U.S. and Coalition aviation commander in Afghanistan, this commander has several roles and responsibilities. Specific to our evaluation, NATO assigned the aviation train, advise, and assist mission to the Commander, U.S. 9th Air Expeditionary Task Force-Afghanistan in his NATO role as Commander, NAC-A. NAC-A subsequently delegated this mission and designated the Commander, U.S. Air Force 438th Air Expeditionary Wing as the Commander for TAAC-Air. As a TAAC with functional responsibilities vice geographic responsibilities, TAAC-Air's aviation train, advise, and assist activities cover all of Afghanistan.

Before transitioning to Resolute Support, the Commander, 438th Air Expeditionary Wing, served in a dual role as the Commander, NATO Air Training Command - Afghanistan. While, the transition from the International Security Assistance Mission to Resolute Support changed NATO's designation for the 438th Air Expeditionary Wing, the 438th's primary mission to train, advise, and assist the Afghan Air Force remained unchanged.

Train Advise Assist Command – Air

~~(FOUO)~~ The United States is 1 of 13 nations that contribute personnel and resources to TAAC-Air. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] TAAC-Air assigns advisors at the Kabul and Kandahar airfields, co-located with two of the three Afghan Air Force Wings.

The headquarters of the third Afghan Air Force Wing is at the airfield in Shindand. However, based on security concerns and force size limitations, neither the United States nor its Coalition partners maintain a permanent presence in Shindand. TAAC-Air supports Shindand and other remote airfields with Expeditionary Advisor

Packages. An Expeditionary Advisor Package is a scalable unit that deploys to a remote site and provides advising services for a limited duration, typically one to several days. TAAC-Air adjusts the size, composition, and duration of these Expeditionary Advisor Packages to meet the needs of the supported Afghan Air Force unit.

Contractor Logistics Support

The Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan develops and manages the Coalition-funded Contractor Logistics Support, which assists with the operations and development of the Afghan Air Force. These contracts require the contractors to maintain Afghan aircraft at a pre-determined level of readiness to have a specific number of aircraft available every day. However, these contracts also require the contractor to develop the skill and capacity of the Afghan aircraft mechanics, which will eventually enable the contractor to transition aircraft-maintenance responsibilities to the Afghan Air Force.

The Afghanistan Director in the U.S. Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy acknowledged that Contracted Logistics Support is part of the long-term strategy for developing and maintaining the Afghan Air Force. This strategy is similar to how the U.S. Army and U.S. Air Force use Contracted Logistics Support to maintain their aircraft's readiness.



Finding A

TAAC-Air is Expanding the Afghan Air Force's Mission Capabilities

The U.S. and Coalition train, advise, assist efforts, led by TAAC-Air, are producing trained and qualified pilots and airmen for the Afghan Air Force.

TAAC-Air, in coordination with the Afghan Air Force leadership, has identified priority capabilities, designed programs to achieve these capabilities, and jointly implemented these programs to achieve the desired capabilities within a realistic timeframe.

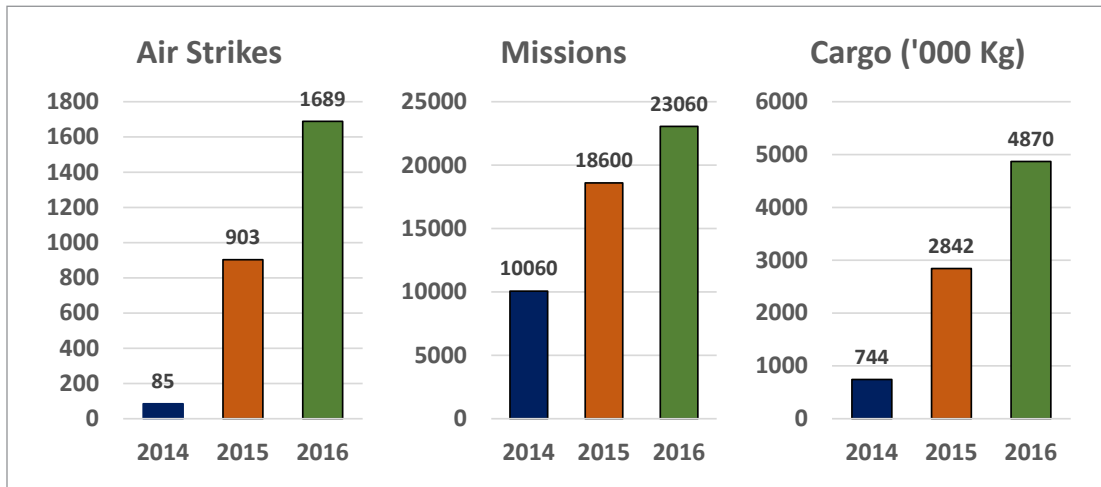
As a result, the Afghan Air Force continues to expand its capabilities and mission sets in support of the Afghan National Army corps. Both U.S. advisors and Afghan National Army leaders have expressed growing confidence in the Afghan Air Force, which results in the Afghan National Army requesting more Afghan Air Force support.

Discussion

Because of NAC-A and TAAC-Air's efforts, the Afghan Air Force shows improvement in three broad areas: A-29 introduction, night vision capability, and air-ground integration between the Afghan Air Force and Afghan National Army.

Table 1 shows the increased operational tempo of the Afghan Air Force across several mission sets from 2014 through 2016. According to TAAC-Air data, in 2016 the Afghan Air Force flew 1689 attack or strike missions compared to 903 missions in 2015. Additionally, even though the Afghan Air Force had 15 fewer Mi-17 helicopters available in 2016, the Afghan Air Force Mi-17s moved one and half times the amount of cargo in 2016 than in 2015.

Table 1. Afghan Air Force Mission Performance 2014 – 2016



Cargo ('000 of KG) – the weight of cargo moved in thousands of kilograms.

Source: TAAC-Air.

Afghan A-29 Mission Performance

Impact of Combat Missions

The first Afghan Air Force A-29 flew its first combat mission on April 14, 2016, giving the ANDSF an air-to-ground capability that had been missing since Coalition forces ceased combat operations. According to Afghan records, as of December 31, 2016, Afghan A-29 pilots flew 1,043 missions, attacking identified targets 138 times with bombs, rockets, or guns. TAAC-Air provided our team similar data, reflecting 141 missions that delivered ordnance instead of the 138 that the Afghans reported.

U.S. advisors to the Afghan National Army 215th Corps noted the positive impact the A-29 had on combat operations. In March 2017, the U.S. Brigadier General advising the 215th Corps Commander stated he had seen a tenfold increase in A-29 support to his advised Corps over the past 3 months compared to the previous 3 months.

With regard to the performance of the A-29 pilots, the Deputy Commander for TAAC-South called them “a glimmer of hope to Afghan Air Force and the Afghan National Army. When they show up overhead, the Afghan National Army have the confidence to continue attacking on ground. The A-29 crews do a great job of putting effects on targets.”² A U.S. Intelligence advisor to the Afghan National Army 215th Corps supported this observation, saying that the A-29s produce good results when they engage their targets.

² TAAC-South, headquartered in Kandahar, partners with the Afghan National Army 205st Corps.

Civilian Casualty Avoidance



The Chief of Staff for Resolute Support stated he was aware of instances when the Afghan Air Force A-29 pilots used discretion and decided against attacking certain targets due to the risk of civilian casualties. He attributed this conformance with the rules of engagement to training and the professionalism of the Afghan pilots. He further stated that the Afghan pilots deserve much credit since their decision-making and disciplined approach avoided potential civilian casualties.

In a separate interview, the Director of Operations for Resolute Support echoed the Chief of Staff's comments, adding that the Afghan A-29 pilots would likely not receive credit for this good-news story. Similarly, the Deputy Commander of TAAC-South also mentioned instances of A-29 pilots exercising judgment by not attacking potential targets in order to avoid civilian casualties.

Finally, the Commanding General of NAC-A provided our evaluation team with Afghan Air Force data compiled from April 14 through December 31, 2016, showing that Afghan A-29 pilots aborted 18 percent of their attacks against identified targets due to concerns about civilian casualties, fratricide, or target identification.

Night Vision Capability

~~(FOUO)~~ TAAC-Air and the Afghan Air Force developed and executed a "Winter Training Plan" between October 2016 and April 2017. One goal of this plan was to create or increase night vision capability within three of the Afghan Air Force's five pilot and aircrew communities. Results of this training from April 15, 2017, show that TAAC-Air achieved a majority of the plan's goals and increased the Afghan Air Force's ability to conduct helicopter and airplane operations at night.


 This effort reduced a capability gap that multiple senior U.S. advisors and officers within the Afghan National Army Corps staff identified.

Air-Ground Integration

Aerial Resupply

The Director of Operations for Resolute Support identified the Afghan Air Force's ability to resupply Afghan National Army Corps units as continuing to improve. During 2016 the Afghan National Army, especially the 209th Corps elements in Kunduz Province and the 205th Corps elements in Kandahar Province, depended on Coalition support for resupply due to Afghan Air Force deficiencies. However, as of March 2017, with the Afghan Air Force's increased capability, the Afghan Air Force was resupplying these Afghan National Army units using its Mi-17 helicopters and C-130 transport aircraft.

The Afghan Air Liaison Officer to the Afghan National Army 215th Corps and his U.S. advisor both supported the Director of Operations' observation on the Afghan Air Force's increased support to the Afghan National Army. The Air Liaison Officer gave the evaluation team scheduling documents for February 2017 that showed almost daily resupply missions to multiple locations. The Air Liaison Officer estimated that, while supplying three locations for 20 consecutive nights, the Afghan Air Force moved about 3,300 pounds of food, water, and ammunition daily using Mi-17 helicopters. He further estimated that Afghan Air Force Mi-17s tasked to the 215th Corps moved almost 41,800 pounds of supplies over a 2-month period. Although they did not have historical records to support it, both the U.S. advisor and the Afghan National Army officer stated that this indicated an increased capability within the Afghan Air Force.

In March 2017, TAAC-Air was helping the Afghan Air Force develop an airdrop capability using the C-208 aircraft. The Afghan Air Force plans to use expendable parachutes to resupply small Afghan National Army units in areas where ground resupply is impossible. The evaluation team observed a successful demonstration of this capability from an Afghan-piloted C-208. In addition to enhanced resupply capability, TAAC-Air believes this airdrop capability will also provide relief to the over-used Mi-17 helicopter fleet.

Target Package Development and Engagement

Senior Afghan and Coalition leaders remarked on the improved coordination and collaboration between the Afghan Air Force, the Afghan National Army, and the Afghan Ministry of Defense on the targeting development and execution processes now in place.

The Afghan Air Force Air Operations Officer assigned to the Afghan General Staff explained an integrated process in which he and his staff receive, develop, and assign prioritized targets for the Afghan Air Force. The two primary sources for these target requests are either national or regional. National sources include the Ministry of Defense or one of the other Ministries. Regional sources include tasking generated in support of the Afghan National Army Corps.

The responsibilities of the Air Operations Officer include receiving proposed targets, clarifying target requests, refining target intelligence requirements in the form of "requests for information," and assigning priorities to the Afghan Air Force for approved targets.

The Afghan National Army is using Scan Eagle, an unmanned aerial system, to locate and identify potential targets.³ Once they have identified a target, the Afghan National Army develops a target package and submits it to the Afghan General Staff for approval. Following approval, the Afghan Air Force receives the target package and coordinates directly with the specific Afghan Army unit they are supporting before attacking the target. This coordination occurs either telephonically between the A-29 pilots and the Scan Eagle operator or face-to-face between MD-530 pilots and the Scan Eagle operator before mission departure.

The Afghan National Army 215th Corps Intelligence Deputy attributed the increased number of successful A-29 strikes to a new target package development process and direct coordination with pilots, but did not have data to support this claim. The TAAC-South Deputy Commander expressed a similar observation. He stated that when the Afghan National Army operates the Scan Eagle, the target-development process and direct coordination with the pilots has greatly increased the situational awareness and effectiveness of the A-29's and MD-530's delivery of fires.

Afghan Tactical Air Coordinators

(FOUO) In its December 2016 report to the U.S. Congress, the DoD said that developing a cadre of Afghan Tactical Air Coordinators (ATACs) is an important aspect of ensuring that the ANDSF uses its Air Force's growing capabilities to support ground forces.⁴ [REDACTED]

According to the TAAC-South Deputy Commander, TAAC-South saw a dramatic improvement in the effects of strikes that the Afghan Air Force conducted since the Coalition began emphasizing the use of ATACs, although TAAC-South did not have records of ATAC performance prior to October 2016. Additionally, the TAAC-South Air Advisor to the Afghan National Army's 205th Corps stated that ATACs are good at identifying target sets and very considerate of civilian casualties.

³ (FOUO) [REDACTED]

⁴ "Enhancing Security and Stability in Afghanistan," p. 60.

The most recent DoD report to Congress on Enhancing Security and Stability in Afghanistan stated, “(t)he AAF’s [Afghan Air Force] integration of A-29s and MD-530s has surpassed expectations with the capability to conduct deliberate airstrikes, and further integration with ATACs will build upon the air-ground integration and close air attack capabilities of the ANA [Afghan National Army].”

Finding B

Terms of TAAC-Air’s Mission Statement Are Not Defined

TAAC-Air could not measure the Afghan Air Force’s progress towards a defined end-state specifying the intended set of Afghan Air Force capabilities.

TAAC-Air lacks a plan defining the terms of its mission statement – “professional, capable, and sustainable” – and does not have associated metrics, to measure progressive development of the Afghan Air Force’s capabilities and capacities. Furthermore, TAAC-Air did not fully integrate its planning with NAC-A’s defined end states or Resolute Support’s campaign plans.

This lack of integration can result in inefficient and potentially ineffective use of U.S. and Coalition resources as incoming advisors perform train, advise, and assist activities that may not align with either TAAC-Air’s or NAC-A’s envisioned end state. Without focused development, the Afghan Air Force may lack the desired skills, capabilities, or capacities necessary to support ANDSF operations, which would prevent the United States and the Coalition from transferring important functions to Afghan control.

Discussion

Upon his arrival to TAAC-Air in June 2016, the Commanding General recognized that his command did not have an approved plan for how to develop the Afghan Air Force. In response, he directed the TAAC-Air plans officer to draft a plan. The current plan operates along four lines of effort, establishes TACC-Air’s strategic direction, and identifies the Afghan Air Force’s end-state capability at four levels of operations and staff:

(FOUO) [REDACTED]

(FOUO) [REDACTED]

(FOUO) [REDACTED]

(FOUO) [REDACTED]

The Commander of TAAC-Air stated his mission is to “...train, advise, and assist our Afghan partners to develop a professional, capable, and sustainable Afghan Air Force.”⁵ He further stated that the “... lines of effort will drive the Afghan Air Force to become professional, capable, and sustainable.”

TAAC-Air’s draft plan identifies the goal to develop a professional, capable, and sustainable Afghan Air Force, but the plan does not define these terms. The draft that TAAC-Air briefed was still largely conceptual, not a comprehensive, written document. As of March 2017, the TAAC-Air plans officer stated that they were still developing the scope for Lines of Effort 3 and 4. Additionally, the draft did not identify tasks needed to achieve, contain metrics to measure the progress of, or describe the frequency for review of each line of effort.

We asked multiple advisors to define “...a professional, capable, and sustainable Afghan Air Force...” Some advisors provided their own definition of these terms while others were unable to provide any definition. In those instances where an advisor provided a definition, the envisioned mission end state was different between advisors. Differences in the advisors’ responses revealed that TAAC-Air advisors do not share a consistent definition of the mission statement, nor a common way to achieve the mission end-state. Finally, we asked the Commander of the 738th Air Expeditionary Advisor Group, a subordinate commander under TAAC-Air, if he was aware of the lines of effort. He replied that he had heard about them, but had not seen them.

The absence of a formal plan led to TAAC-Air personnel having an inconsistent understanding of the organization’s own mission, thereby allowing air advisors to perform potentially disparate train, advise, and assist activities. This inconsistency was compounded as advisors rotated out because TAAC-Air could not ensure incoming advisors performed train, advise, and assist activities that aligned with its envisioned end state.

⁵ <http://www.rs.nato.int/subordinate-commands/TAAC-Air/index.php>.

Conversely, a NAC-A senior advisor stated that growing the Afghan Air Force is 1 of the 12 lines of effort in NAC-A's advising plan. Furthermore, "NAC-A's Air Estimate," listed desired end states for national and strategic objectives of the Afghan Air Force train, advise, and assist effort for each airframe. TAAC-Air end states for Lines of Effort 1 and 2 are similar to those in the NAC-A document. Additionally, the "NAC-A's Air Estimate" describes associated capacities and metrics to measure the achievement of each program's end state. However, as previously stated, TAAC-Air's draft lines of effort do not include desired capacities or associated metrics.

None of TAAC-Air's staff mentioned or referenced their higher headquarters guidance, the "NAC-A Air Estimate," during the course of our fieldwork. Neither the TAAC-Air plans officer nor the TAAC-Air assessments officer indicated they had been coordinating with NAC-A or using the "NAC-A Air Estimate" to align the TAAC-Air lines of effort with NAC-A's desired end states.

When asked about whether TAAC-Air coordinated with Resolute Support planners, the TAAC-Air plans officer replied that a loose connection existed between TAAC-Air's plan and the Resolute Support campaign plans. He stated that the Resolute Support staff only provided Fragmentary Orders and direction with no direct link to the Afghan Air Force train, advise, and assist mission. However, the plans officer reported that TAAC-Air had been striving to synchronize its train, advise, and assist efforts with Resolute Support staff through TAAC-Air's Tactical Air Operational Cell. Lastly, the TAAC-Air planner stated he had not discussed the draft plan with Afghan Air Force representatives.

Conclusion

Because TAAC-Air has not defined a professional, capable, and sustainable Afghan Air Force in its strategic plan, air advisors interpret the mission statement on their own. This detracts from developing the Afghan Air Force because air advisors perform train, advise, and assist activities that may not work in concert to achieve the desired end state.

The TAAC-Air strategic plan remains in draft form and lacks coordination with the "NAC-A Air Estimate." This prevents assurance that TAAC-Air's lines of effort align with the NAC-A Commander's desired end states for the Afghan Air Force train, advise, and assist effort. Finally, TAAC-Air did not synchronize its draft plan with the Resolute Support campaign-level plans.

Recommendations, Management Comments, and Our Response

Recommendation B.1

We recommend that the Commander of Train, Advise, Assist Command-Air complete and formalize (publish) a strategic plan that includes:

- a. **Associated lines of effort.**
- b. **A set of metrics to measure the development of the Afghan Air Force's capabilities and capacities.**

9th Air Expeditionary Task Force-Afghanistan

The Chief of Staff, 9th Air Expeditionary Task Force-Afghanistan, answering on behalf of TAAC-Air, agreed with the recommendation. He stated that TAAC-Air already maintains plans that include associated lines of effort, and a set of metrics that measure the development of the Afghan Air Force's capability.

Our Response

Comments from management addressed all specifics of the recommendation; therefore, the recommendation is resolved, but will remain open. We will close Recommendation B.1 once we verify that TAAC-Air has completed the planned corrective actions. Specifically, by February 4, 2018, we request a copy of TAAC-Air's approved plan(s) that include lines of effort, and the associated metrics used to measure the development of the Afghan Air Force.

Recommendation B.2

We recommend that the Commander of Train, Advise, Assist Command-Air coordinate with the Commander of NATO Air Command-Afghanistan to ensure that the Train, Advise, and Assist Command-Air plan and its supporting lines-of-effort meet Headquarters Resolute Support requirements listed in the Headquarters Resolute Support campaign plans.

9th Air Expeditionary Task Force-Afghanistan

The Chief of Staff, 9th Air Expeditionary Task Force-Afghanistan, answering on behalf of TAAC-Air, agreed with the recommendation. He stated that TAAC-Air coordinates with NATO Air Command-Afghanistan on a weekly, almost daily, basis when needed to ensure lines of effort meet Headquarters Resolute Support campaign plans.

Our Response

Comments from management addressed all specifics of the recommendation; therefore, the recommendation is resolved, but will remain open. We will close Recommendation B.2 once we verify that TAAC-Air has completed the planned corrective actions. Specifically, by February 4, 2018, we request documentation of Train, Advise, Assist Command-Air's coordination with NATO Air Command-Afghanistan regarding the alignment and linkage of Train, Advise, Assist Command-Air's lines of effort with Resolute Support planning efforts. This documentation may be in the form of official correspondence, meeting minutes, or approved decisions that clearly show the relationship between TAAC-Air's efforts and Resolute Supports goals.



Finding C

Contractor Logistics Support De-emphasizes Afghan Maintenance Training

Contractor Logistic Support (CLS) agreements for Afghan Air Force aircraft, which the Coalition administers, limit the progressive transfer of maintenance responsibilities to Afghan Air Force maintainers.

These CLS contracts do not contain plans with associated timelines to transition maintenance operations to the Afghans. Additionally, neither Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan, nor NAC-A, nor TAAC-Air have identified the long-term maintenance needs and logistics workload distribution between the contract vendor and the Afghan Air Force.

The existing contracts reduce Afghan Air Force maintenance training opportunities and delay the Afghan Air Force from establishing their own maintenance capability. The current CLS contracts prolong Afghan dependence on CLS, and delay the transfer of aircraft-related maintenance responsibility to Afghan Air Force personnel.

Discussion

As part of the transition from NATO's International Security Assistance Force mission to its Resolute Support mission, the Coalition limited combat sorties and general aviation support to the ANDSF to special circumstances. This change in mission forced ANDSF units to rely on Afghan Air Force assets. However, Afghan Air Force support functions, such as maintenance and logistics, could not sustain air operations in support of Afghan-led operations. To fill these gaps, TAAC-Air in coordination with the U.S. Army and U.S. Air Force program offices, established contracts that generated necessary operating capability within the Afghan Air Force while the Afghan Air Force continued to develop.

When initiating these contracts, aviation support focused on the immediate need to support ongoing Afghan National Army operations. As a result, contracts prioritized providing mission-ready aircraft over training Afghan aircraft mechanics. During a briefing in March 2017, the TAAC-Air Chief of Staff stated that, although aircraft maintenance efforts produced combat-capable airframes,

CLS contractors performed 80 percent of the maintenance work, while Afghan mechanics contributed the remaining 20 percent. This distribution was the inverse of TAAC-Air's stated aspirational goal for the aircraft maintenance program of 80-percent Afghan execution with 20-percent CLS oversight.

However, TAAC-Air analysis showed that the ratio of maintenance work that CLS employees and Afghan Air Force mechanics performed varied greatly by aircraft type.

- Mi-17 fleet: 20 percent CLS contractors, 80 percent Afghan mechanics.
- C 130 fleet: 100 percent CLS contractors, 0 percent Afghan mechanics.
- A-29 fleet: 60 percent CLS contractors, 40 percent Afghan mechanics.
- MD 530 fleet: 65 percent CLS contractors, 35 percent Afghan mechanics.
- C 208 fleet: 40 percent CLS contractors, 60 percent Afghan mechanics.

The CLS contracts, as written, do not promote the desired balance between Afghan and CLS effort or the eventual transition of maintenance ownership to the Afghans. Each CLS vendor developed its own maintenance training plan, evaluation and advancement criteria, and other procedures to develop qualified Afghan mechanics and supply personnel according to their individual contract.

Of all five CLS contracts supporting Afghan Air Force airframes, only the contract covering the Mi-17 defined transition criteria or identified transition timelines. As the exception, this contract directs the contractors to transition responsibility to the Afghans, specifically assigning TAAC-Air the responsibility to define objectives, set the timeline, and transition Mi-17s from CLS to the Afghans.

The Performance of Work Statement for the C-130 maintenance contract contains a clause that requires a mechanic credentialed by the U.S. Federal Aviation Administration to certify all maintenance conducted on the aircraft. Current implementation of this contract clause continues to result in CLS contractors performing 100 percent of the maintenance, despite the presence of 45 trained and qualified Afghan mechanics.

The requirement for a U.S.-credentialed mechanic to certify maintenance provides a level of risk mitigation for U.S. Air Force advisors who conduct training flights in these aircraft. However, as currently enforced, this requirement prevents Afghan maintenance on the C-130 and hinders them from establishing a long-term Afghan capability.

Finally, the Performance of Work Statement for the C-130 contract states “the Contractor shall maintain configuration control and responsibility for the maintenance performed until the Afghan Air Force personnel become self-sufficient.” Unfortunately, this work statement does not require the contractor to meet any production goals regarding the training or proficiency of the Afghan mechanics.

None of the three remaining CLS contracts (for the A-29, the MD530, and the C-208) include a timeline or conditions-based method of transitioning maintenance functions to the Afghan Air Force. These contracts instead designate the contractor as the lead and requires them to achieve readiness quotas and FAA standards for maintenance operations until the contract ends.

However, we learned of two practices unique to maintaining the A-29. First, the Commanding General of TAAC-Air implemented a 24-hour, Afghan-only maintenance period once a week. TAAC-Air, in conjunction with the A-29 contractor, coordinated the Afghan-only maintenance day to occur on the contractor’s required day-off. This practice bolsters Afghan competence and still provides the CLS contractors a refit day. Second, the A-29 Field Manager described a pre-decisional plan for TAAC-Air approval that would progressively transition A-29 maintenance responsibilities to the Afghans.

Conclusion

The current CLS efforts have created an initial capability in readiness and safety. However, as written, these contracts limit the ability of U.S. advisors and contractors to build Afghan capacity and to transition maintenance responsibilities to the Afghan Air Force. Without identified criteria and measurable conditions, these efforts may risk the overall success for transitioning maintenance activities to the Afghan Air Force.

Recommendations, Management Comments, and Our Response

Recommendation C

We recommend that the Train, Advise, Assist Command-Air coordinate with the Commander of Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan to identify requirements and modify aircraft Contractor Logistic Support contracts as appropriate to increase emphasis on building the Afghan aircraft maintenance capability, increasing the Afghan responsibility for daily aircraft maintenance, and identifying the transition criteria for Afghan-led maintenance within the Afghan Air Force.

9th Air Expeditionary Task Force-Afghanistan

The Chief of Staff, 9th Air Expeditionary Task Force-Afghanistan, answering on behalf of TAAC-Air, agreed with the recommendation. He stated that TAAC-Air is working with Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan to identify transition criteria for both Afghan-led maintenance and contract modifications that may be needed.

Our Response

Comments from management addressed all specifics of the recommendation; therefore, the recommendation is resolved, but will remain open. We will close Recommendation C once we receive documentation of the approved transition criteria for Afghan-led maintenance and a list of the identified contract modifications to be implemented.

Finding D

The Afghan Air Force Has Institutional Training Gaps

Afghan Air Force mission support and aircraft maintenance personnel do not receive standardized or consistent training.^{6, 7}

The Afghan Air Force did not leverage existing training opportunities at Afghan National Army functional schools and lacks the institutional training capability to effectively augment functional training to incorporate Air Force-specific requirements.

The lack of standardized and consistent training for Afghan Air Force mission support personnel limits the development of internal technical capability and delays progress toward a professional, capable, and sustainable Air Force.

Discussion

During our interview with the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, the Director for Afghanistan Resource and Transition raised concerns over the lack of Afghan institutional training and its adverse impact on the sustainability and the development of Afghan Forces.

As a component of the Afghan National Army, the Afghan Air Force does not possess its own institutional schools, such as facilities-engineering or logistics-management training centers. Therefore, the Afghan Air Force relies on the institutional schools of the Afghan National Army to train Air Force mission support personnel. Despite the importance of mission support functions and training, the Afghan Air Force does not receive priority to attend these courses. Instead, the Afghan Air Force must compete with Afghan National Army units for the limited training opportunities available.

~~(FOUO)~~ According to the Afghan Ministry of Defense Vice Chief of Staff, the Afghan Air Force does not forecast its training requirements for available Afghan National Army courses, and, when they do receive student allocations, the Afghan Air Force does not prioritize its students to ensure the most appropriate person attends. Additionally, U.S. advisors revealed that Afghan Air Force leaders choose either

⁶ For this report, mission support includes generic and non-aviation functions such as logistics, civil engineering, finance, contracting, and security.

⁷ Training for aircraft maintainers for this finding refers only to initial entry-level training. We discuss advanced and aircraft-specific maintenance training in Finding B.

(~~FOUO~~) not to send students to training in Afghan National Army schools or to select non-priority individuals. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

The Afghan Air Force Vice Chief of Staff stated the Afghan National Army school curriculum is technologically inadequate or does not meet the Afghan Air Force's required skill sets. According to a U.S. advisor and an Afghan Air Force official, when Afghan Air Force members get the chance to attend these courses, students do not receive training designed or tailored to their needs as mission-support airmen. The U.S. Army's Training and Doctrine Command supported these claims in its April 2017 assessment of the Afghan National Army's Branch Schools. Our review of this assessment shows that the existing schools or courses within the Afghan National Army Education and Doctrine Command do not incorporate or address Afghan Air Force-specific training requirements.

The Afghan Air Force Director of Operations, the Afghan Air Force Director of Logistics, and the TAAC-Air Maintenance Advisor all said that engineering and logistics training is deficient.

Engineering

(~~FOUO~~) According to senior members of the Afghan General Staff, the Afghan military education system does not possess a dedicated facilities-engineering school or course of instruction. Again, the April 2017 U.S. Army Training and Doctrine command assessment supports this claim. The assessment states [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Neither ground combat skills nor Counter-Improvised Explosive Device operations apply to the Afghan Air Force facilities engineering, such as runway, parking ramp, or aircraft hangar construction or maintenance tasks required of Afghan Air Force engineers.

TAAC-Air continues to advise and provide on-the-job training to its Afghan counterparts on construction and airfield and ground-equipment maintenance in an effort to build capacity. However, the lack of formal training creates a gap in the skills of the Afghan Air Force's engineers and prevents them from reaching their full performance potential. As a result, contractors perform all construction-related projects on Afghan Air Force bases, according to TAAC-Air's engineering advisors.

Logistics

U.S. air advisors, CLS personnel, and senior Afghan Air Force Operations and Logistics officers all mentioned logistics as a function within the Afghan Air Force that required additional training and assistance. The Afghan Air Force Operations and Logistics directors found that the Afghan Air Force students do not receive sufficient technical training through the army school because the army school focuses on ground operations only.

The Afghan National Army Combat Service Support School provides a baseline education on items such as Finance, Logistics, Human Resources, and Ground Maintenance. However, Air Force personnel require additional English-language training and Air Force-specific technical skills. Additionally, competition with the Afghan National Army for student quotas prevented sufficient quantities of Afghan Air Force logisticians from receiving training. As a result, the Afghan Air Force Operations and Logistics directors stated that, while Afghan Air Force personnel previously attended the Afghan National Army logistics school, they no longer participate. Therefore, in order to meet operational requirements, the Afghan Air Force relies on Coalition contractors performing CLS to provide on-the-job training.

In response to the current situation, the same Afghan Air Force directors stated that they desired to develop an Afghan Air Force-specific logistic course with a curriculum that provides additional needed training and a greater focus on Air Force-specific technical skills. Afghan institutional logistics systems that the Afghan National Army already uses would serve as the basis for this proposed school.

Aviation-Specific Training

CONUS-based Training for Aircrew and Aircraft Mechanics

Under the current training model, select Afghan Air Force service members who demonstrate basic English-language skills attend English-language and initial aircraft-maintenance training in the United States. All others receive training in Afghanistan. Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan, Security Assistance Office-Afghanistan records show that the Coalition spends approximately \$74 million annually to train Afghan Air Force aircrew and maintenance personnel outside of Afghanistan.

English comprehension is mandatory for Afghan Air Force maintenance personnel trained in the United States. The original equipment manufacturers for aircraft will not convert their technical procedures or maintenance manuals into Dari or Pashtu, citing translation concerns with the non-technical nature and limited

vocabulary of these languages. Contractors cannot translate aircraft technical manuals due to the risk associated in translating technical concepts into languages with limited comparable technical vocabulary for Afghan-trained maintainers who may not be literate in any of the major Afghan languages.

After successfully completing language training, Afghan Air Force members remain in the United States and attend basic aircraft maintenance courses tailored to their aircraft and job specialty. Based on interviews and records with the Security Assistance Office-Afghanistan and TAAC-Air, Defense Language Institute English-language training and initial aircraft-maintenance instruction lasts an average of 10 to 12 months.

(FOUO) [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Reintegration and Job Assignment

Afghan Air Force officials stated that ANDSF personnel rules dictate that once service members have been absent from a position for more than 12 months, they forfeit the position and the ANDSF can assign another individual. Therefore, Afghan personnel who have been abroad for 1 year or more lose their Ministry of Defense-assigned position. Upon returning from language and functional training, their position may have been taken by any available airman, qualified or not. TAAC-Air advisors stated that re-enrolling the trained individual can take 2 or 3 months, during which time the airman receives no pay and his newly acquired skills atrophy.

The rules regarding absenteeism even apply to trained pilots. We interviewed one Afghan Air Force pilot who, following qualification and graduation from CONUS-based flight training, returned to his squadron only to find his assignment to the unit had expired. According to both the pilot and the U.S advisors, it took approximately 12 months to get this individual re-assigned to an authorized position requiring his skills.

While this initial out-of-country training produces capable mechanics, it takes the trainees away from Afghanistan for a lengthy period, incurs great cost, and does little to accomplish the mission of establishing a sustainable Afghan Air Force maintenance training capability in-country.

Benefits of Western Training

Accepting the re-integration challenges associated with out-of-country training, several U.S. advisors stated there are intangible benefits to out-of-country or “western” training. TAAC-Air pilot advisors stated they recognize a higher level of maturity and decision-making from the pilots who received training outside of Afghanistan. These same advisors stated that the western-trained pilots and aircrew typically progress to more advanced qualifications or higher leadership positions faster than their non-western-trained counterparts. The Commander of TAAC-Air added that western-trained personnel in the Afghan Air Force countered the influence of Soviet-trained Mi-17 pilots and mechanics. The Commander of NAC-A concluded that, despite the challenges associated with western training, the training is worthwhile because it makes the Afghans more professional.

Unknown Cost for Training in Afghanistan

The Chief of the Training and Education Division within the Security Assistance Office of Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan stated that the command does not know how much it costs to provide similar aviation-specific training within Afghanistan because no such aviation-specific training programs or institutions currently exist.

Creating Institutional Capability

As a featured speaker at the DoD-sponsored 2017 Afghanistan Program Management Review, a senior member of the Afghan General Staff proposed creating an Afghan institutional training capability in the form of a training and education directorate.⁸ This proposal described a framework for developing Afghan training institutions, doctrine, and oversight directorates. If effective, this plan would provide the mechanism that the Afghan National Defense Forces currently lacks to document and construct programs of instruction in an effort to standardize Afghan Air Force training. This plan is pre-decisional and is awaiting Resolute Support staff coordination.

⁸ Program Management Review, (PMR) is a structured program review that is conducted by the Program Manager with all key Stakeholders at a specific milestone in a program or on a predictable schedule. The 2017 Spring Afghan PMR was held in Arlington, Virginia, in April 2017 and included participants from the Office of the Secretary of Defense, the Services, Government Contractors, and Members of the Afghan Government and Military.

During the same Program Management Review symposium, the Afghan Assistant Minister of Defense for Acquisitions, Technology, and Logistics briefed several recommendations regarding Afghan Air Force-specific institutional capabilities. These included establishing Mi-17 repair and maintenance workshops in Mazar-e-Sharif and Kandahar, in-country training for aviation maintenance personnel, and workshops for MD-530 helicopters and the A-29, C-130, and C-208 airplanes. He also identified the need for ground-support equipment for the A-29 in Kandahar and Mazar-e-Sharif. While the ANDSF has not implemented these recommendations as of September 2017, the recommendations themselves do illustrate a desire within responsible elements of the Afghan Ministry of Defense to institutionalize training and create sustainable capabilities within the Afghan Air Force.

Conclusion

The Afghan Air Force lacks standardized or consistent mission-support training, but is attempting to minimize the effects of institutional training deficiencies through contractor-provided on-the-job training. Current Afghan Air Force efforts without continued U.S. involvement are unsustainable and do not build a long-term Afghan capability. Concepts to institutionalize training for aviation and mission-support functions exist and should become an integral part of the Afghan Air Force's strategic plan.

Recommendations, Management Comments, and Our Response

Recommendation D.1

We recommend that the Commander of Resolute Support coordinate with the Afghan Ministry of Defense and General Staff to identify and create the follow-on institutional aviation-specific and mission-support functions training capability necessary to support future requirements.

Headquarters Resolute Support

The Audit Director, United States Forces-Afghanistan, answering on behalf of Headquarters Resolute Support, agreed with the recommendation.

9th Air Expeditionary Task Force-Afghanistan

Although not required to comment, the Chief of Staff, 9th Air Expeditionary Task Force-Afghanistan, agreed with this recommendation. He stated that Resolute Support will continue to train, advise, and assist the Afghan Ministry of Defense and General Staff leaders to codify and appropriately resource the elements of a comprehensive recruiting-accession-training-assignment process for the Afghan Air Force.

Our Response

Comments from management addressed all specifics of the recommendation; therefore, the recommendation is resolved, but will remain open. We will close Recommendation D.1 once we verify that Headquarters Resolute Support has coordinated with the Afghan Ministry of Defense and General Staff to identify and create the institutional capabilities to support the Afghan Air Force's future capabilities.

Recommendation D.2

We recommend that the Commander of Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan compare in-country training costs to the current out-of-country approach to ascertain potential savings or benefits.

Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan

The Deputy Chief of Staff, Security Assistance, Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan agreed with this recommendation. However, in order for Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan to conduct this comparative analysis, TAAC-Air, as the requirements owner, must provide the appropriate level of detail necessary to support the cost analysis. Therefore, he proposed reassigning Recommendation D.2 to TAAC-Air instead of Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan.

Our Response

We concur with the Deputy Chief of Staff and, as a result, revised Recommendation D.2 to the Commander of TAAC-Air and renumbered Recommendation D.2 to Recommendation D.3.

Revised Recommendation D.2

We recommend that the Commander, Train, Advise, Assist Command-Air provide Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan detailed training requirements to support a comparison of in-country to out-of-country costs and benefits.

As a revised recommendation, Recommendation D.2 is unresolved. We request, by February 4, 2018, that the Chief of Staff, 9th Air Expeditionary Task Force-Afghanistan, address this revised Recommendation D.2 and provide detail about the actions planned or actions taken to resolve this recommendation.

Recommendation D.3 (Previously D.2)

We recommend that the Commander of Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan compare in-country training costs to the current out-of-country approach to ascertain potential savings or benefits.

Recommendation D.3 is unresolved, as it is dependent on the resolution of Recommendation D.2. We request, by February 4, 2018, that the Deputy Chief of Staff for Security Assistance, Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan, provide details about the actions planned or actions taken to resolve Recommendation D.3.

Finding E

Modified Mi-17 Tasking Authority

Afghan National Army corps commanders exceeded programmed monthly flying hours for Mi-17s. Coalition advisors identified this problem and, in coordination with their Afghan counterparts, proposed a solution.

Afghan Ministry of Defense and General Staff policy allows Afghan National Army corps commanders to use Mi-17s in a direct-support role.⁹ This policy authorizes the Army commanders to task these helicopters directly without properly regarding the aircraft's condition and available flying hours.

Operating aircraft beyond scheduled flying hours, and without the required intervening maintenance and inspections, will accelerate the Mi-17 fleet's deterioration and reduce available aircraft for operational use.

Discussion

Since 2005, the United States has purchased Russian-made Mi-17s for the newly recreated Afghan Air Force, an airframe that the prior Afghan Air Forces had since the 1970's. In 2014, following Russia's military involvement in Syria and Ukraine, President Obama issued sanctions, restricting business with Russian arms manufacturers. As a result, the authorized overhaul and heavy repair of Mi-17s is limited to facilities in the United Arab Emirates, the Czech Republic, Bulgaria, and Slovakia. According to a December 2015 DoD study, Afghanistan's Mi-17 fleet will become unsustainable due to lack of parts, aging airframes, and high operational tempo by the middle of 2018.

The Afghan Air Force has 24 Mi-17 helicopters available to perform a variety of key missions to support the Afghan National Army. Considered the "workhorse" of the Afghan Air Force, Mi-17s transport troops, evacuate casualties, transport human remains, resupply forces, and perform close air attack missions. Senior coalition officers cited the use of the Mi-17 as a lifeline to resupplying forward operating bases in contested areas and as a critical element in preventing Afghan National Army collapse in Helmand and Nangahar provinces in 2016.

⁹ The "Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms" defines "direct support" as "a mission requiring a force to support another specific force and authorizing it to answer directly to the supported force's request for assistance."

Direct Support Role

The Afghan Air Force Mi-17s fly in support of the Afghan National Army's six corps throughout Afghanistan. Once Mi-17s and their crews are away from their main operating bases (Kabul, Kandahar, and Shindand), Afghan National Army corps commanders – not Afghan Air Force commanders – assign them missions. In U.S. military doctrine, this represents a direct-support relationship.¹⁰

The Afghan Air Force expectation is that these direct taskings in support of the Afghan National Army Corps operational missions will last for a finite number of days. At the end of the designated time, the crew should return the aircraft to its main operating base for additional inspections and, if needed, repairs.

However, Afghan Corps commanders can violate their delegated authority for use of Mi-17s. A coalition advisor to the Afghan National Army 215th Corps described the corps commanders as having a good deal of autonomy regarding where and when assigned Mi-17s flew within the commander's geographic area of responsibility. Another advisor cited a corps commander's extreme reluctance to release assigned Mi-17s until the Afghan Air Force provided replacements. A senior NAC-A advisor echoed this position, describing the Afghan Air Force as losing control of its assets when it directly supports Afghan National Army corps commanders.

Adverse Impacts of Direct Support

Two primary adverse impacts result from Afghan National Army corps commanders directly controlling Afghan Air Force Mi-17s. When deployed away from its home unit, the aircraft cannot undergo all required periodic technical inspections and maintenance. In addition, overflying programmed flight hours decreases the number of available Mi-17s by accelerating the requirement for major maintenance at out-of-country depot maintenance locations in the Czech Republic, Bulgaria, and Slovakia.

Maintenance technicians must periodically inspect aircraft based on the aircraft's flying hours. Trained personnel with the proper equipment can complete basic inspections and maintenance procedures, such as pre- and post-flight inspection, at either home or deployed locations. More intensive inspections and preventive maintenance actions, such as the 200-hour avionics inspection, require additional specially trained personnel. These inspections also require specialized equipment and facilities that are unavailable at deployed locations. The third and most

¹⁰ The DoD Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms defines "direct support" as "a mission requiring a force to support another specific force and authorizing it to answer directly to the supported force's request for assistance."

extensive type of aviation maintenance is programmed depot maintenance. For example, Mi-17s require depot maintenance every 2,000 flight-hours. Predictable scheduling and timely completion of this depot maintenance is critical to the future sustainability of the fleet.

Since maintenance technicians can perform only the most basic type of inspection in a deployed location, it is critical that corps commanders periodically return Mi-17s to their home stations for required comprehensive inspections. These inspections are necessary to maintain the aircraft's airworthiness and to prevent mechanical failure. Likewise, the required maintenance inspections ensure the safety and serviceability of the aircraft; failure to conduct these inspections increases the risk to the aircraft, the crew, and the mission.

The second adverse impact of the direct support relationship is flying aircraft beyond their programmed monthly flying hours. According to Senior U.S. advisors to both the Afghan National Army's 205th and 215th Corps, the Corps' leadership knowingly exceeds flight hour limitations. According to these advisors, the Corps leaders focus on accomplishing the immediate tactical tasks but without concern for the Mi-17 fleet's long-term sustainability.

One can compare an aircraft's programmed flying hours to an available budget. Exceeding available resources in the near term, incurs long-term costs. The long-term cost in this case is the more frequent requirement for depot maintenance of the Mi-17 fleet at the out-of-country depot locations. Specially trained technicians conduct depot maintenance for Afghan Air Force Mi-17s outside Afghanistan in the Czech Republic, Bulgaria, and Slovakia. Afghan Air Force records show that Mi-17 depot maintenance may take longer than 12 months to complete.

Once an aircraft exceeds its depot flying-hour limit, it becomes unavailable for operational use and decreases the amount of aircraft available to support the Afghan National Army. Accelerating the requirement for depot maintenance upsets the planned flow into a limited capability at maintenance depots outside of Afghanistan. As of April 2017, 17 of the 42 Mi-17s that the Afghan Air Force possessed (excluding 4 Presidential aircraft) were undergoing or awaiting depot maintenance, heavy repair, or some other assessment and were therefore unavailable for operational use. Any increase in flying time on individual aircraft beyond the programmed time will cause even more aircraft to reach their depot flying-hour requirement and increase the backlog of aircraft awaiting depot maintenance.

Concern for Changing Direct Support Tasking

Advisors assigned to support Afghan National Army units in southern Afghanistan presented an alternative viewpoint in favor of maintaining the current Mi-17 direct-tasking model. One U.S. senior officer said he recognized that the current usage of Mi-17s was unsustainable. However, in his opinion, the Afghan National Army Corps had no choice because the Afghan Air Force had not supplied enough aircraft.

Another advisor cited concern for a potential increase in the time required to approve tasking request for an Afghan Air Force air asset. Without direct support tasking authority, the Afghan National Army Corps will have to submit requests for aviation support and compete against other Corps' for the limited Mi-17 helicopters available. This centralized request and approval process will delay the timeliness of the aviation supporting the Afghan National Army Corps.

The advisors to the Afghan National Army Corps were more concerned with the Afghan Air Force's ability to support their operational missions in the near term than the long-term sustainability of the Mi-17 fleet. A senior Resolute Support general officer summarized the issue between the operational need for aircraft support and the concern with aircraft sustainability, saying the "[Afghan National Army] is concerned about the 25 meter target and fails to see the long-term impact on the Mi-17 fleet."

Chief of the General Staff Order

~~(NATO/RS Unclass Rel To GIROA)~~ [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

As one TAAC-Air senior officer described, this order will establish a centralized control and decentralized execution of Afghan Air Force assets.

~~(NATO/RS Unclass Rel To GIROA)~~ [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]

(NATO/RS Unclass Rel To GIROA) [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

- [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

The order addresses many of the advisor’s concerns raised during the course of our fieldwork regarding the lifecycle of the Afghan Air Force Mi-17s. Coalition advisors now need to emphasize implementing the details within the order.

Conclusion

Afghan Air Force Mi-17s perform key missions in support of the Afghan National Army and are vital to the success of the Afghan National Army’s operations throughout Afghanistan. However, the model of giving command and control of the Mi-17s to the Afghan National Army corps commanders was detrimental to the availability and sustainability of the Mi-17 fleet. The order establishing centralized control and decentralized execution of Mi-17s may be the long-term solution, but following through and strictly implementing that order requires assistance from coalition advisors.

Recommendations, Management Comments, and Our Response

Recommendation E

(NATO/RS Unclass Rel To GIROA) We recommend that the Commander of Resolute Support closely monitor the implementation of the recently signed Afghan directive, [REDACTED] and provide additional advice and assistance to the Afghan Ministry of Defense as required.

Headquarters Resolute Support

The Audit Director, United States Forces-Afghanistan, answering on behalf of Headquarters Resolute Support, agreed with the recommendation.

9th Air Expeditionary Task Force-Afghanistan

Although not required to comment, the Chief of Staff, 9th Air Expeditionary Task Force-Afghanistan, agreed with this recommendation. He stated that Resolute Support and its subordinate units (NATO Air Command-Afghanistan and TAAC-Air) will continue to train, advise, and assist the Afghan Ministry of Defense, General Staff, and Afghan Air Force leaders on the effective use and sustainment of helicopters while ensuring that augmenting aviation assets, such as contract helicopters provide, mobility support until the Afghan Air Force programs achieve full capacity.

Our Response

Comments from management addressed the specifics of the recommendation; therefore, the recommendation is resolved, but will remain open. We will close Recommendation E once we verify that Headquarters Resolute Support has implemented the planned actions.

Finding F

Pre-Deployment Training Does Not Prepare Advisors on Afghan Air Force Organization and Processes

Coalition Air Advisors received training on general advising skills and cultural aspects needed for a generic train, advise, and assist mission. However, they were not fully prepared to perform the Resolute Support advising mission of supporting the Afghan Air Force upon arriving in Afghanistan.

Air Advisors did not receive training on the Afghan Air Force and its relationship to the Afghan National Army, nor did they receive training or information on the Afghan Air Force's mission, its organizational structure, or its staffing or decision-making processes.

Air Advisors are less effective and efficient while they are acquiring the requisite knowledge and developing the skills necessary to accomplish their mission in Afghanistan. This learning period impedes relationship building between the advisors and their Afghan counterparts and slows the development of the Afghan Air Force personnel.

Discussion

Department of Defense Instruction 5000.58, "Security Force Assistance," instructs the military Services to support DoD efforts to organize, train, equip, and advise foreign military forces. Air advising is a critical component of the U.S. Air Force's response to this direction. From 2012 to 2015, the U.S. Air Force primarily trained and educated airmen at the Air Advisor Academy prior to their assignments as air advisors. In September 2015, the Air Force closed the Air Advisor Academy and transferred execution of air advisor training to the U.S. Air Force Expeditionary Operations School, located at Joint Base McGuire-Dix in New Jersey.¹¹ In its present form, the Expeditionary Operations School offers a series of courses that prepare airmen to become advisors.

¹¹ The U.S. Air Force Expeditionary Operations School is a subordinate element of the U.S. Air Force Expeditionary Center, which is part of Air Mobility Command. Air Education and Training Command is the lead Major Command for General Purpose Forces Air Advisor Education and Training oversight, policy, and guidance.

Airmen selected for assignment as an advisor in Afghanistan complete the “Air Advisor C Course” at the Expeditionary Operations School. The course includes instruction and training on air advisor core knowledge skills, region-specific languages (Dari or Pashtu), and other tactical skills such as weapons training. In addition to briefings on ongoing ground, air, and counter-insurgency operations, country-specific instruction includes familiarization with the Afghan culture, predominant religion, government, and legal systems.

Air advisors reported that the country-based training prepared them well for cultural sensitivities and nuances they faced upon arriving in Afghanistan. However, the curriculum did not include explanations of the Afghan military structure or unique procedures. The same advisors that lauded the instruction on Afghan culture reported that the training did not equip them with the specific knowledge of the Afghan Air Force and the Afghan National Army needed to allow them to be immediately effective. For example, they did not receive training on the organizational differences between the Afghan Air Force and the U.S. Air Force. Specifically, the air advisors were not told that the Afghan Air Force is subordinate to, and operates under, the Afghan General Staff, which is Afghan National Army-centric.

In addition, air advisors reported that none of the U.S. Air Force pre-deployment training prepared them for many of the technical aspects of their advising duties. This included Afghan-specific Ministry of Defense, General Staff, Afghan National Army, and Afghan Air Force policies, procedures, and other processes that they needed to understand in order to assist their Afghan counterparts. For example, none of Expeditionary Operations School courses trained advisors how to use the Afghan Ministry of Defense Form 14, MoD-14. Completing and staffing the MoD-14 is critical for ordering and receiving supplies through the Afghan logistics system. Because of this lack of familiarity and training, Air Advisors could not help their counterparts until after they gained sufficient understanding of the Afghan system.

The Air Advisor Training program manager at the school confirmed that the Expeditionary Operations School collects feedback from students through an end-of-course critique and in-country interviews with air advisors every 18 months. Multiple air advisors stated that they relayed observed training gaps to the school via feedback mechanisms.

The Air Advisor Training program manager reported that input from students and in-country advisors resulted in several additions to the Air Advisor Academic curriculum including:

- Guardian Angel training,¹²
- role-playing exercises reinforcing classroom instruction,
- additional interpreter-translator practical exercises, and
- high-threat driving and Combat Lifesaver top-off training.

While adding value, these additions did not address advisor concerns regarding the need to include specific training for their Afghan air advisory mission.

Air advisors assigned to TAAC-Air reported they “...were less efficient and effective...” until they achieved sufficient on-the-job training and completed the “... learning process...” to acquire the requisite knowledge and skills. This learning period delayed the development of the relationship between the advisors and their Afghan counterparts, thereby hindering the continued development of Afghan Air Force personnel.

In our interviews with TAAC-Air advisors, none of them had received information on Afghan-military specific processes and procedures, which they deemed essential for their success as advisors. This missing information included Afghan Ministry of Defense processes, organizational structure, and relationship between the Afghan National Army and the Afghan Air Force, and Afghan Air Force staffing processes. NAC-A and TAAC-Air staff acknowledged that they did not provide this or related information to incoming advisors

Conclusion

Air advisors received training on a variety of tasks to prepare them for deployment. However, pre-deployment training did not give them working knowledge of the status of the Afghan Air Force within the ANDSF or sufficient technical information specific to the Afghan military and anticipated advisor duties. Without working knowledge of these areas, advisors were less efficient and effective until they acquired the requisite knowledge and skills on the job. The learning period delayed the development of working relationships between the advisors and their Afghan counterparts, hindering the continued development of Afghan Air Force personnel.

¹² Guardian Angels are armed individuals, pairs, or small groups of Resolute Support personnel whose **sole** purpose is to protect other Resolute Support personnel from an insider attack from ANDSF or Afghan civilians.

Recommendations, Management Comments, and Our Response

Recommendation F.1

We recommend that the Commander of NATO Air Command-Afghanistan provide relevant and Afghan-specific information to incoming advisors.

9th Air Expeditionary Task Force-Afghanistan

The Chief of Staff, 9th Air Expeditionary Task Force-Afghanistan, answering on behalf on NAC-A, agreed with the recommendation. He stated that incoming advisors currently receive Afghan-specific information during their pre-deployment training and additionally through 'in-country Key Leader Training.'

Our Response

Comments from management addressed all specifics of the recommendation; therefore, the recommendation is resolved, but will remain open. We will close Recommendation F.1 once we verify that NAC-A has completed the planned corrective actions. Specifically, by February 4, 2018, we request that 9th Air Expeditionary Task Force-Afghanistan provide us evidence that all incoming air advisors receive the Afghan-specific information from NAC-A during their pre-deployment training and during the 'in-country Key Leader Training.' This documentation should include the Afghan-specific information necessary for advisors to accomplish their mission. Particularly, we request evidence showing air advisors are receiving information on the structure of the Afghan Air Force, staffing processes within the Afghan Air Force, and the administrative processes associated with the Afghan Ministry of Defense Form 14. This evidence can be in the form of email distribution lists, attendance rosters, or advisor acknowledgement of training.

Recommendation F.2

We recommend that the Air Advisor Training program manager, U.S. Air Force Expeditionary Operations School periodically assess the training they provide and incorporate feedback into the training syllabus to support the Train, Advise, and Assist Command-Air mission.

Air Education and Training Command

The Chief, Special Missions Division, US Air Force Air Education and Training Command agreed with Recommendation F.2. Specifically, he stated that the U.S. Air Force Air Expeditionary Operations School will:

- update the Air Education and Training Command curriculum taught at the Air Advisor course;
- update Air Force Tactics, Technique, and Procedures publication AFTTP 3-4.5 “Air Advising”; and
- collect air advisor observations, best practices, and lessons learned from air advisors operating in Afghanistan.

Our Response

Comments from management addressed all specifics of the recommendation; therefore, the recommendation is resolved, but will remain open. We will close Recommendation F.2 once we verify that Air Education and Training Command has completed the planned corrective actions. The estimated completion date is May 2018.



Appendix A

Scope and Methodology

We conducted this evaluation in accordance with the “Quality Standards for Inspection and Evaluation” published by the Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency in January 2012. Those standards require that we plan and perform the evaluation to obtain sufficient, competent, and relevant evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings, conclusions, and recommendations based on our review objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings, conclusions, and recommendations based on our review.

We evaluated the U.S. and Coalition efforts, specifically the efforts of Train, Advise, Assist Command-Air, to develop the Afghan Air Force into a professional, capable, and sustainable organization.

This project’s scope includes following areas:

- Policies, plans, and activities conducted by U.S. and Coalition Forces related to efforts to train, advise, and assist the Afghan Air Force.
- Progress of Afghan Air Force development including pilot academic training, pilot and aircrew flight training, maintenance training, and airspace management.
- Activities conducted by DoD entities in CONUS, as well as the U.S. European Command and U.S. Central Command Areas of Operations, that pertain to efforts to train, advise, assist the Afghan Air Force.
- Issues pertaining to the growth, performance, and operational readiness of the Afghan Air Force.
- Contractor statements of work and contractor performance as it impacts Afghan Air Force development.

We announced the project on February 2, 2017. The team collected data, conducted interviews, and attended Afghan Air Force-related policy events and discussions from March 2017 through June 2017. To evaluate our objective, we:

- reviewed public laws and budget requests, White House Fact Sheets, and DoD regulations and fact sheets related to the train, advise, and assist effort of the Afghan Air Force;
- reviewed NATO, national, and DoD strategies and plans relevant to the development of the Afghan Air Force;

- reviewed published reports and professional articles and attended public-policy forums pertaining to NATO and U.S. efforts to support the Afghan Air Force;
- interviewed civilian and military leaders and advisors assigned to the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, NATO's Operation Resolute Support, NATO Air Command- Afghanistan, Resolute Support's TAAC-Air, the 81st Fighter Squadron at Moody Air Force Base, TAAC-South, and advisors to the Afghan National Army 215th Corps, and
- interviewed civilian and military leaders in the Afghan Ministry of Defense, the Afghan General Staff, the Air Staff of the Afghan Air Force, and the Afghan Air Force Wings.

The team deployed to Afghanistan from March 19 to April 7, 2017. We visited the headquarters of NATO Resolute Support, Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan, NATO Air Command-Afghanistan, and TAAC-Air in Kabul, Afghanistan. We visited Train, Advise, Assist, Command-South, in Kandahar, Afghanistan and the Afghan National Army's 215th Corps located in Helmand Province, Afghanistan.

Limitations

The team limited its visits to Kabul, Kandahar, and Helmand Province due to security concerns and a lack of available opportunities to visit other remote locations in Afghanistan. Our visits to Kabul, Kandahar, and Helmand Province allowed the team to observe training and advising activities between U.S. advisors and their Afghan counterparts.

To reach our conclusions, we relied on testimonial evidence with supporting documentation, theater plans, public law, congressional testimony, and Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan Contracted Logistics Service agreements.

Use of Computer-Processed Data

We did not use computer-processed data to perform this evaluation.

Prior Coverage

We found one previous oversight report relevant to the scope of this project.

DoD OIG

DODIG-2012-141, "Assessment of U.S. Government and Coalition Plans to Train, Equip, and Field the Afghan Air Force," September 28, 2012

This assessment determined whether U.S. Government and Coalition Forces goals, objectives, plans, and guidance to train, equip, and field a viable and sustainable Afghan Air Force were prepared, issued, operative, and relevant. This report contained 15 findings grouped into 4 broad areas: systemic issues, training issues, equipping issues, and fielding issues. The DoD OIG reported all open items closed by mid-2013.

Appendix B

Applicable Criteria

“DOD Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms,” as of June 2017. This publication sets forth standard U.S. military and associated terminology to encompass the joint activity of the Armed Forces of the United States.

Joint Publication 3-07, “Stability,” August 3, 2016. This publication establishes joint doctrine for missions, activities, and tasks as part of stabilization efforts across the range of military operations.

Joint Publication 3-22, “Foreign Internal Defense,” July 12, 2010. This publication establishes joint doctrine for the Armed Forces of the United States involved in or supporting foreign internal defense. It discusses how joint operations, involving the application of all instruments of national power, support host-nation efforts to build capability and capacity to free and protect its society from subversion, lawlessness, and insurgency.

Air Force Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures 3-2.76, “Advising. Multi-Service Tactics, Techniques and Procedures for Advising Foreign Security Forces,” November 2014. This publication assists in advising foreign security forces. It serves as a reference to ensure coordinated multi-Service operations for planners and operators preparing for and conducting advisor team missions.

Air Force Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures 3-45, “Air Advising,” July 20, 2012. This publication provides U.S. Air Force general purpose advisors with a tactical doctrine document that contains tactics, techniques, and procedures on how to assist partner nation Air Forces build, sustain, and implement air power capacities and build their aviation enterprise in support of national policies.

Appendix C

Afghan Air Force Data



Figure 1. Afghan Air Force A-29
Source: DoD Report to Congress.

General Description: The A-29 Super Tucano light attack aircraft provides critical air support, such as aerial fires, to Afghan National Defense and Security Forces ground forces. A-29s began combat operations in Afghanistan on April 14, 2016. As of April 2017, the Afghan Air Force operated eight A-29s.

Speed/Ceiling: 240-knot per hour cruise speed / 21,000 feet.

Max Range: 225 nautical miles and 45-minute loiter time.

Crew: One pilot.

Armament: .50-caliber machine guns, 2.75 inch Rockets, and 250- 500-pound general purpose or precision bombs.

Operating Locations: Kabul and Kandahar airfields. It can also forward deploy to improved, and some unimproved, airfields throughout Afghanistan.



Figure 2. Afghan Air Force C-130H
Source: DoD report to Congress.

General Description: The C-130 Hercules provide a strategic airlift capability for large passenger movements and casualty evacuation operations. Additionally, the C-130s transport cargo that is too large or unsuitable for movement in the C-208 or Mi-17 aircraft. As of April 2017, the Afghan Air Force operated four C-130s.

Speed/Ceiling: 300 Knots per hour / 25,000 feet.

Max Range: 2000 Nautical Miles – empty, 1200 Nautical Miles – full.

Crew: Two pilots, one flight engineer, two loadmasters.

Cargo Capacity: 35,000 pounds or 70 passengers.

Medical Evacuation: 32 litters or 70 ambulatory patients.

Operating Location: Country wide, based in Kabul.



Figure 3. Afghan Air Force C-208
Source: DoD Report to Congress.

General Description: The C-208s provide the Afghan Air Force light-lift personnel transport, casualty evacuation, and human remains recovery capabilities in support of the ANDSF. As of April 2017, the Afghan Air Force operated 24 C-208s.

Speed/Ceiling: 170 Knots per hour/ 25,000 feet.

Max Range: ~500 nautical-mile-radius/1000+ nautical miles.

Crew: Two pilots.

Cargo Capacity: 3310 pounds / 8 passengers.

Medical: Two litters or six ambulatory patients.

Operating Locations: Kabul, Kandahar, and Shindand. It can also forward deploy to improved, and some unimproved, airfields throughout Afghanistan.



Figure 4. Afghan Air Force MD-530
Source: DoD report to Congress.

General Description: The MD-530 helicopter provides close air attack and aerial escort capability to the ANDSF. MD-530s conducted their first strike mission in August 2016. As of April 2017, the Afghan Air Force operated 26 MD-530s.

Speed/Ceiling: 80 Knots per hour / 12,000 feet.

Max Range: 60 nautical-mile combat radius (~30 minutes loiter time on station).

Crew: Two pilots.

Armament: Forward-fixed .50-caliber machine guns or 2.75-inch rockets.

Operating Locations: Kabul and Kandahar. It can also forward deploy to improved, and some unimproved, airfields throughout Afghanistan.



Figure 5. Afghan Air Force Mi-17
Source: DoD report to Congress.

General Description: The Mi-17 helicopter conducts day and night personnel transport, casualty evacuation, resupply, close combat attack, aerial escort, and aerial assault missions. As of April 2017, 24 of the 46 Mi-17s in the Afghan Air Force were operationally available.

Capabilities: (Note: high altitude capable).

Speed/Ceiling: 150 Knots per hour/ 19,500 feet.

Max Range: ~160 nautical-mile radius/320+ nautical miles.

Crew: Two pilots, one flight engineer, two door gunners (M240).

Armament: 13 Mi-17 are capable of 57-mm rockets / 23-mm cannon.

Cargo Capacity: 6,620 pounds / 24 passengers.

Medical: 12 litters or 18 ambulatory patients.

Operating Locations: Kabul, Kandahar, and Shindand. It can also forward deploy to both improved and unimproved areas throughout Afghanistan.

Appendix D

List of Classified Sources

(U) Standard Operating Procedure 00331 Theater Force Protection (NATO/RS SECRET)

Declassify On: no date

(U) 9th Air Expeditionary Task Force -Afghanistan Mission Brief (SECRET//REL USA, NATO, RSMA)

Declassify On: no date

(U) Commander, Resolute Support Request for Information: Advisor Laydown. Security Force Assistance Weekly 26 Aug 16 (NATO/RS SECRET)

Declassify On: no date


(U) Resolute Support Security Force Assistance Guide version 3.1 (U//FGI ISAF NATO//Rel to USA, ISAF, NATO//FOUO)

Declassify On: no date

Management Comments

9th Air Expeditionary Task Force-Afghanistan

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DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
HEADQUARTERS, 9th AIR AND SPACE EXPEDITIONARY TASK FORCE - AFGHANISTAN
KABUL, AFGHANISTAN

25 Nov 17

MEMORANDUM FOR USFOR-A Audits

FROM: 9 AETF-A/COS

SUBJECT: DoD Draft Report Response (Project D2017-000SPO-0081.000)

1. The following is an additional response to a DoD Inspector General draft report tasker from the USFOR-A Audits office. The following sections of the report were concurred with and sent back to the Audits office several days ago. Without publication of the report, we are being asked to provide courses of action for each section of the draft report.
2. Below are the responses.
 - a. Recommendation B.1 a. & b. - TAAC-Air concurs with the recommendation and already has plans that include associated lines of efforts and a set of metrics that measure the development of the Afghan Air Force's capabilities and capacities.
 - b. Recommendation B.2 – TAAC-Air concurs with the recommendation to coordinate with the Commander of NAC-A to ensure lines of effort meet Headquarters Resolute Support campaign plans. This already happens on a weekly and almost daily basis when needed.
 - c. Recommendation C – TAAC-Air concurs with the recommendation to coordinate with CSTC-A to identify requirements and modify aircraft Contractor Logistics Support contracts as appropriate to increase emphasis on building the Afghan aircraft maintenance capability. TAAC-A is in the process of working an effort with CSTC-A to identify transition criteria for Afghan-led maintenance and identifying contract modifications that may be needed.
 - d. Recommendation D.1 – TAAC-Air concurs with the recommendation. The rapid growth planned in the Afghan Air Force Modernization program requires commensurate expansion in human capital development. It is essential that the MoD and General Staff follow through on their recent decision to codify the independent recruiting program for the Afghan Air Force (separate and distinct from the Afghan National Army) by ensuring that the reorganized Afghan Air Force structure billets are filled with qualified and appropriate individuals. Long-term sustainability, in the realm of Afghan-performed maintenance and logistics, depends on an expanded training pipeline (in terms of volume and throughput rate) for those Afghan Air Force recruits. Resolute Support will continue to Train, Advise, Assist MoD and General Staff leaders to codify and appropriately resource the elements of a comprehensive recruiting-accession-training-assignment process for the Afghan Air Force.
 - e. Recommendation E. TAAC-Air concurs with the recommendation. Resolute Support and subordinate units will continue to Train, Advise, Assist MoD, General Staff, and Afghan Air Force on the effective and safe use and sustainment of their rotary wing assets while ensuring

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9th Air Expeditionary Task Force-Afghanistan (cont'd)

2

that augmenting tactical airlift (such as contract rotary wing mobility) provides support to the GIRA until the Afghan Air Force programs achieve full capacity.

f. Recommendation F.1 – NAC-A concurs with recommendation to provide relevant and Afghan-specific information to incoming advisors. This already happens during pre-deployment training specific to Afghanistan and additionally during iKLT training in theater.

3. For any questions concerning this request, please contact me or our Director of Staff, [REDACTED]



DAVID K. SIEVE, Colonel, USAF
Chief of Staff

Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan

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DEPUTY CHIEF OF STAFF SECURITY ASSISTANCE
COMBINED SECURITY TRANSITION COMMAND-AFGHANISTAN
KABUL, AFGHANISTAN
APO AE 09356

DCOS SA/CSTC-A

16 November 2017

MEMORANDUM THRU USFOR-A DCDR-S

FOR Department of Defense Inspector General, 4800 Mark Center Drive, Alexandria, VA
22350-1500

SUBJECT: Unclassified Report, "Evaluation of U.S. and Coalition Efforts to Train, Advise, and Assist the Afghan Air Force" (Project No. D2017-D00SPO-0081.000)

1. (U) Attached is the DCOS SA/CSTC-A response to DODIG Draft Report, Progress of U.S. and Coalition Efforts to Train, Advise, and Assist the Afghan Air Force" (Project No. D2017-D00SPO-0081.000) dated 18 October 2017 and FOUO Supplement to the Unclassified Report, SAB, dated 19 October 2017.
2. (U) DCOS SA/CSTC-A supports' the DODIG evaluation of the U.S. and Coalition progress towards accomplishing the Train, Advise, Assist Command-Air (TAAC-Air) mission to develop the Afghan Air Force into a professional, capable and sustainable force.
3. (U) We cannot properly execute recommendation (D.2), for the Commander, Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan (CSTC-A) to compare potential in-country training costs to the current out-of-country approach to ascertain potential savings or benefits, without a valid training requirement.
 - a) (U) DCOS SA/CSTC-A's mission is to Train, Advise, and Assist (TAA) within the Afghan Security Institutions to develop Resource Management, Inspector General (Transparency, Accountability and Oversight), Rule of Law, and Sustainment capability in order to develop a "sustainable, effective and affordable" ANDSF in support of the Government Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GIROA).
 - b) (U) The DCOS SA/CSTC-A, Security Assistance Office (SAO), coordinates acquisition, transportation, End-Use-Monitoring of Afghan Security Forces Fund procured equipment for MoI and MoD and coordinates provision of individual and small group training funded by ASFF, international Military Education and Training, or associated funding.
 - c) (U) The DCOS SA/CSTC-A staff possesses the capability to conduct training cost comparisons (military pay, special pay, transportation, forward base operating cost, life support, communications, logistics, security, and infrastructure, etc.) to ascertain potential savings or benefits. However, in order for DCOS SA/CSTC-A to conduct the comparison analysis, the requirement owner must provide a requirement with the appropriated level of detail (type of

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Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan (cont'd)

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DCOS SA/CSTC-A

SUBJECT: Unclassified Report, "Evaluation of U.S. and Coalition Efforts to Train, Advise, and Assist the Afghan Air Force" (Project No. D2017-D00SPO-0081.000)

training, number of students be trained, number of training classes per year, equipment/infrastructure, etc.).

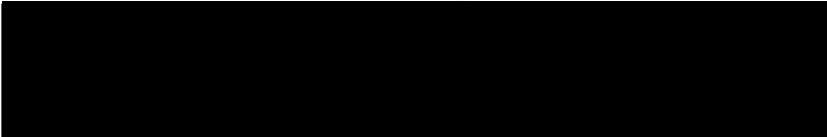
4. (U) CSTC-A has two clarifying remarks in response to response to the FOUO information embedded in the Draft Report, *FOUO Supplement to the Unclassified Report*, "Evaluation of U.S. and Coalition Efforts to Train, Advise, Assist the Afghan Air Force" DODIG Project No. 2017-D00SPO-0081.00,

a)



DCOS/SA CSTC-A Comment: This comment was not made by CSTC-A. We cannot validate or evaluate the claim. Recommend either the comment be attributed to the correct source or deleted from the report.

b)



(U) DCOS/SA CSTC-A Comment: The FOUO comment listed above needs to be kept FOUO due to the specific force details.

5. (U) CSTC-A supports the DODIG evaluation of the U.S. and Coalition progress towards accomplishing the Train, Advise, Assist Command-Air mission to develop the Afghan Air Force into a professional, capable and sustainable force.

KELLY.ANDREW.DON

Digitally signed by
KELLY.ANDREW.DONALD.D.R.

ALD.JR.

ANDREW D. KELLY
COL (OF-5), US Army
Chief of Staff, CSTC-A

Encl.

Attachment 01-CSTC-A SAO Response- DODIG Draft Report, Progress of U.S. and Coalition Efforts to Train, Advise, and Assist the Afghan Air Force" (Project No. D2017- D00SPO-0081.000)

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Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan (cont'd)

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CSTC-A DRAFT REPORT RESPONSE

**“Progress of U.S. and Coalition Efforts to Train, Advise, and Assist the Afghan Air Force”
(DODIG Project No. D2017—D00SPO-0081.000)**

1. (U) Finding D – The Afghan Air Force Has Institutional Training Gaps.
2. (U) Recommendation D.2: We recommend that the Commander of Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan compare in-country training costs to the current out-of-country approach to ascertain potential savings or benefits.

(U) DCOS SA/CSTC-A Response: *DCOS SA/CSTC-A concur with the recommendation with comments.*

(U) DCOS SA/CSTC-A Management Comments:

DCOS SA/CSTC-A concur with the recommendation with comment: DCOS SA/CSTC-A cannot properly compare in-country training costs to the current out-of-country approach to ascertain potential savings or benefits without training requirement information being provided by an outside agency.

(U) DCOS SA/CSTC-A’s mission is to Train, Advise, and Assist (TAA) within the Afghan Security Institutions to develop Resource Management, Inspector General (Transparency, Accountability and Oversight), Rule of Law, and Sustainment capability in order to develop a “sustainable, effective and affordable” ANDSF in support of the Government Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GIRoA).

(U) The DCOS SA/CSTC-A, Security Assistance Office (SAO), coordinates acquisition, transportation, End-Use-Monitoring of Afghan Security Forces Fund procured equipment for MoI and MoD and coordinates provision of individual and small group training funded by ASFF, international Military Education and Training, or associated funding.

(U) The DCOS SA/CSTC-A staff possesses the capability to conduct training cost comparisons (military pay, special pay, transportation, forward base operating cost, life support, communications, logistics, security, infrastructure, etc.) to ascertain potential savings or benefits. However, in order for DCOS SA/CSTC-A to conduct the comparison analysis, an agency, outside of DCOS SA/CSTC-A’s span of control, must provide the DCOS SA/CSTC- SAO team with the training requirements (type of training, number of students be trained, number of training classes per year, equipment/infrastructure, etc.).

(U) DCOS SA/CSTC-A strongly believes Recommendation D.2 should be assigned to TAAC- Air with DCOS SA/CSTC-A providing analytical support because TAAC-Air is the Resolute Support lead for producing trained and qualified pilots and airmen for the Afghan Air Force.

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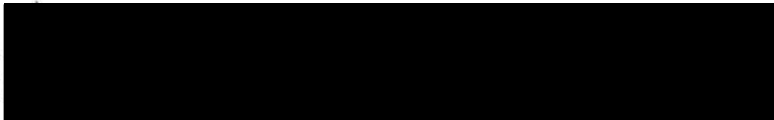
Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan (cont'd)

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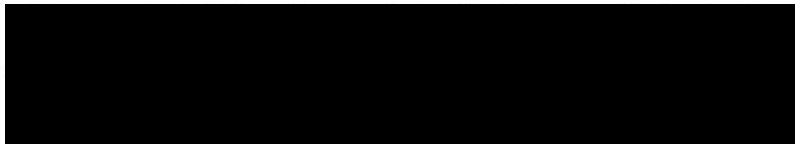
CSTC-A DRAFT REPORT RESPONSE

“Progress of U.S. and Coalition Efforts to Train, Advise, and Assist the Afghan Air Force” (DODIG Project No. D2017—D00SPO-0081.000)

- 3. FOUO Supplement to the Unclassified Report, “Evaluation of U.S. and Coalition Efforts to Train, Advise, Assist the Afghan Air Force” DODIG Project No. 2017-D00SPO-0081.00



(U) DCOS/SA CSTC-A Response: This comment has no validity and should be stricken from the record altogether. SAO is not able to validate the circumstances or the details of the comment and disagrees with the perception that Afghan cannot fill slots; we simply do not have the data to prove this statement neither wrong nor correct.



(U) DCOS/SA CSTC-A Response: SAO training confirms that the FOUO comment listed above needs to be kept as is due to the specific force details it speaks to. Due to the fact that the comment outlines specifics numbers of students against course capacities we believe this would be of use to external agencies in planning operations against the Coalition and Afghanistan.

- 4. (U) DCOS SA/CSTC-A – Additional Information (if required): Not required

CHAPMAN.BRYAN
 N.KEITH
 BRYAN K. CHAPMAN
 Colonel, U.S. Army
 Director, CSTC-A/SAO

Digitally signed by
 CHAPMAN.BRYAN.KEITH

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United States Forces-Afghanistan

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HEADQUARTERS
UNITED STATES FORCES-AFGHANISTAN
KABUL, AFGHANISTAN

USFOR-A AUDITS

13 Nov 17

MEMORANDUM FOR United States Central Command Inspector General (CCIG),
7115 South Boundary Blvd, MacDill Air Force Base, FL 33621-5101

SUBJECT: (U) Response to USCENTCOM Tasker USCC1729657517 – DoD
OIG D2017-000SPO-0081.000 Draft Report - "Evaluation of U.S./Coalition Efforts
to Train, Advise, and Assist the Afghan Air Force"

1. (U) USFOR-A was tasked to 1) Provide a formal response to recommendations B.1, B.2, C and D.2 in DoD OIG's Draft Report D2017-000SPO-0081.000, and 2) facilitate a formal response to D.1, E, and F.1 in DoD OIG's Draft Report D2017-000SPO-0081.000.
2. (U) Commander, Train, Advise, Assist, Command Air (TAAC-Air) concurs with DoD OIG's recommendations B.1, B.2, and C. (Refer to Enclosure 1.)
3. (U) Commander, Train, Advise, Assist, Command – Air (TAAC-Air) and Commander Combined Security Transition Command – Afghanistan (CSTC-A) partially concur with DoD OIG's recommendation D.2. Recommend using the below revised wording:

(U) We recommend that the Commander of Combined Security Transition Command Afghanistan, in coordination with Commander, Train, Advise, Assist, Command – Air, compare in-country training costs to the current out-of-country approach to ascertain potential savings or benefits.
4. (U) Commander, Resolute Support concurs with DoD OIG's recommendations D.1 and E.
5. (U) Commander, NATO Air Command (NAC-Air) concurs with DoD OIG's recommendation F.1. (Refer to Enclosure 1.)

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United States Forces-Afghanistan (cont'd)

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13 Nov 17

SUBJECT: (U) Response to USCENTCOM Tasker USCC1729657517 – DoD
OIG D2017-000SPO-0081.000 Draft Report - "Evaluation of U.S./Coalition Efforts
to Train, Advise, and Assist the Afghan Air Force"

6. (U) Our point of contact for this matter is Col Diana M. Brown, USFOR-A Audits
Director, who can be reached at [REDACTED]

BROWN,DIANA.M [REDACTED]
ARIA. [REDACTED]

1 Encl
1. E-mail from TAAC-Air

DIANA M. BROWN
Colonel, U.S. Air Force
Audits Director
United States Forces-Afghanistan

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U.S. Air Force Air Education and Training Command



**DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
AIR EDUCATION AND TRAINING COMMAND**

6 November 2017

MEMORANDUM FOR DEPUTY INSPECTOR GENERAL

FROM: AETC/A3Q

SUBJECT: Progress of U.S. and Coalition Efforts to Train, Advise, and Assist the Afghan Air Force (Project No. D2017-D00SPO-0081.000) (Recommendation F.2)

1. We agree with the Inspector General's observation and recommendation. AETC/A3Q and the U.S. Air Force Expeditionary Operations School will continue to participate in the USAFCENT-sponsored Air Advisor Assessment Team trips to Afghanistan, which occur every 18 to 24 months. The Assessment Team's purpose is to: 1) update the AETC curriculum taught at the Air Advisor course, 2) update AFTTP 3-4.5 *Air Advising*, and 3) gather latest air advisor observations, best practices, and lessons learned from the air advisors operating in Afghanistan.
2. An Air Advisor (AA) Assessment Team, consisting of members from AF/A3TMQ, USAF/EOS, USAFCENT/A3T, AETC/A3Q and JCISFA, visited Afghanistan 9-13 Oct 17. The team conducted over 50 in-person interviews and will finalize their findings during the Air Advisor Assessment Team writing conference 13-17 Nov 17. The Air Advisor Assessment Team Report should be coordinated and approved no later than May 18. Following the release of the Air Advisor Assessment Team Report, AETC/A3Q will host an AA Curriculum Review where Assessment Team findings will be incorporated into the AA Academic training syllabus, where feasible.
3. We recommend the following two minor administrative corrections to the report.
 - a. On page iii, management of recommendation F.2 should change from "Air Advisor Training program manager, U.S. Air Force Expeditionary Operations School" to "Air Education and Training Command, Lead MAJCOM for General Purpose Forces Air Advisor Education and Training oversight, policy, and guidance."
 - b. Footnote 10 should be changed to read, "The U.S. Air Force Expeditionary Operations School is a subordinate element of the U.S. Air Force Expeditionary Center, which is part of Air Mobility Command. Air Education and Training Command is the lead MAJCOM for General Purpose Forces Air Advisor Education and Training oversight, policy, and guidance."

U.S. Air Force Air Education and Training Command (cont'd)

4. AETC/A3Q and the U.S. Air Force Expeditionary Operations School will continue to periodically assess the Air Advisor Academic training and incorporate feedback into the training syllabus to support the Train, Advise, and Assist Command-Air mission.



PHILIP M. SENNA, GS-15, DAF
Chief, Special Missions Division
Director of Intelligence, Operations,
and Nuclear Integration

Acronyms and Abbreviations

- ANDSF** Afghan National Defense and Security Forces
- ATAC** Afghan Tactical Air Coordinators
- CLS** Contractor Logistics Support
- NAC-A** NATO Air Command-Afghanistan
- NATO** North Atlantic Treaty Organization
- TAAC-Air** Train Advise Assist Command-Air



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